HISTORY DENIED: A STUDY OF DAVID IRVING AND HOLOCAUST DENIAL

by

WILLEM J. STENEKES, B.A., M.A.

A thesis presented to the University of Western Sydney in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts (Honours)

May 2002
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

No one could write a thesis such as this without incurring many debts. My first is to Associate Professor Andrew Moore, my academic supervisor, whose assistance in defining, developing and encouraging the thesis has been of utmost value. My second is to Jeremy Jones, the current Director of Jewish International and Community Affairs Council in Sydney, with whom I spent many profitable hours discussing David Irving and other issues relating to Holocaust denial. Mr. Jones, on a trust basis, also allowed me access to the extensive Sydney Jewish Community Archives and their World Press Cutting Service. Of interest is the extent to which the Sydney Jewish Community is aware of and fearful about a repetition of the dark days of persecution of Jews during the Second World War. Such vigilance is reflected in their maintenance of documentation concerning Holocaust denial and its consequences. So arresting was this material that within hours of arriving at my first archival visit, I became convinced that there was a thesis to be written. Throughout subsequent research sessions at the archives I received expert and courteous assistance from the staff there. In particular, I should like to thank Sue Lederer, who helped me at different stages of the research.

Throughout the planning and writing of this thesis my wife Ann has taken upon herself the worst of its burdens and has shared in all of its occasional pleasures. It is to her that the thesis is dedicated in gratitude and love.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

(Signature)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Statement of authentication

Abbreviations  ii
Glossary... iii

INTRODUCTION... xi

CHAPTER 1: THE ORIGINS AND CONTEXT OF HOLOCAUST DENIAL  1

CHAPTER 2: THE MAKING OF AN IDEOLOGUE  32

CHAPTER 3: IRVING AS HISTORIAN  61

CHAPTER 4: IRVING AS HOLOCAUST DENIER  154

CHAPTER 5: IRVING AND THE FAR RIGHT  226

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION  292

BIBLIOGRAPHY  309
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJHS</td>
<td>Australian Jewish Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJT</td>
<td>Australian Jewish Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Australia/Israel Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALR</td>
<td>Australian League of Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANS</td>
<td>Aktion Nationale Sozialisten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVO</td>
<td>Althaus Vertriebsbewegung und Offentlichkeitsarbeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHJ</td>
<td>Bund Heimatjugend (League of Loyal Youth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLR</td>
<td>British League of Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNF</td>
<td>British National Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNP</td>
<td>British National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODOH</td>
<td>Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Deutsche Liga (a.k.a. The Nationalen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Nationale Zeitung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVU</td>
<td>Deutsche Volksunion (German People's Union)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAJ</td>
<td>Executive Council of Australian Jewry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPG</td>
<td>Focus Policy Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GdNF</td>
<td>Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der Neuen Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFP</td>
<td>Gesellschaft für freie Publizistik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>Gruppo Movimento Politico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICH</td>
<td>Institute for Contemporary History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHR</td>
<td>Institute of Historical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHR</td>
<td>Journal of Historical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEL</td>
<td>League of Empire Loyalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>National Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>Nationale Partei Deutschland (German National Democratic Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Nationale Offensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODESSA</td>
<td>Organisation der Ehemaligen SS Angehörigen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPS</td>
<td>Radical Preservation Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Sturmabteilung (Brownshirts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Sicherheitsdienst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRP</td>
<td>Sozialist Reich Partei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Schutzstaffel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCCL</td>
<td>Victorian Council for Civil Liberties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WACL</td>
<td>World Anti-Communist League</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

Holocaust

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) describes this word as "complete destruction, especially of a large number of persons; a great slaughter or massacre" (caust'-burn, holo'-whole). Guided by this definition, the Holocaust more specifically can be defined as "the systematic state-sponsored massacre of some six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War in Europe".¹

The term Holocaust, widely used only since the 1960s, now serves to separate this particular massacre from other cases of genocide in human history.² Haulocaustus, we are also reminded, comes from the third century BC Greek translation of the Old Testament, signifying "the burnt sacrificial offering dedicated exclusively to God".

The spelling of anti-semitism (antisemitism):

Throughout the thesis, I have used the spelling antisemitism, although no standard dictionary shows the term "antisemitism", even as an alternative spelling to "anti-Semitism". It should be noted that "Semitism" in the composite term "anti-Semitism" appears to be

meaningless. The word "Semitic" derives from a group of arcane languages such as perhaps spoken by peoples like the Phoenicians. Ancient and modern Hebrew also belong to that language group.

In addition to being meaningless, the term "anti-Semitism" has served as a cover for discrimination and racist agitation against Jewish people throughout history. In that context, "Semitic" came to be applied, first erroneously and then intentionally, as a racist epithet in politics. In English, in a different context, the term "antisemitism" probably stems from the work of Dr. James Parkes, a Church of England priest and a long-time student of Christianity's anti-Jewish ideology, actions and sentiments. His book *An Enemy of the People: Antisemitism*, appeared in the critical year 1945. In the book Dr. Parkes explained: "Antisemitism is not a scientific word and it is entitled to neither a hyphen nor a capital."

**Holocaust Revisionism:**

Revisionism may be defined as a legitimate function of serious historians, whose goal is to seek an accurate record of history wherever they find it. Many historians review and interpret the Holocaust and the Jewish genocide in as objective a manner as possible, without any pre-conceived intention to attack Jews. Scholars and critics, although at times controversial, generally regard historical analysis without an "agenda" as the only credible form of revisionism vis-à-vis the Holocaust. Essentially this school of historical interpretation argues that
although the Holocaust indubitably happened, there are still aspects which require interpretation.

**Holocaust denial:**

Dissenting from the view that the Holocaust has been accurately represented, or that it happened at all, is termed Holocaust denial.

Denial of the Holocaust is central in the thinking of contemporary, organised antisemitism. The purpose of Holocaust denial is complex, with a number of interconnected propositions. It is argued in this study that the re-writing of the past for present ulterior motives takes many forms, one of which is Holocaust denial.

A number of Holocaust scholars have suggested that because the historical method - particularly its reliance on empiricism - is under attack, the historicity of the Holocaust is also challenged. The recent post-modern 'turn' of historical writing is to be blamed, at least in part. This is more than the traditional theme of historical relativism to which the likes of Charles A. Beard, R. J. Evans and, most famously, E. H. Carr have averred.

---

4 C.A. Beard, 'That Noble Dream', in F. Stern, *The Varieties of History*, Vintage Books, New York, 1972, pp. 315-328. In this work, Beard defined history as "contemporary thought about the past", arguing that "no historian can describe the past as it actually was and that every historian's work, that is, selection of facts, his emphasis, his omissions, his organisation, his method of presentation, bears a relation to his own personality and the age and circumstances in which he lives".
Recent theories of deconstructionism\textsuperscript{7} may be summarised in the following seven propositions:

(1) history exists only in the mind of historians,

(2) the past is constructed by historians,

(3) historians can only know and describe the past through available documentation,

(4) historians can no more purge themselves of bias than anyone else,

(5) there is no complete causal structure of contingent events in the past,

(6) historians construct a causal structure in their minds out of available documentation,

(7) the historians' task is to present this constructed past not as it actually happened but as it might have happened in one interpretation only.\textsuperscript{8}

Several of these, particularly (1), (2), (5) and (7) have great bearing on Holocaust studies and Holocaust denial.

Although the body of literature on the Holocaust is large, there are comparatively few books and articles available on the theses of Holocaust deniers: those that can be located are mostly chronologies of revisionists' ulterior motives with some claims and refutations scattered throughout.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{7} See Collins English Dictionary (Australian Edition), Harper Collins, 1992, p.412, in which \textit{deconstructionism} is defined as "a technique of historical analysis that regards meaning as resulting from the differences between words rather than their reference to the things they stand for. Different meanings are discovered by taking apart the structure of the language used and exposing the assumption that words have a fixed reference point beyond themselves."

\textsuperscript{8} R. Eatwell \& N. O'Sullivan (eds), \textit{The Nature of the Right}, Pinter, London, 1992, p. 143.

\textsuperscript{9} Schermer, op. cit., p.5.
With some variations, Holocaust deniers have specifically questioned three pivotal assertions about the Holocaust. First, that there was particular intention to the programme, based primarily on race; second, that a highly technical, well-organised extermination programme using gas chambers and crematoria was implemented; third, that an estimated five to six million Jews were killed.

Holocaust deniers, David Irving among them, may not deny that there was rampant antisemitism in Nazi Germany; nor do they deny that Jews were deported and forced into concentration camps, where they were, in general, very harshly treated and made the victims of overcrowding, disease and forced labour.

According to Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt, the term 'revisionism' should be avoided whenever possible and the term 'denial' should be used instead. This is because the deniers' assertions are neither scholarly nor do they represent any legitimate sense of historiographical inquiry. Lipstadt postulates that the deniers' selection of the term 'revisionist' to describe themselves shows their basic strategy of deceit and distortion: they attempt to display themselves as "legitimate historians engaged in the traditional practice of describing the past".10

Moreover, as Lipstadt points out, Holocaust deniers should not be described as revisionists because "these are people who are not revising anything". She writes:

[They are simply people who are denying]... It is important to understand that they are not people who are revisers (historians revise). Revisionism is the historians' craft. We look at the body

---

of material and ask what fact has been ignored? Whose voice has not been heard? When we fold that fact or that voice into our pre-existing body of knowledge how does it revise our understanding of the event? But these people do not revise, they deny. Words are exceptionally important. The deniers understand this, and therefore, have chosen this appellation, revisionist.  

Right-wing Extremism:

Right-wing extremism and its relationship to antisemitism is difficult to define. In the global context, upsurges of extremism in Europe, North America and even Australia, as well as the electoral successes of some radical right parties, have heightened awareness of the dangers of right-wing extremism. Some observers may see this as a peripheral problem. Many Holocaust historians, on the other hand, draw parallels to the Nazi accession of power invoking the spectre of the Third Reich, underscoring the need for a deeper examination of the problems and devising adequate responses to the Holocaust denial phenomenon.

References to right-wing extremism have been heard more and more frequently since the mid-1980s. The term has been applied to individuals, parties, movements and organisations across the world. It has also been used in reference to a wide range of phenomena: from "skinheads"  

11 D. Lipstadt, 'Holocaust: Denial and the Extreme Right', Address to Sydney Institute, in Sydney Papers, vol. 6, no. 4, Spring 1994, pp. 81-90.
12 C. O Maolain, (comp.), The Radical Right, Longmans, London, 1987, p.120.
Although the term 'skinheads' has become a generic term for neo-Nazi youth, the word originally was coined in the mid-1980s, in Germany, where 'skinhead' violence against the Turkish immigrants, and reciprocal violence, was frequently reported. Several neo-Nazi skinhead gangs had organised around football clubs. Some of their
ideology, a form of observable behaviour, various kinds of political activities, or personal attitudes and dispositions.

Notwithstanding the diversity of extremist forms, attempts have been made to define right-wing extremism.¹³ Michael Billig postulates, for instance, that certain constant themes of discernible right-wing extremism, in particular that right-wing extremists may be identified principally by their fundamental expression of hatred, bigotry, or prejudice grounded in antisemitism.¹⁴

According to the tenets of extreme-right propaganda, Jews throughout history have been and still are the ultimate source of evil. Antisemitism thus performs a special function for the extreme right. Jews can be identified as convenient and residual targets, easily vilified on the basis of past propaganda, pre-empting the need for new and bigoted doctrines. We can see that as a tool or device for antisemitism it is critical for success in indoctrinating new recruits.¹⁵

Antisemitism also provides an ideological justification and purpose for joining right-wing extremist movements from different countries around the globe. For many right-wing extremists, Jews universally represent the unidentified enemies behind the state, politicians, or any positions of power. Indeed, the emergence of Holocaust denial has blurred the boundaries of antisemitic propaganda, bringing a measure

---

¹⁴ P. Hainsworth, (ed.) The Cutting Edge: The Extreme Right in Post War Western Europe and the USA, Pinter, London, 1992, pp. 146-146.
of apparent credibility and legitimacy to extreme right organisations and individuals. As Lipstadt puts it:

The dangers of denial increase when the proponents of these views clean up their act and gain entry into legitimate academic circles.\textsuperscript{16}

It is a truism that not every right-wing extremist is necessarily antisemitic; neither is the reverse true, that all antisemites must be right-wing extremists. However, antisemitism is generally regarded as being central in right-wing discourse, having developed beyond personal prejudice to an ideology which informs and structures belief systems.

Antisemitism to some extent also reflects the final identifying factor of right-wing extremism: its propensity to disregard accepted norms of public behaviour. The extreme right is often neither restrained nor bound by conventional rules and procedures in its commitment to violence: throughout history, right-wing extremists have gained notoriety through frequent attacks, murders, terror, and the destruction of property.

\textsuperscript{16} Lipstadt, op. cit., p.4.
INTRODUCTION

The peoples conquered him in time, but let no one rejoice too early at his fall - The womb is fruitful still from which he crept.

Bertold Brecht

(from The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui)

When the research for this thesis was ongoing, as if to underscore the historical significance and topicality of its subject, news emerged from Britain about David Irving's libel trial in London.\(^1\) Irving, the British writer of numerous historical books, had sued Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt, an American historian, accusing her of ruining his


Important newspaper articles informing about the Irving libel trial include: (1) Manne, R. 'Tears For David Irving', The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 February 2000, p.17., (2) Gold, A. 'Philosophy of Hate Has No Room for Truth', The Sydney Morning Herald, 21
career and for claiming that he is "one of the most prominent and
dangerous Holocaust deniers in the world".  

For many years Irving had questioned whether six million European
Jews were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War. Lipstadt's
book contended that, according to Irving, Hitler knew nothing of the
extermination of the European Jews and that there were no gas
chambers.  

The 2000 Irving libel trial reflected the potential, after more than half a
century, to open yet again Holocaust wounds. The trial also risked
emergence of residual bitterness engendered by Holocaust denial,
which has become a major "growth industry" throughout the world.  

Irving failed in his bid. The defence had proven its case and Irving's
libel action was rejected. Evidence presented at the trial throws
important new light on Irving's activities as an active Holocaust denier.

The present study examines the promotion of Holocaust denial since
1945 with a particular focus on the works of David Irving. It specifically
examines the contribution to Holocaust denial of Irving's ideological
beliefs as expounded in his published works and his many public

---

February 2000, p. 13, and (3) 'Irving Tells Court He's Victim of Vilification,' London
2 The Guardian, 8 January 2000. The article discusses the manner in which Deborah
Lipstadt, professor of modern Jewish and Holocaust studies at Emory University,
Atlanta, in her 1994 book Denying the Holocaust, denounced David Irving as a "Hitler
partisan who twists history to cast the German dictator in a better light".
3 D.Lipstadt, Denying The Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory,
4 The Irving Libel trial, London, (see The Court Judgment, Internet article,
(Hereafter referred to as the 'Irving trial transcript'.
7 R. J. Evans, Lying About Hitler: History, Holocaust, and the David Irving Trial, Basic
speeches. My thesis also presents evidence and an argument about Irving's crusade to promote Holocaust denial.

The lack of scholarly attention paid to the works of British historian Irving contrasts markedly with his public profile. While many thousands of words have been written about Irving's utterances and activities, the literature about him is limited.8 The most recent works are also the most significant. These are studies of the 2000 Irving London libel trial by R.J. Evans9 and D.D. Guttenplan.10

My thesis attempts to continue the truncated literature. It establishes a framework of reference in which David Irving's writings can be evaluated.

Between 1939 and 1945, the German Nazis killed some six million Jews, two thirds of the Jewish population of the world.11 The horror of what became known as the Holocaust12 was documented in photographs taken covertly by German soldiers, in captured reports and sworn testimonies of the Nazis. Also documenting these events were

---


11 Lipstadt, op. cit., pp. 58-60. Lipstadt includes an evaluation of most of the available estimates of Jewish deaths as a result of the Holocaust. Historians generally agree that the eminent Jewish Holocaust scholar, Raoul Hilberg, (R. Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1961), has been responsible for the most reliable research in this context.

12 The literature of the Holocaust is vast; for the purpose of citing relevant and specific secondary Holocaust sources for my thesis, please refer to Bibliography appendix, pp. 22-24.
the diaries of Jewish victims that were recovered from secret hiding places after the war as well as the memoirs of hundreds of Holocaust survivors, recounting their own experiences.

This being so, how is it possible that documented facts of the Second World War can be denied more than half a century after Hitler's death? With all the film footage, the eyewitness statements, the admission by the perpetrators of genocide themselves, the legal and academic investigations, the books, the newspaper articles, the hundreds of millions of words written by victims and commentators, how can the Holocaust be denied?

For, despite the strong evidence of the Holocaust, a pervasive, international movement has sprung up since the end of the Second World War, claiming that the Holocaust never occurred. In a 1996 radio broadcast, Australian Holocaust survivor and author Abraham Biderman began to describe his thoughts:

It seems to me that there are many who would like the history of the Holocaust to be struck from the record. They completely deny it. It is a denial symptomatic of a perpetual malignancy. They wage a blood-less Holocaust. They are murdering the memory of the dead. They claim it never happened, the Holocaust is a Jewish invention. They appear to be doing everything possible to confuse, mis-inform an water down the events of the Holocaust in an attempt to obscure the fact that it was an abominable Jewish blood-letting. Yes, in the denial hides the virus of another Holocaust.¹³

Biderman's observations capture something of the intense emotion that remains at the heart of the survivor's view of the Holocaust; the sense

of horror and lack of comprehension about the conflagration and then its denial.

Even a superficial scanning of electronic or printed news media reveals an existing and growing Holocaust denial lobby today, whose origins, functions and extent will be examined in this thesis. Concurrent with proliferation of Holocaust denial, there are signs that deniers are becoming bolder and more sophisticated in their antisemitic enterprise.\textsuperscript{14} Holocaust denial frequently engenders angry controversy, benefitting those who use it for their own agendas.

My thesis argues that the importance of Holocaust denial lies less in the substance of its claims than in society's perception of conspiracy theory as promoted by the deniers. There is evidence to show that many people, lacking in understanding of history, tend to accept the irrationality of what is termed Holocaust denial.

Further, this thesis will chart a changing consciousness about the established history of the Holocaust, in which conventional historical discussion is gradually losing ground. Deborah Lipstadt argues that these attacks on history and knowledge have the potential to alter the way established truth is transmitted from generation to generation. Lipstadt points out that according to some post-structuralist scholars no fact, no event, and no aspect of history any longer has any fixed meaning or content. Any truth can be retold. Any fact can be re-cast. Lipstadt defines this as bigotry.\textsuperscript{15} I tend to agree.

Since Irving's historical writings have rarely been systematically critiqued, it is important to do so. My aim is to evaluate Irving as an historian, initially to show why he should not be dismissed as inconsequential. With a *curriculum vitae* that includes twelve long historical works, many based on extensive primary research, his is a substantial contribution to an historical understanding of the Second World War. Yet his writings also reveal a good deal about the priorities of Holocaust denial; we see him as a polemicist rather than a neutral scholar of ‘fact’. Indeed Irving's name recognition and his status as a "convert" to the Holocaust deniers' cause have marked him as both popular lecturer and a leading authority within the denial movement itself. A consideration of Irving's contribution to Holocaust denial illuminates some little-known but important aspects of his purpose. Irving's world is both that of the quiet serenity of the library and the archive as it is the angry and confused maelstrom of contemporary right wing politics. He is an activist more than he is a scholar, or so this thesis will argue.

In organisational terms, the first chapter of the thesis will examine the genesis and context of Holocaust denial. Here I shall evaluate significant contemporary denial writings and offer some perspectives about the controversy. In its second chapter the thesis will consider general aspects of David Irving's background, personality and the major steps in his intellectual development. In chapter three Irving will be examined as an author of historical books and an historian of the Second World War. Chapter four will examine Irving as a Holocaust
denier. Chapter five will examine both Irving’s political agenda, his propensity to associate with extreme right groups and individuals and his alleged capacity to incite violence.

Sources

In a study dealing with the relatively modern phenomenon of Holocaust denial, it has been difficult to locate appropriately balanced sources. In terms of primary sources, I have often depended on information about Holocaust denial contained, for instance, in hostile sources such as the British anti-fascist journal *Searchlight*.\(^{16}\) It may seem, therefore, that I have been partisan in the use of some primary and secondary evidence. Accordingly, I must enjoin the reader to understand that the sources of material in this area are fragmentary. Of course I have also consulted the writings of the Holocaust deniers. Especially useful were some of David Irving’s own Internet sources.\(^{17}\)

In terms of secondary sources regarding Holocaust denial, of special prominence were the works of Deborah Lipstadt, John Lukacs, Gitta Sereny, Raoul Hilberg, Eberhard Jaeckel, Lucy Dawidowicz, Martin Broszat, Hilary Rubinstein, Ron Rosenbaum, Richard Evans, Kenneth Stern, as well as many other modern authors acknowledged in the bibliography of this study.

Lipstadt’s book, published in 1994, is the most thorough study of the Holocaust deniers, and because of Irving’s libel trial the most famous. It

---

\(^{16}\) See bibliography-Searchlight.

\(^{17}\) For the most useful of these see [http://www.fpp.co.uk](http://www.fpp.co.uk).
was, however, by no means the only source. Other contemporary authors who sought to describe and explain the phenomenon of Holocaust denial included the distinguished French historian Vidal-Naquet, as well as Gill Seidel who wrote *The Holocaust Denial: Antisemitism Racism and the New Right*, Kenneth Stern, *Holocaust Denial*, British political scientist Roger Eatwell, Israeli scholar Yisrael Gutman, author of *Denying the Holocaust*, and the works of Evans and Guttenplan, previously mentioned. Professor Evans has dissected the legal defence in respect of Irving's libel action in 2000.

Finally, I feel obliged to point out that my thesis emerges from a "liberal" tradition opposed to racism, antisemitism and fascism. A brief statement about my personal background might assist the reader. As a child born in The Netherlands before the onset of the Second World War, the significance of the Holocaust and its place in history has been a life-long interest. My sense of outrage about the injustice meted out to the European Jews has been with me since early childhood. As a child of four years of age when the German occupation of the Netherlands began, the subject of the Holocaust and its implications became, as it were, ingrained in the mind of an impressionable youngster. My most lasting and profound memory from those times relates to the harbouring by my parents, from 1942 to 1945, of a Jewish mother and her two

---

children, a girl and a boy, then respectively twelve and fourteen years of age. The father perished in Auschwitz, but Marie van Dijk-de Haas (her assumed Dutch name), and her two children Jaap (later Yisrael Alexander) and Annie (now Ruth Levi), survived the war.

To my great joy, my wife Ann and I were able to experience a reunion with Jaap, then sixty-six years of age, in Israel in 1996. My family, as Righteous Gentiles, was subsequently honoured by the establishment of a carob tree and a plaque in the grounds of Yad Vashem in remembrance. Unfortunately, Yisrael Alexander died in Israel in 1998. Ruth continues to reside in Tel Aviv with her family.

---

CHAPTER ONE

THE GENESIS AND CONTEXT OF HOLOCAUST DENIAL

...[For the Holocaust deniers]...the Holocaust is an infuriating fact of history...What better way to rehabilitate antisemitism than by convincing the world that the great crime for which antisemitism was blamed, simply never happened: indeed, that it was nothing more than a frame-up invented by Jews?¹

W. Reich.

Holocaust author M.R. Marrus² tells that during the evacuation of the ghetto of Riga, the Nazis shot and killed the famous Jewish octogenarian historian Simon Dubnow. It is said that Dubnow's last words were an admonition to his fellow Jews: "Write and record!"³ Dubnow's anguished appeal and that of countless Jews who expressed a similar yearning that their sufferings be made known, have echoed through the years. Many have taken up this task, to tell the story, either as witness, or in commemoration, or as historians, as a sombre warning to future generations.

Opposing their efforts, however, are the aging of Holocaust survivors and shrewd organising by Holocaust deniers. Standing apart from the existing scholarly literature about the Holocaust was an attempt by a small number of writers to deny that there was any systematic or

organised extermination of Europe's Jews by the Nazis: to suggest that the number of Jews killed was far smaller than 5 or 6 million; and to claim that there were no gas chambers or other specially built extermination facilities. They seem to inhabit an intellectual world that is far removed from the cautious rationality of academic historical scholarship.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to address the issue of how and why the fact of the Holocaust became questioned. What is Holocaust denial? Who were involved? What caused received history to become so questioned? Who were David Irving's predecessors and counterparts?

The origins of Holocaust denial are generally traced to a book entitled *Nuremberg ou la Terre Promise*, written by Maurice Bardeche, a French fascist, published in Paris in 1948. Although the earliest deniers did not become part of a larger group, their tactics and arguments have since become integral elements of contemporary Holocaust denial. They made little, if any, efforts to disguise their antisemitism.

Bardeche's fundamental argument was that not only were the Nazis innocent of atrocities, but that the true culprits were the Jews themselves. By supporting the Treaty of Versailles, Jews, both those who died and those who survived, deserved no sympathy because they helped to instigate the Second World War. According to Bardeche the

---

3 ibid., p. 111. In Yiddish: 'shreibt und farshreibt'.
5 J. Jones, 'Holocaust denial: "Clear and Present' Racial Vilification', in *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, vol.1, no 1, December 1994, p.172. In this article, Jones argues that denial ancestry can be traced back to individual deniers' contributions; they operated in isolation and were predominantly concerned about acquiring individual reputations.
Nuremberg trials in 1946 were both morally and legally wrong because they punished Germany for having done no more than was necessary to defeat Bolshevism. While some of these antisemitic notions had been articulated by others, Bardeche was the first to contend that the pictorial and documentary evidence of the Holocaust had been falsified.\(^6\)

Some historians argue that Holocaust denial actually began before the Holocaust ended. A very early type of denial activity was reported by Gerry Gable, editor of the London-based anti-fascist monthly *Searchlight*, who wrote of fleeing "Schutzstaffel" (SS) officers asserting their innocence in the refuges to which they had fled. According to Gable:

> In 1944, people who were SS, who were propagandists, and who were involved in the camp system, knew they had lost the war, and left Germany. Sweden was one of the places they went. Some went to the Arab states, and into some South American countries. Holocaust denial material first appeared very, very early, before the end of the war.\(^7\)

Systematic repudiation of the Holocaust further developed in the writings of Paul Rassinier (1908-67).\(^8\) A French concentration camp survivor and former socialist and anarchist, Rassinier blamed the "kapos",\(^9\) or foremen, for the suffering in the concentration camp. Rassinier claimed he was beaten by a communist fellow-prisoner in the Buchenwald concentration camp for failing to recognise or pay his respects to the imprisoned German communist leader Ernst Thalmann.

---


\(^6\) Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 51.

\(^9\) B. Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart*, Granada Publishing Ltd., London, 1961, p. 130. The term "kapo" is described by Bettelheim as "prisoner foreman in charge of a labour command" in concentration camps. Such persons were arbitrarily appointed by SS staff.
(subsequently murdered by the SS in 1944). His fellow prisoners seemed more dangerous than the SS guards to him. Rassinier eventually managed to get a relatively easy job in the infirmary on his transfer to camp Dora in the Hartz mountains, where he was well treated by his boss, a senior SS officer. These experiences seem to have prejudiced him in favour of the Nazis. Initially he published a defence of the SS against its critics and denied reports by survivors of atrocities in the camps. Later Rassinier then went on to dispute the existence of the gas chambers and to assert that it was the Jews who had started the Second World War. Rassinier also detailed inconsistencies he could find in statements about the number of Jews killed. His book *Le Monsonge d’Ulysse* published in French in 1949 was translated into English and is still extensively promoted by neo-Nazis around the world. The book was widely denounced in France.

In 1964 Rassinier wrote another book, *Le Drame des Juifs Europeens*. An assembly of arguments rehashed from the repository of antisemitic writings in it, he calculated that 4,416,108 of the six million Jews said to have been murdered were actually alive and that the rest had probably not been killed by the Germans anyway.

At around this time Rassinier met American Holocaust denier Harry Elmer Barnes, of whom we shall hear later. They had much in common; Barnes undertook to translate Rassinier’s book into English and also

---

10 P. Rassinier, 'The Real Eichmann Trial', *Historical Review Press*, Silver Spring, Colorado, 1967, p. 120.
praised Rassinier in the American Mercury to the American public. Barnes wrote:

The courageous author [Rassinier] lays the chief blame for misrepresentation on those whom we must call the swindlers of the crematoria, the Israeli politicians who derive millions of marks from nonexistent, mythical, and imaginative cadavers, whose numbers have been reckoned in an usually distorted and dishonest manner.\textsuperscript{14}

After 1945, the widespread revulsion against the Third Reich did not create a hospitable climate for Holocaust denial. Even in postwar Germany, where recalcitrant Nazis continued to believe in the cause, they nevertheless did not dare to defend the Third Reich openly.

Perhaps the only denial work on the Second World War, or so it could be construed, by a reputable historian was A.J.P. Taylor's The Origins of the Second World War, published in 1961.\textsuperscript{15} Taylor argued that Hitler had not planned a general war, and that the conflict, far from being premeditated, was a "mistake, the results on both sides of diplomatic blunders".\textsuperscript{16} Taylor may have had a point when he argued that British appeasement had encouraged the onset of war, although historians throughout the world roundly attacked him for perceived errors. Taylor's book soon became the banner under which a swarm of Nazi apologists and antisemitic individuals rallied.

In the years since, Taylor's argument appears relatively mild. By 1980, one would commonly find it argued by Holocaust deniers not only that Hitler's Germany was not responsible for the Second World War, but that the murder of six million European Jews by the Nazis had never

\textsuperscript{14} ibid., p. 33.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., p. 19.
taken place. In short, it would be contended that the Holocaust was a hoax invented by the Jews.

Another early denier was Austin J. App,17 author of The Six Million Swindle: Blackmailing the German People for Hard Marks with Fabricated Corpses.18 App estimated the total number of Jewish casualties of the Third Reich at around three hundred thousand, and declared the "six million" to be "an impudent lie".19 Born in 1902, App was for a time president of the Federation of American Citizens of German Descent, and in 1942 he campaigned in the United States in support of Nazi war aims. Immediately after the war he defended the mass murder of the Jews and similar atrocities as legitimate acts of war. App also minimised the numbers of victims and denied the existence of gas chambers. In his book App argued that the "fraudulent six million casualty" figure for Jewish deaths at the hands of the Nazis was used vindictively as an external club for pressuring indemnities out of West Germany and for "wringing financial contributions out of American Jews".20 He alleged that at least five hundred thousand of the Jews supposedly gassed in the camps had gone to Israel. The perpetuation of the "swindle," he argued, was due to Jewish domination of the media.

App's major contribution to the development and evolution of Holocaust denial was to formulate eight axioms that have come to serve as the founding principles of the California-based Institute for Historical

17 Austin J. App, a professor of English at the University of Scranton LaSalle College in Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania University in North Carolina, played a central role in the development of Holocaust denial in the United States. Though less prominent than Barnes, he began explicitly denying the Holocaust within a few years after the Second World War.
Review, (which we shall examine later), and as the basic postulates of Holocaust denial.\textsuperscript{21}

Others took up the cause of Holocaust denial in the 1960s. In 1961 another Holocaust denial work appeared in Germany, written by American denier David L. Hoggan. The book had originated as a Harvard doctoral dissertation completed in 1948, but was revised and expanded in the ensuing years. Unable to find a mainstream German publisher, Hoggan gave his manuscript to the Institute of Historical Review, a US Holocaust denial publisher.\textsuperscript{22} According to one of his Harvard advisers, Hoggan's thesis had been of mediocre quality:

No more than a solid, conscientious piece of work, critical of Polish and British policies in 1939, but not beyond that what the evidence would tolerate.\textsuperscript{23}

In its published form, however, Hoggan's thesis turned into an apologia for Nazi Germany. The English were portrayed as warmongers, the Poles as the real provocateurs of the war, while Hitler was painted as the paragon of peace. It argued also that from 1933 to 1938 the Third Reich treated its Jews more generously than Poland.\textsuperscript{24} To support his claims, Hoggan tampered with sources, distorting and misreading those that did not fit into his theories and prejudices. As well, he glossed over those that conflicted with his theories and ignored

\textsuperscript{20} App, op. cit., pp. 2, 29.
\textsuperscript{23} Reviewed in Commentary, September 1977, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{24} Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 32.
those that refuted them.\textsuperscript{25} One noted German historian, Helmut Krausnick, Director of the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, summed up Hoggan's work as follows:

Rarely have so many inane and unwarranted theses, allegations, and 'conclusions' ...been crammed into a volume written under the guise of history.\textsuperscript{26}

How had a once "solid, conscientious piece of work" metamorphosed into Nazi apologetics? The credit, it seems, belongs to the already mentioned Harry Elmer Barnes, Paul Rassinier's translator and \textit{eminence grise} of American Holocaust deniers.\textsuperscript{27}

In 1969 Hoggan probably wrote \textit{The Myth of the Six Million},\textsuperscript{28} published by Noontide Press in the US. The publisher was part of the network of antisemitic enterprises associated with one of America's leading antisemitic authors, Willis Carto and his Liberty Lobby,\textsuperscript{29} a white supremacist and antisemitic group operating from Washington and perhaps the best financed antisemitic organisation in the United States. Among its other activities, the Liberty Lobby produces antisemitic propaganda and acts as a point of contact between ultra-conservative and fascist organisations.\textsuperscript{30}

The introduction to \textit{The Myth of the Six Million} was written pseudonymously by Carto. This indicates that the anonymous author was a college professor who wished to protect his standing in the academic community by hiding his identity.

\textsuperscript{25} ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{26} ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{27} ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{28} Stern, op. cit., p. 155. Stern notes that according to Dawidowicz, Hoggan's work also appeared in Germany in 1961.
\textsuperscript{29} Lipstadt, op. cit., pp. 144-145.
It appears likely that the book’s author was the aforementioned David Leslie Hoggan. In 1969 Hoggan sued *Noontide Press* for damages, claiming authorship of *The Myth of the Six Million*. The *Myth of the Six Million* undertook to disprove all the evidence of the murder of the European Jews and to discredit all eyewitness testimony, including that of Rudolf Höss, SS commandant at Auschwitz, and Kurt Gerstein, the SS officer who delivered the poison gas to the extermination camps at Belzec and Treblinka. The author of *The Myth of the Six Million* distorted and falsified some sources, suppressed others, and invented still more.

Harry Elmer Barnes (1889-1968), was an American historian and sociologist of wide-ranging interests whose career as a professor and then as a journalist was aborted by his contentiousness and disregard for truth. He produced no scholarly work, but synthesised information from his vast reading in a series of repetitious works on the history of Western civilisation. In the 1920s Barnes became a First World War revisionist. He was absorbed by the notion that "vested political and historical interests" were behind the official accounts of Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of the war. The energy which this notion provoked in him sustained Barnes as a revisionist into the period of the Second World War. Barnes' obsessions with warmongering conspiracies in government and the historical profession preoccupied him until the end of his life. Growing increasingly paranoid, his writings

---


31 Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 33.

32 ibid., p. 34.
embodied sinister plots and he saw powerful enemies everywhere.

Barnes began to write about the "historical blackout", or conspiracies to prevent him from publicising his views on the Holocaust. According to Barnes:

It is no exaggeration to say that the American Smearbund, operating through newspaper editors and columnists, "hatchet-men" book reviewers, radio commentators, pressure-group intrigue and espionage, and academic pressures and fears, has accomplished about as much in the way of intimidating honest intellectuals in this country as Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler, the Gestapo, and concentration camps were able to do in Nazi Germany.33

Barnes' pamphlet, Blasting the Historical Blackout, published in 1962, claimed that Germans who were expelled from Germany after the Second World War suffered a fate "obviously far more hideous and prolonged than those of the Jews said to have been exterminated in great numbers by the Nazis".34 By 1962, according to Holocaust scholar Lucy Dawidowicz, Barnes "already doubted that the Third Reich had committed any atrocities or murder".35

It was at this time that Barnes became interested in Hoggan's dissertation and over the years guided him into Nazi apologetics. Blasting the Historical Blackout praised A.J.P.Taylor's The Origins of the Second World War and alluded to what Barnes called the "alleged wartime crimes of Germany":

Even assuming that all the charges ever made against the Nazis by anybody of reasonable sanity and responsibility are true, the Allies do not come off much, if any, better.36

---

33 H. Barnes, 'Revisionism and the Historical Blackout', appearing as the lead article in Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace (1959), a massive compendium which Barnes edited and privately financed.
34 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 73.
35 Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 4.
36 ibid., p. 33.
Barn's relativist remarks about Germans suffering more than Jews appeared callously linked to his denials that Nazi Germany was guilty of state-sponsored extermination of European Jews.\textsuperscript{37}

Four years later, in 1966, in another article styled 'Revisionism: a Key to Peace' that was published in a short-lived libertarian journal, Barnes specifically denied that Hitler's Germany had committed mass murder:

Even if one were to accept the most extreme and exaggerated indictment of Hitler and the National Socialists for their activities after 1939 made by anybody fit to remain outside a mental hospital, it is almost alarmingly easy to demonstrate that the atrocities of the Allies in the same period were more numerous as to victims and were carried out for the most part by the methods more painful and brutal than alleged extermination in gas ovens.\textsuperscript{38}

Barnes laid the ideological foundation of American Holocaust denial. He was one of the first proponents and wrote some of the earliest attacks on the history of the destruction of European Jewry.\textsuperscript{39}

The most prominent Holocaust denial organisation in the United States other than the Liberty Lobby, is the Institute for Historical Review\textsuperscript{40} (IHR), publisher of The Spotlight,\textsuperscript{41} a radical right-wing newspaper disseminated in Washington, DC. Apparently not satisfied with promoting Holocaust denial through his other antisemitic outlets, Willis Carto founded the Institute of Historical Review in the United States in 1979.\textsuperscript{42} The IHR's ideology can be directly linked to Carto.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{37} ibid., p. 33.
\textsuperscript{38} ibid., p. 33.
\textsuperscript{39} Littman, (ed.), 'Holocaust denial', op. cit., p. 20.
\textsuperscript{40} O Maolan, (comp.), op. cit., p. 367.
\textsuperscript{41} ibid, p.374. The Spotlight has numerous "international bureaus" or correspondents in countries all over the world.
\textsuperscript{42} A. Moore, The Right Road?: A History of Rightwing Politics in Australia, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{43} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 144.
The Institute had its first annual conference in 1979, when it convened a "Revisionist Convention" on the Northrup College campus in Los Angeles. Papers were read by Butz, Faurisson and Austin App. All argued that there had been no Holocaust and no gas chambers and contended that the concentration camp photographs had been falsified and that the millions of European Jews were still alive.

Holocaust deniers from around the world have attended the IHR's annual conferences since 1979, including David Irving. The conferences further exposed neo-Nazis to Holocaust denial. In 1995 Irving referred to himself as part of this wider movement:

People like myself and the brave band of scientists, and writers, and journalists, and historians who have gradually fallen in. I won't say they have fallen in behind me because I'm not going to try and place myself at the head of this revisionist movement. They've fallen in shoulder-to-shoulder with us and are marching at our side in this extraordinarily interesting adventure.

At the 1979 "revisionist" convention, Willis Carto announced that in 1980 the Institute of Historical Review would launch the quarterly Journal of Historical Review. This was delivered as promised, with lead articles by Butz and Faurisson, to whom we shall return later in this study. In the years to follow the Institute of Historical Review continued to produce the Journal of Historical Review, which publishes an abundance of pseudo-academic denial tracts, described as "the spine of the international Holocaust denial movement". As the creation of

---

44 Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 34.
45 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 85. By the late 1950s App was offering "proof" that the figure of six million was a "bloated libel", and appeared before varied audiences accusing Jews of perpetrating a massive hoax.
46 Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 34.
48 Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 36.
49 ibid., p. 24.
the IHR, the *Journal of Historical Review* sought to move Holocaust denial from the fringe of racist and antisemitic extremism to the realm of academic respectability.\(^{50}\) The IHR itself was designed to win scholarly acceptance for deniers. This is why it preferred to use the University of California facility for conferences.

Although the IHR and its followers proclaim that Holocaust denial is heir to a genuine intellectual legacy,\(^ {51}\) analysis of the Institute, its publications and activities, as well as the people most closely associated with it, shows that the IHR is part of a continuum of extreme antisemitism and racism.\(^ {52}\) The Institute's antisemitic attitude is reflected in virtually all its activities.

When the Institute for Historical Review first came to public attention in 1980, it offered a $50,000 reward to anyone who could conclusively prove that Jews had been gassed at Auschwitz. A survivor, Mel Mermelstein, accepted the challenge and submitted a great deal of evidence, including his own personal testimony.\(^ {53}\) When the evidence was ignored by the IHR, Mermelstein sued the organisation for the reward. During the trial, Mermelstein used his original evidence. The case was settled in July 1995, with IHR ordered by the Los Angeles Superior Court to pay $50,000 reward, plus an additional $40,000. This was in fact paid by the IHR for pain and suffering caused to

---

\(^{50}\) D. Lipstadt, 'The Holocaust: Denial and the Extreme Right', Address to Sydney Institute, 21 July, 1994, in *Sydney Papers*, vol.6, no.4, Spring 1994, pp. 81-90.


\(^{52}\) Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 36.

\(^{53}\) Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 139.
Mermelstein.\textsuperscript{54} Mermelstein's victory was a major defeat for the Institute of Historical Review.\textsuperscript{55}

The Institute for Historical Review has often been mistaken for other, more credible organisations, including the respectable London-based Institute of Historical Research, whose ideology is far from that of the IHR. Organisations with little knowledge of IHR's work have sometimes been deceived into selling advertisement space or mailing lists to IHR. An example of this is where IHR was able to obtain a "call for research papers" published in the newsletter of the American Historical Association in 1993.\textsuperscript{56} This caused uproar when IHR's real mission was revealed. As a result, the American Historical Association decided to donate the money paid for the advertisement to the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.

The Institute for Historical Review presents a public façade, which avoids overt anti-Jewish bigotry. However, its fundraising letters mailed to "supporters of the truth in history" reveal its director's prejudices more clearly: the IHR claims that its founding goal was to follow in the footsteps of Harry Elmer Barnes, described as a "well-known and respected historian of the First World War".\textsuperscript{57}

Often those who become involved with the Institute for Historical Review are unaware of its connections to Liberty Lobby, a link which the IHR itself is slow to reveal, presumably for the sake of preserving its

\textsuperscript{54} Auschwitz Study Foundation, founded by Mermelstein in Huntingdon Beach, California. As told by a member of staff of this foundation.

\textsuperscript{55} In 1986, Mermelstein also won a $5.25 million default judgement against former IHR Advisory Committee member Dittlieb Felderer, a Swedish Holocaust denier who had used his Jewish Information Bulletin to personally attack and libel Mermelstein. In retaliation for both suits, IHR and Liberty Lobby sued in 1986 for libel, but dropped the charges in February 1987.

\textsuperscript{56} Searchlight, October 1992.
credibility. Only Liberty Lobby publicises the connection, often printing Holocaust denial material in the associated publication *Spotlight*, devoting entire issues of that newspaper to the "Holocaust hoax". Liberty Lobby's central role in promoting Holocaust denial material dates to the 1960s, although associates dabbled in this area since the 1950s. Its involvement appears to have begun with its publication of the forementioned "The Myth of the Six Million",\(^{58}\) which has become a standard source for the Liberty Lobby.

The Liberty Lobby’s intention to support Holocaust denial became clear in the early 1970s, when it began to distribute "The Hoax of the Twentieth Century", written by Northwest University professor Arthur Butz, whose work we shall examine shortly.

Another significant United States Holocaust denial organisation is the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH).\(^{59}\) An effort to place full-page newspaper advertisements in the student newspaper of the University of Rhode Island in 1987 attracted extensive news coverage at that time.\(^{60}\) Essentially a one-person operation, it is run by Bradley Smith,\(^{61}\) a self-confessed believer in "freedom of speech" and a subsequent Holocaust denier. Along with Mark Weber, who is currently the editor of IHR’s Journal of Historical Review,\(^{62}\) in 1987 Smith founded CODOH, now an Internet website denial tract.\(^{63}\) In an effort to promote his Holocaust denial beliefs, Smith has appeared on over three

---

\(^{57}\) Lipstadt, op. cit., pp. 22-28.

\(^{58}\) ibid., p. 105.

\(^{59}\) ibid., pp. 185-94.

\(^{60}\) ibid, p. 185.

\(^{61}\) ibid., p.184. Smith’s demeanour as a calm, kindly, elderly gentleman helped to sell his message. He is a far cry from the stereotypical, alienated fanatic usually associated with Holocaust deniers.

\(^{62}\) ibid., p. 184.
hundred radio and television talk shows. He claims to have believed in the Holocaust "myth" until 1979, when an article published in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, written by French denier Robert Faurisson converted him to the cause of Holocaust denial. Smith has also worked with the Institute for Historical Review as its spokesperson and media director.

By the late 1960s, with both Barnes and Rassinier dead, the Holocaust deniers' bid for academic respectability took a step forward when it became known that a professor at Northwestern University, Arthur R. Butz, had published a book styled *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*. The hoax, of course, was the "Holocaust legend". With the publication of this book, Butz became perhaps the most influential proponent of Holocaust denial views at that time. Published in 1976 by the Historical Review Press, Butz's book constituted the first attempt to present Holocaust denial in a pseudo-academic form. Its eight chapters featured 450 footnotes, 5 appendices, and 32 plates and diagrams, all of which made the work look at first glance like an academic treatise.

Butz argued that the Jews of Europe had not been exterminated and that there was no German attempt to exterminate them. An associate professor of electrical engineering and computer sciences at Chicago's Northwestern University, Butz was convinced that all the Jews said to have been murdered were still alive and he undertook to prove it. Any gas chambers, he argued, were for the purpose of de-lousing;

---

63 CODOHmail@aol.com
Auschwitz, he claimed, was an industrial plant. Deaths there were mainly caused by typhus. Butz maintained that Jews should be elated to discover that large numbers of their people were not deliberately destroyed.\textsuperscript{67} In Butz's view, when the Nazis talked or wrote about "Judentum" (Jewry), they meant the destruction of Jewish power, not of human beings, and when they used the word annihilation ("Vernichtung") or extirpation ("Ausrottung") in this context, they did not mean actual killing. Butz alleged that the failure of the Yad Vashem memorial to the Holocaust, in Jerusalem, to collect 6 million names of those who had died, proved that the number of dead was far fewer than 6 million. The Nuremberg trials were a frame-up in Butz's view, and the myth of the Holocaust was propagated after the war by the Jews for their own advantage.\textsuperscript{68} Butz's career as an antisemitic scholar elevated him to national notoriety. His presence at Northwestern embarrassed the university, especially when its Jewish contributors threatened to withhold their financial support.\textsuperscript{69}

Arthur Butz also enjoyed Holocaust denial connections in Australia. The link occurred between Butz and influential Australian denier, John Bennett, a Melbourne lawyer who came to prominence in 1979. Butz's book had a profound effect on Bennett. For many years secretary of the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties (VCCL), Bennett had been converted by Butz, distributing about 200 copies of Butz's books to persons in Australian public life.\textsuperscript{70} Early in 1979, Bennett began to

\textsuperscript{67} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 73.
\textsuperscript{68} Butz, op. cit., pp. 246-50.
\textsuperscript{69} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 133.
\textsuperscript{70} Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 34.
speak of the murder of the European Jews as a "gigantic lie created by Zionist Holocaust propaganda" to make people support Israel. Several of his letters-to-the-editor were published in leading Australian papers.\textsuperscript{71} The subsequent uproar soon brought about his dismissal from the VCCL.

Since the Second World War the extreme right's presence may be exemplified in Australia by the Australian Civil Liberties Union and the Australian League of Rights.\textsuperscript{72} Denying the historicity of the Holocaust was common to both. With the publication of Arthur Butz' \textit{The Hoax of the Twentieth Century} in 1976,\textsuperscript{73} Holocaust denial began as a major public issue in Australia.

France has had its equivalent of Butz in the person of Robert Faurisson, already mentioned, a former associate professor of French literature at Lyon-2 University. Perhaps the most active and vocal of the deniers in the 1980s and 1990s, Faurisson became a significant exponent of Holocaust denial from 1979. Author of several Holocaust denial books, Faurisson is one of the many proponents of the notion that it was technically and physically impossible for the gas chambers at Auschwitz to have functioned as extermination facilities.\textsuperscript{74} In a number of articles he argued that there never was a predetermined German master plan to exterminate Jews. He denied that gas chambers were in

\textsuperscript{71} ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{72} Moore, op. cit., p. 143.
\textsuperscript{73} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 123.
\textsuperscript{74} Littman, (ed.), 'Holocaust Denial', op. cit., p. 21.
use in the Third Reich for that purpose,\textsuperscript{75} describing those structures as "delousing chambers". In one article Faurisson asserted:

The alleged gas chambers and the alleged genocide are one and the same lie, which is largely of Zionist origin. The participants in this lie distort the purpose and nature of revisionist research.\textsuperscript{76}

Faurisson contended that the conventionally accepted figure of six million Jewish deaths was absurdly high.\textsuperscript{77} The articles he wrote created such a furore that his university suspended him. He was tried, convicted\textsuperscript{78} and dismissed from his academic post under newly established legislation opposing racial hatred.\textsuperscript{79} Indeed, the convictions were under the Fabius-Gaysot law of 1990, largely written with the express intent of criminalising Faurisson’s denial activities.\textsuperscript{80}

As well as all the preceding figures, a role was also played in the denial phenomenon by William Staeglich. An academically qualified German lawyer, Staeglich wrote The Auschwitz Myth: Legend or Reality,\textsuperscript{81} published in 1979 by the far right publisher Grabert-Verlag in Germany. Staeglich followed Butz in presenting Holocaust denial in a pseudo-academic form. His book argued that there had been no mass extermination of Jews in Nazi concentration camps, and that guilty

\textsuperscript{75} Evans, op. cit., p. 107. Faurisson had argued over many years that "the alleged massacres in the 'gas chambers' and the alleged 'genocide' were part of the same lie" which "is essentially Zionist in origin" and "has allowed a huge political and financial swindle of which the State of Israel is the principal beneficiary".
\textsuperscript{76} Dawidowicz, op. cit., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{78} Evans, op. cit., p. 107. Faurisson was tried in his native France for slander, violation of Article 382 of the Civil Code by willfully distorting history, and incitement under a law dating from 1972, having been found guilty on all three counts.
\textsuperscript{79} Miele, op. cit., p. 62.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 60. This law makes it a criminal offence to "contest by any means the existence of one or more of the crimes against humanity as defined by Article 6 of the Statutes of the International Military Tribunal, attached to the London Agreement of 8 August 1945, committed either by the members of an organisation declared criminal in application of Article 9 of the same statutes, or by a person held guilty by a French or international jurisdiction".
verdicts secured in postwar trials of the perpetrators were wrong. Staeglich used minor discrepancies in postwar documents and reports of the extermination to dismiss all such documents as forgeries and falsifications. As a result of this book Staeglich was dismissed from state employment and his doctoral title was withdrawn by his university.82

Of concern to many historians is the proliferation of Holocaust deniers; figures such as these operated on the fringes of public life. Their books were mostly distributed by mail order and could seldom be found on the shelves of respectable bookshelves. They seemed to belong in the world of sensational newspapers and there was indeed a distinct genre of historical writing about Nazi Germany that could be slotted into this category and seemed to find enough readers for publishers to be willing to sell it.

Most of this work tried to present its arguments as the outcome of serious historical scholarship, seemingly resting on a combination of detailed documentary research and careful scholarly reasoning. Often, Holocaust denial material was extremely ingenious and required considerable concentration in order to refute the writings. In most cases its authors really seemed to believe what they were saying, however spurious the theories they were advancing. They belonged to an eclectic style of historical writing: nothing was quite what it seemed, and terrible secrets, it was contended, had been suppressed by mainstream historical scholarship for decades. Unlike other historians, however, it


82 Evans, op. cit., p. 107.
appeared that these writers were never willing to accept criticism, and adhered to their views no matter how convincing the contrary documentary evidence.

Though repugnant, engaging with work such as this seemed pointless. The writings of people like Rassinier, Butz, Faurisson, Irving and Staeglich were different, however. To begin with, it was surely deeply offensive to the many thousands of Hitler's victims who had been through the camps and the prosecution to be now confronted by Holocaust deniers telling them that virtually nothing of what they had suffered had ever happened. Moreover, the denial of such a large and complex part of history as the systematic extermination of millions of Jews by the Nazis called into question a huge mass of historical evidence that had been carefully gathered and interpreted by historians over the decades.

Some of the writings of the earlier Holocaust deniers contained evidence of an underlying agenda.\textsuperscript{83} A good deal of the material appeared to be linked to racial hatred and antisemitic animosity in a direct way.\textsuperscript{84} The Holocaust deniers appeared not to be maverick individualists but fed off each other's work and organised journals, conferences, and institutes to exchange views and disseminate publications.\textsuperscript{85} It was for these reasons that they began to attract

growing attention from scholars such as Deborah Lipstadt in recent years.\textsuperscript{86}

In 1989 the Leuchter Report,\textsuperscript{87} since discredited,\textsuperscript{88} became an important event in the Holocaust-denying network. The Leuchter Report, prepared by Fred Leuchter, a designer and merchandiser of execution chamber equipment in the United States, impressed many activists, including David Irving. Leuchter tested scrapings from the walls of a number of concentration camp buildings, including those associated with the killing process.\textsuperscript{89} Leuchter concluded that his examination of the cyanide residues in the inner walls of the gas chambers at Auschwitz proved that they had not been used for gassing at all.\textsuperscript{90} As we shall see in a later chapter, the findings of the Leuchter Report represented for David Irving the turning point in the evolution of his views on the questions of the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz and the extermination of the European Jews by gassing.\textsuperscript{91}

The author wrote the foreword to the Leuchter Report, in which he expressed his conviction about the report's findings in unequivocal terms:

I was shown the reports on the tests on the walls of the gas chambers at Auschwitz and I became quite satisfied having studied forensic science at university that this is an exact science

\textsuperscript{86} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 78. In 1984, Jehuda Bauer, director of Hebrew University's Vidal Sassoon Center for the Study of Antisemitism, asked Lipstadt if she might be interested in undertaking a study of the historical development of "Holocaust revisionists, i.e. those who deny that the Holocaust happened". This commission resulted in Lipstadt's later book.

\textsuperscript{87} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 163. Leuchter summarised his findings in the report, the full title of which was The Leuchter Report: An Engineering Report on the Alleged Execution Gas Chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Majdanek, Poland. The Leuchter Report was published by David Irving's publishing House, Focal Point Publications in London.

\textsuperscript{88} Jones, op. cit., p. 177.

\textsuperscript{89} Stern, op. cit., p. 45.

\textsuperscript{90} Evans, op. cit., p. 123.

and that there's no traces of compounds in the walls of those gas chambers...that was the turning point for me. That's when we decided we had to cut the word 'gas chamber' out of my book [Hitler's War].

Holocaust denial was also promoted by sections of the extreme right in Britain, where the British National Party (BNP) became a major post-war Holocaust denial organisation. Though not the first right-wing party to use that name, the BNP was founded in 1982 by John Tyndall, who had a record of fascist activities dating back to the late 1950s. Tyndall was prominent in the former BNP in 1960-62, and was widely regarded as the father of Britain's post-war Nazi movement. In a publication of one of its members, Bruno Clifton, the BNP had called the Holocaust a "myth." The policies of the BNP are essentially those espoused in the 1970s by the National Front, in particular the total opposition to black immigration and hostility towards a supposed "Zionist" conspiracy.

In addition the British League of Rights (BLR) became a virulent Holocaust denying organisation. Founded in 1970, it was an offshoot of the Australian League of Rights. In 1974 the BLR transformed itself into the British Chapter of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) at a time when global anti-communism still appeared to justify amnesia towards the activities of the Nazis. By 1974, the Chapter of the World Anti-Communist League had virtually been taken over by antisemitic, Holocaust denying fascist groups. In the early 1980s, however, a new leadership of the WACL, expelled the BLR and other antisemitic affiliates.

93 O Maolan, C., (comp.), op. cit., p. 312.
94 ibid., p. 312.
95 ibid., p. 321.
The British National Front (BNF), too, made a particular contribution to international Holocaust denial. Founded in 1967 by leading members of several far-right groups, the BNF now included the League of Empire Loyalists (LEL), the Radical Preservation Society (RPS) and the British National Party (BNP). In 1986 the National Front described itself as "Britain’s only patriotic political party",\textsuperscript{96} professing a nationalist ideology. Rather than using traditional Nazi terminology, the National Front pioneered the use of code words such as “Zionists”, “cosmopolitans” or “aliens” (for Jews) and “one-worldism” or “international Zionism” for a supposed Jewish conspiracy for world domination.\textsuperscript{97}

Thus, within a decade, Holocaust denial evolved concurrently in Britain, Canada, South Africa, Germany and Australia, and in the rest of the world. The phenomenon was attractive to far-right antisemitic individuals and groups. It validated their belief that Jews were evil and conspiratorial, implying that the Holocaust was a myth or a hoax fabricated by the Jewish leaders of the “conspiracy” in order to elicit sympathy for the pro-Jewish cause. In the fragmented literature of Holocaust denial, certain themes of right-wing extremism became constantly discernible; above all right-wing extremists were identifiable foremost by their expression of hatred, bigotry, or prejudice against Jews. This was grounded in traditional antisemitism as well as racism, xenophobia, and intolerance. According to much of the extreme right’s propaganda, Jews are viewed as the ultimate source of evil.

\textsuperscript{96} R. Hill, and A. Bell, \textit{The Other Face of Terror; Inside Europe’s Neo-Nazi Network}, Grafton Books, London, 1988, pp. 80-84.
\textsuperscript{97} O Maolan, op. cit., p. 312.
Antisemitism thus performs a special function for the extreme right. Jews are convenient and residual targets, easily vilified on the basis of past propaganda. As a tool and device, antisemitism is critical for indoctrinating new recruits for Holocaust denial.  

Antisemitism also provides an ideological justification and purpose for joining right-wing extremist global movements. For Holocaust deniers, Jews represent the unidentified enemies behind any position of power.

Moreover, the emergence of Holocaust denial as an "academic" enterprise has obfuscated the boundaries of antisemitic "hate" language, bringing ostensible credibility and legitimacy to the extreme right. The ideology of antisemitism, contained in an elaborate conspiracy theory, is thus essential to the extreme right and may be said to represent a "common theme linking extreme right-wing groups".

During the 1990s, Holocaust denial literature intensified. That intensification, the worsening of an antisemitic climate, has not occurred in isolation from other social trends; it is largely one aspect of a general rise in manifestations of global intolerance and bigotry.

With the persistence and intensification of Holocaust denial since the late 1970s, there were other significant developments, which gave the deniers a more threatening quality. These included an increase in

---

99 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 4
fanaticism, resorts to acts of violence, incitement to violence, as well as greater involvement of the young and an increasing development of links with neo-fascist and other right-wing organisations. This happened principally in Europe, where for Holocaust deniers various opportunities presented themselves. Well-financed, and in some cases well educated, the leaders of the Holocaust denial movement could afford to travel. As a result, they contrived to develop strong international links joining the National Front in Britain,\textsuperscript{103} neo-Nazis in Germany,\textsuperscript{104} right-wing publishing houses in the United States, Ernst Zundel in Canada\textsuperscript{105} as well as groups in Australia, such as the League of Rights and the Australian Civil Liberties Union.\textsuperscript{106} Such interconnections became significant when David Irving capitalised on their proliferation. In 1991 and 1992 he toured Canada at the invitation of a series of local neo-Nazi groups including Zundel.\textsuperscript{107} In turn, Zundel spoke at a fascist rally in London organised by David Irving on 19 September 1992.\textsuperscript{108}

In the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Norway, Hungary and Brasil, many renascent neo-Nazi groups and individuals have embraced Holocaust denial as a prime propaganda instrument. Yet Holocaust denial can be expressed in terms that are abrasive and far from scholarly. Mark Weber,\textsuperscript{109} for example, articulates his views on Jews in the following manner:

\textsuperscript{103}Hill & A. Bell, op. cit., p. 237.
\textsuperscript{104}Braun, & S. Scheinberg, (eds), op. cit., p. 224.
\textsuperscript{105} ibid., p. 225.
\textsuperscript{106} J. Jones, in Report on Antisemitism in Australia, October 1997, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{107} Braun & Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 222.
\textsuperscript{108} Searchlight, January 1993, p. 4. Irving was reported to have been “faced with an audience of whom 90 per cent were from the BNP. Ernst Zundel spoke of his “discovery of Adolf Hitler, and what a great man he had been”.
\textsuperscript{109} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 184. Mark Weber is not to be confused with the famous sociologist Max Weber, who wrote long before the evolution of Nazism, and who
We focus on the Jews because just about everyone else is afraid to. Part of the reason we exist, and part of the pleasure is to be able to deal with a subject that others are not dealing with in a way we feel helps provide information on what is relevant...There are constant references... [in the Jewish museums]...[what the Germans did to the Jews in the Second World War. This is a double standard, of which the Holocaust campaign is the most spectacular manifestation. The very existence of these Jewish museums in our society points up this perverse sensitivity of Jewish concerns in our society. We feel a sense of liberation in what we say.  

Contemporary Holocaust deniers including Mark Weber and other leading individuals such as Francois Genoud, Thies Christophersen and Fred Leuchter, as well as David Irving, exhibit a core of racism and paranoia which is clearly directed against the Jews. In order to gain acceptance, deniers have in some circumstances disguised and modified their expressions of hatred: their language becomes muted; extreme terminology in the Holocaust denial lexicon became subject to euphemism. This is evident where contemporary Holocaust deniers have resorted to Holocaust “moral

understood the potential power of bureaucracy in social organisation. Mark Weber is the editor of the Journal of Historical Review.

110 Braun, & Scheinberg, (eds.), op. cit., p. 16.
111 M. Kapel, Australia/Israel Review, October 1996, p. 8. Genoud, a Swiss banker and lawyer, has been a Nazi since the 1930. A close friend of the leaders of the Third Reich, he holds the copyrights on the writings of Hitler, Bormann and Goebbels. He is speculated to have been the source for Irving’s Goebbels’ diary “discovery.” Irving described Genoud as “a very old friend and esteemed colleague.” Genoud evidently told a London newspaper in 1992 “that Hitler was a great leader and if he had won the war, the world would have been a better place today”.
112 ibid., p. 8. Christophersen was an SS guard of Auschwitz and a neo-Nazi activist. He is author of the notorious pamphlet The Auschwitz Lie. Christophersen attended a denial meeting with Irving in Hagenu, near Strassbourg, France, in 1992. When asked if he is in contact with Irving, Christophersen replied that he “had known Irving for many years.”
113 R. Griffin, (ed.), Fascism, 1995, at p. 331 describes Christophersen as “one of the leading eyewitnesses of the Holocaust denial industry”.
114 Stern, op. cit., p. 23. An instance where euphemism and language have been used to trivialise the Holocaust. When President Reagan travelled to Bitberg in Germany in 1985 to lay a wreath at a cemetery for perished Jewish people that included SS men, the prevailing perception was that he marginalised the horror of what the SS was and did: an international political leader was seen to diminish the Holocaust through a symbolic act.
equivalence" arguments.\textsuperscript{115} These themes will be explored in chapter three, but for instance, Lipstadt cites circumstances where:

Shades of Holocaust denial were evident at the Klaus Barbie trial in France, when defence attorneys, attempting to diminish the significance of the Holocaust, argued that forcing people into gas chambers was no different from killing people in a war, and that it was no more of a crime to murder millions of Jews because they were Jews than it was to fight against Algerians, Vietnamese, Africans, or Palestinians who were attempting to free themselves from foreign rule.\textsuperscript{116}

As we shall see later in this study, there exist subtle variations in the techniques of Holocaust denial: some denial arguments acknowledge that the Holocaust occurred, but trivialise what can be learned from it by obfuscating its unique and universal beginnings.\textsuperscript{117}

Conclusion

One of the dangers of Holocaust denial is that one need not be a neo-Nazi to be influenced by the antisemitism implicit in these ideologies. This is especially true for the younger generation for whom the events of the 1930s and 1940s are obscure. Lipstadt argues that unless an educational approach about the history of the Holocaust is implemented, it may well be that succeeding generations will be entirely ignorant of what happened to European Jewry in the Second World War. Lipstadt points to the outcome of a 1993 US Roper Organisation poll conducted to determine the extent of Americans' knowledge of the

\textsuperscript{115} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 162. The concept of "moral equivalence" refers to a device used by a number of Holocaust deniers, by which they compare two entirely different sets of circumstances. For instance, Irving has long equated the actions of Hitler and Allied leaders, an equivalence that was made easier by his claims that the Final Solution took place without Hitler's knowledge.

\textsuperscript{116} ibid., p. 11
Holocaust. It seems that 22 per cent of American adults and 20 per cent of American high school students thought that it was possible the Holocaust did not happen.\textsuperscript{118}

The rapid rise of Holocaust denial in the last few decades has owed much of its apparent success to the superior organisation of the adherents of denial. Since the global Holocaust denial movement is well financed, the proponents of antisemitism are often capable of penetrating into the highest political, educational and cultural arenas of the societies in which they operate. They serve as front groups for influential political interest groups, establishing publishing houses and sophisticated communication networks that allow them to disseminate their denial literature widely.\textsuperscript{119} It is also important to understand that organised Holocaust deniers do not operate in a vacuum; they are plying their trade in circumstances where much of history is questioned and attacks on the Western rationalist tradition have become commonplace.\textsuperscript{120}

Once hatred of Jewish minorities takes root, the resulting prejudices and bigotry can be transmitted from generation to generation. Even where we find that Jews may not be the specific targets for extreme right activity, much of that activity is couched in antisemitic language or Holocaust denial, suggesting that Holocaust denial has become a kind of common language for organised antisemitic cultures.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{117} ibid, pp. 214-215.
\textsuperscript{118} Lipstadt, op. cit. p. vii. See a further analysis about lack of clarity concerning the outcome of this poll, because the questions had been flawed. Although the findings of a second (1994) poll were not officially released, it appears that the previous poll had over-estimated the number of people who think the Holocaust never happened.
\textsuperscript{119} ibid., p. 17.
\textsuperscript{120} ibid., p.18.
\textsuperscript{121} Stern, op. cit., pp. 25-27.
It is a truism that in most democratic countries widespread revulsion about the Holocaust has not led to the eradication of antisemitism. However, public opinion and the dissemination of the facts of the Holocaust have assisted in making overt expressions of antisemitism unacceptable. With the passage of time the role of education about the Holocaust has been weakened by the promoters of Holocaust denial.

As Lipstadt argues, memory of the Holocaust is waning:

> With the demise of [Holocaust] survivors, and history, however well disseminated, there can never be an adequate substitute for the collective memory of a generation.\(^{122}\)

Lipstadt sees no room for complacency here, concluding that there is a "clear and present danger" in the global promotion of Holocaust denial, which should be combated not just by Jews but all rational groups and individuals.\(^{123}\) She focuses on the Holocaust deniers' "assault on historic truth"\(^{124}\) and predicts that a tragic price may have to be paid again by society should the lessons of the Holocaust no longer be heeded. Lipstadt believes that it is essential to expose the illusion of reasoned enquiry, which conceals the deniers' arguments. Historians have an important role to play and may be compared to that of "the canary in the coalmine"\(^{125}\) whose death warned the miners that dangerous fumes were in the air.\(^{126}\) Lipstadt argues that the customary response to Holocaust denial in international society has been to avoid engaging in open debate with neo-Nazi connections or deniers, or even to acknowledge their existence for fear of lending deniers any form of

\(^{122}\) Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 29.

\(^{123}\) Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{124}\) Ibid., p. 19.

\(^{125}\) Ibid., p. 29.

\(^{126}\) Ibid., p. 29.
legitimacy.\textsuperscript{127} Hence, Lipstadt postulates, it becomes important to generate global understanding of the genesis, nature and extent of Holocaust denial in order to combat and eradicate prevailing anti-Jewish bigotry.

We have seen that by the end of the 1970s, the Holocaust denial movement had become firmly entrenched. Holocaust denial became the rationalised manifestation of the growth of post-war antisemitism.\textsuperscript{128} The international Holocaust denial movement had found new outlets for their viewpoints. More recently the ascendancy of Holocaust denial is particularly visible in the great increase of denial Internet websites, with David Irving emerging as a prominent participant.

For present purposes, however, it is important to note that Holocaust denial was a hydra-headed monster with a rich tradition in many countries. Increasingly, David Irving was to play an important role. Who, however, was Irving? What was his background and what were his formative influences? These are the questions explored in the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{127} Y. Bauer, (ed.), "The Revisionist Pseudo-science", in Australian Jewish News, 2 July 1993, front-page editorial. In this article, Professor Yehuda Bauer, the eminent Holocaust historian, analyses Holocaust denial. He makes the point that the way deniers operate is typical of reality denial: they find contradictions in testimonies in small details, and thereby try to deny the validity of the testimonies as a whole. Professor Bauer argues that Holocaust denial is spreading because the extreme right needs antisemitism, anti-democratic propaganda, and wants it to be spread among intellectuals. Therefore, an attack on the Jews, in this case the memory of the dead, does not remain an attack on Jews alone, but is directed against decent humanity wherever it is.

\textsuperscript{128} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. xix.
CHAPTER TWO

DAVID IRVING: THE MAKING OF AN IDEOLOGUE

I am a baby Aryan/ not Jewish or sectarian/
I have no plans to marry an/
Ape or Rastafarian.¹

(Ditty allegedly composed by David Irving for his daughter).

David John Cawdell Irving was born in Hutton, Essex, England, on 24 March 1938, the youngest of four children.² The son of an illustrator³ and a naval officer, Irving likes to recall that he was born in the same year as the "Kristallnacht", the occasion of the Nazi state-sponsored pogroms against the Jews in Germany.

His father, Commander John Irving, RN, was an author and Arctic explorer who served in the battle of Jutland in 1916 and the North

¹ J. Freedland, 'History On Trial', The Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February 2000, p. 11. During the 2000 libel trial in London, the defendants produced a personal diary belonging to Irving, from which this quote was read in court as a means of proving that Irving is a man with an agenda, or motive. The ditty allegedly had been composed by Irving for his little daughter Jessica. Mr. Rampton, the defence counsel, confronted Irving with his own words, thus attempting to build up a portrait of what he called a "perverted racist".
Russian convoys in the Second World War. An absent father to David, John Irving was an individualist and a natural rebel. From a family of smallholders who found it hard to earn a good living, John Irving was at odds with what he saw as an oppressive, conformist society in Britain.

More than likely, the young David Irving retained from his father such a sense of deprivation. As related by Irving in an interview with British journalist Ron Rosenbaum, the author of Explaining Hitler, as early as his wartime childhood Irving experienced stirrings of disquiet and scepticism about the conventional perception of Hitler.

At a very young age Irving felt that "unlike Americans, we English suffered great deprivations" during the Second World War. For Irving this was quite personal. He later recalled:

We went through childhood with no toys. We had no kind of childhood at all. We were living on an island that was crowded with other people's armies.

What disturbed Irving was not only the privation of his childhood but also the "rationing of truth" in England at that time. Childhood occurrences appear to have made a strong impression on him:

We saw the losses in Allied air fleets by watching aircraft formations take off and return with great gaps in them. You know these things, but they wouldn't report them in the press.

An avid reader at a young age, Irving viewed caricatures of the leading Nazis which led him to question official truths:

---

4 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 40.
7 ibid., p. 228.
8 ibid., p. 227.
There was a magazine at that time rather like Life but in England called the Picture Post. Every issue had a caricature box of various little characters usually dominated by the Nazi figures: there was fat old Goering and Hitler with his postman’s hat, and there was Goebbels, who was shorter and had one leg shorter. And it seemed to me at that time there was something odd in the fact that these cartoon characters were able to inflict so much indignity and deprivation on an entire country like ours. I said to myself, if they are such ludicrous people, then why are the Germans doing it for them.\textsuperscript{9}

From such early impressions, it may be argued that from a very young age Irving was unable to reconcile portrayals of Hitler’s apparently petty-criminal character with the magnitude of the crimes he subsequently perpetrated. It is revealing also to follow Irving into young adulthood when his respect for Hitler was reinforced:

I began to be sceptical, and emerging from university rather footloose with no particular aim. I became a steel worker in Germany, to help me learn the language. Then finding out about the Dresden air raid and [the] firebombing, which at that time was totally unknown in the outside world. I wrote a book which imported Dresden into the vocabulary of war atrocities...So I decided to be a writer. And I went to my publisher and he said: 'What are you going to write about?' and I said: 'I’ve decided to pick Adolf Hitler'. And he said: 'Well, there have been lots of books about Hitler. How are you going to justify yours?'. And I said: 'Well, I'm going to tell it from the inside'.\textsuperscript{10}

David Irving has said it was a trump card in his life that he had been born into the lower middle class. His was not the feckless world of the idle rich. His mother was a painter and commercial artist, who provided the family’s regular income after eventual separation from her husband.\textsuperscript{11} Irving recalls:

She brought us up. Because of the wars, we never saw our father, except on one or two occasions, and toward the end of

\textsuperscript{10} ibid., p. 15.
his life when he came to live with us when he was dying of cancer. Mother supported all of us. She found it difficult bringing us up purely through her abilities with her brush and palette. We were a very poor family.\textsuperscript{12}

In 1997 the author told a journalist that he has early memories of his father going into the services and not coming back home because he "didn't want to stay with my mother".\textsuperscript{13} Irving adored his father and looks back on him as a better person than himself; as someone with more humanity and altruism, being feared but also widely admired for his honesty, courage and idealism. It appears from all available evidence that no one else had more influence on Irving's character and beliefs.\textsuperscript{14}

Yet father and son were not emotionally close:

When I was young and growing up I found that I was in a house where there was only mother and one or two brothers and sisters. This fact made no difference to me until I went to school and found the boys talking about their fathers. My father was away at the war but he was invalided out of the Royal Navy about 1942. He stayed away from us and it was not until about a year before he died in 1967 that I got to know him.\textsuperscript{15}

The Irving household provided no easy beginning in life for the young David, however stimulating it may have proved to his budding and precocious political consciousness. Irving recollects a lack of tenderness and affection by his mother, and he sees this as the main reason he developed a tight-lipped personality. Nor was he close to his twin brother, who, in adult life changed his name by deed poll to avoid being stigmatised by his brother's views.\textsuperscript{16} Irving in turn described his

\textsuperscript{12} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{13} McDonald, op. cit., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{14} Orvice, op. cit., p. 38. Irving actually collaborated with his father on the latter's last book, The Smokescreen of Jutland.
\textsuperscript{15} Bishop, op. cit., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{16} The Sunday Age (Melbourne), 25 May 1997, p. 2.
brother as being "a very respectable civil servant who is endlessly boring and balding". 17

It has been suggested by some newspaper accounts that Irving had difficulty in learning to speak. 18 For some months his mother evidently feared he might be retarded or seriously developmentally delayed. Only with much patient attention did she manage to extract his first sounds of speech. Irving eventually became a bright child and adult, 19 but retained a short concentration span 20 and a reputation as a school prankster:

In 1956 I was beaten for having placed a twelve foot square hammer and sickle flag over the school's main entrance with a quick release gear so that the fire brigade had to be called to haul it down. It was the flag which I thought would cause the most annoyance to the academics. Oh, yes, I was a'gin [sic] authority. 21

In common with his subject Hitler, David Irving may well tend to exaggerate the privations of his youth. Although many historians delight in pointing to Irving's lack of tertiary qualifications, 22 from an early age Irving seems to have been imbued with a sense of the need to educate himself, beginning his studies at Imperial College, London University in 1955, switching from art subjects to sciences the following year. 23 In

17 Ibid., p.2.
18 Ibid., p.4. Whatever may have caused Irving to be developmentally delayed in his speech certainly was not evident in adulthood. Irving has become an extremely articulate and persuasive public speaker.
19 Bishop, op. cit., p. 4. In his 1989 interview with John Bishop, the latter describes Irving as follows: "Irving came across as a polished performer, with immediate recall of a wealth of facts and figures and little concern about whether people agree with him or not".
20 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 10.
21 Bishop, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
23 K. Phillips, 'Too Poor to Graduate', The Adelaide Advertiser, 28 September 1996, pp. 18-20, where it is explained in some detail that after an arts education at the four hundred years old Sir Anthony Browne's School in Brentwood, Essex, Irving won an
1957 he failed the first year of his undergraduate degree\textsuperscript{24} and repeated the year in 1958. He dropped out of his course at the end of that year and failed to complete his studies. Irving then worked as a labourer in London. Living in Brentwood, Essex, he resat his O-level examinations\textsuperscript{25} and began an undergraduate degree at Imperial College, London, an annexe of the University of London. Part of his time was spent attending outside lectures.\textsuperscript{26} Irving's circumstances remained impecunious; his workload was arduous, labouring as a steel construction worker and in other jobs in the morning while attending classes in the afternoon.\textsuperscript{27} He dropped out once again after two years and never completed the course. Thus he currently holds no undergraduate or post-graduate qualifications, an absence that has rankled on more than one occasion.\textsuperscript{28} Superficially, at least, David Irving has not regretted his lack of academic qualifications, though perhaps his protests disguise a sense of inferiority:

Yes, it is true, I admit. Exactly forty years (and thirty works on modern history ago) I was too poor to complete my university course. So, no qualifications. So what: Pliny had'n't any qualifications either; Winston Churchill wrote and made history without them, and Macauley wrote his History of England without them. So, I seem to be in good company.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{24} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 10. Irving had been given a one-year scholarship. He lost his scholarship after failing his mathematics examination, a failure for which he blames his professor, a "known communist".


\textsuperscript{26} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 10.

\textsuperscript{27} The Adelaide Advertiser, 28 September 1996, p.20.

\textsuperscript{28} ibid., p. 20.

\textsuperscript{29} ibid., p.20. It is interesting to note that in self-defence about his lack of professional qualifications, Irving explained that at the time he "buckled under the workload", and dropped out of university because "the money ran out".
However, Irving laid great stress on the fact that the catalogue of his work demonstrated that he had since become a reputable historian:

As an independent historian, I am proud that I cannot be threatened with the loss of my job, or my pension, or my future. Other historians around the world sneer and write letters to the newspapers about "David Irving, the so-called historian", and they demand, "Why does he call himself a Historian anyway? Where did he study History? Where did he get his Degree? What, no degree in History, then why does he call himself a Historian? Did he get a degree in some university?" And yet we unashamedly call them historians...we call them historians because they wrote history which had done (recte: gone) down the ages as accepted true history.  

When his formal education effectively ended in 1959, Irving travelled to Germany's industrial Ruhr to spend a year in the August Thyssen steel works, ostensibly to perfect his fluency in German. But like so many aspects of his career we cannot be entirely sure why he went to this proletarian life in a foreign country. One reason Irving gave was that he lacked economic opportunities in Britain. More likely he was running away from his restrictive home environment, like many young men. Irving also felt an urge to escape, to travel and learn about a wider world. In Germany, however, just before his twenty-first birthday, there followed two desolate and desperate years. On the other hand, his relative poverty and isolation in Germany were, contradictorily perhaps, not as unrelenting as he would later claim. Over this period he held a succession of jobs. Irving's fellow steelworkers at Thyssen added a rough-hewn fluency to his high school German. One of them, a native of Dresden, gave him the subject of his first book. The man had lived

---

through the Allied fire-bombing of the city in February 1945; his harrowing account of the raid came as a revelation to Irving, who set to work interviewing survivors and combing through German and Allied archival material.\textsuperscript{32}

The resulting book \textit{The Destruction of Dresden}, published in 1963, was Irving's first major work and the book was an immediate best seller. The book's gruesome photographs of German civilians burying their dead ensured maximum press attention for his claim that the bombing raids had killed 135,000 people, an inflated figure that was more than twice the official estimates. Irving triumphantly told the media:

\begin{quote}
I imported Dresden into the vocabulary of horror. People now say 'Dresden' in the same breath as they say 'Auschwitz' and 'Hiroshima'. That's my small contribution to the vernacular.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

At the time, however, \textit{The Destruction of Dresden} was important to Irving for other reasons; the book's financial success allowed him to abandon efforts to complete his university degree. It also set him on a course of writing two more books: a history of the German rocket programme and a biography of Adolf Hitler.

While in Germany, Irving became interested in extreme right politics.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, it was apparent that, like Hitler in Vienna many years earlier, he was restless and lacked the will or capacity to hold down a regular job.

\textsuperscript{31} Guttenplan, \textit{The Holocaust on Trial}, op. cit., p. 42. Having been rejected by the Royal Air Force on medical grounds, Irving was also denied a job with Krupp Steel. However, Krupp's rival, Thyssen, offered Irving a year's work.

\textsuperscript{32} Guttenplan, \textit{Atlantic Monthly}, op. cit., p. 11.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{ibid.}, p. 12. Irving would sometimes make direct comparisons between Dresden and Auschwitz in relation to the numbers of people killed.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{ibid.}, p. 10. In this period Irving reportedly became fascinated with Oswald Mosley, the former head of the British Union of Fascists, who was running for parliament. See also \textit{The Holocaust on Trial}, op. cit., p. 41. In this recent book Guttenplan reported that at a rally for Oswald Mosley, the former head of the British Union of Fascists, who
His sojourns in Germany and later in Spain produced advantages for Irving in that he can speak and write fluent German and has a very good command of the Spanish language, as well as the ability to read other languages. Irving also practised public speaking, having exhibited those talents at college in his student days.

After a stint working as a clerk-stenographer with the US Strategic Air Command at an airbase near Madrid, he returned to England to further his career and to consolidate his new marriage.

Irving had married a Spanish girl named Pilar in Madrid in the early 1960s, just before returning to England and planning to resume his formal studies. Unfortunately the marriage of twenty years was never harmonious. The couple eventually divorced in the early 1980s, having produced four daughters: Josephine, Pilar, Paloma and Beatrice. None of Irving's daughters have been emotionally close to him. Now in their early thirties, all four have led separate lives and shunned any association with their father. Beatrice, a graphic designer, who was in Australia in 1992, had not even given her father her new address. Pilar, an artist, said: "My views and my family's views are totally

---

the British Union of Fascists, who was running for parliament, Irving found himself "entranced by the techniques and mechanisms of street politics".


36 Guttenplan, The Holocaust on Trial, op. cit., p. 42. Guttenplan mentioned that Irving, after securing a placement at University College, supported himself by working as a nightwatchman on the site of the Commonwealth Institute.

37 For some reason best known to himself, Irving has never disclosed the year of his first marriage, and has always been reticent about the circumstances of their subsequent divorce. Nor did he disclose the surname of his wife.

38 V. Orvice, op. cit., p. 38. Irving stated: "One reason my marriage lasted twenty years was that in every dispute, my wife allowed me to be right. No doubt she gnashed her teeth but she very rapidly learned that the simplest course was to yield".

39 Beatrice married an Australian and remained in Western Australia. In 1993, David Irving unsuccessfully sought sponsorship from his daughter in relation to his intended tour of Australia. He had also intended to visit his daughter and her husband.
opposed to his and anyone who reads what he says I find totally laughable". She described her father as "tyrannical" and remembered even in childhood his "extreme male chauvinism". Now working in an advertising agency, Paloma has retained the name of her divorced husband. When she married, she did not invite her father to the wedding, and commented: "I am completely opposed to his beliefs". Josephine, his eldest daughter residing in a flat in Covent Garden, suffered from schizophrenia and was involved in a severe accident in 1996 in which her legs were crushed so badly that one, and later the other, had to be amputated. Recently Josephine committed suicide.

David Irving's recorded views about his four daughters in their teenage years are instructive. These reflect a mixture of pride and exasperation:

I have four daughters, all very different. The eldest is permanently ill. She has a great problem but she is combating it with great heroism. The second is an art student, which of course is a difficult choice in life. I warned her that my mother had great difficulties in bringing us up purely through her abilities with her brush and palette. But my second daughter has chosen to do that. My third and fourth daughters are more business inclined.

---

40 Orvice, op. cit., p. 38.
41 ibid., p. 38
42 ibid, p. 38.
43 ibid., p.38.
44 It was mentioned in an on-line The Guardian article on 15 January 2000 that Josephine recently died. The article was unclear about the cause of death. Guttenplan, in the Holocaust On Trial, op. cit., p. 49, confirmed this information. Guttenplan cites Irving as relating how Josephine had committed suicide by "throwing herself out of a fourth floor window".
45 R. Manne, 'Tears for David Irving', The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 February 2000, p. 17. Professor Manne wrote that Josephine had died, having been retarded since her fearful motor accident in 1996. He has an anecdote about Josephine's funeral; Irving told a London court during the recent libel case that someone had sent him an expensive wreath after his daughter's death. It was signed "Philip Bouhler", the architect of the Nazi "euthanasia" programme for killing the mentally retarded and ill. There was some suggestion that Irving may have been responsible for this information himself.
and very money-oriented. The third is called Paloma, and I say that stands for 'Please, a Lot of Money at Once' [sic].

When questioned in 1989 as to whether his single-mindedness had destroyed his marriage, Irving refrained from taking responsibility for the failed relationship. Deborah Lipstadt reports that during an interview with the British newspaper The Daily Telegraph in June 1992, Irving had related that his "one mistake in life was getting married", revealing that as far as he was concerned, "marriage was a detour, something Hitler understood". The reasons he stated for the failure of his marriage shed light on other neuroses entertained by David Irving: his disdain for members of the legal profession and misogyny:

I did not destroy that marriage. Two factors did. I think the legal profession did and I think Mrs Irving destroyed it by her single-minded determination not to find outside interests. The children became her sole interests and this is devastating to a marriage. A woman has to find outside interests, not necessarily an outside man. But rather an outside career, outside friends, hobbies, women's institutes. Whatever it is, it has to be something different from just the family, otherwise it becomes introverted.

Never known to relinquish emotional control in any public interview, Irving attempted to deal with a question as to whether he missed his wife since the divorce:

I miss family life, but then family life there never was. When I was brought up family life revolved around the family table and Sunday lunch. The Spanish do not do that. This was a big mistake. I didn't realise this. The Spanish, rather like the Americans, drift in and out.

In the midst of his acrimonious divorce, in 1983 everything seemed to be collapsing around Irving. On the one hand Inland Revenue was

46 Bishop, op. cit., p. 20.
48 Bishop, op. cit., p. 19.
pursuing him: his material possessions, including a Rolls Royce motor car, were forfeited. Due to a lack of income from his writings, large fines and court costs were beginning to accumulate. Irving's political activities had also collapsed due to a lack of funds. He was on the point of being evicted from his Mayfair flat. Most of the furniture had been taken by his wife. Entire rooms were left stripped and abandoned while he was reduced to "squatting in one corner".50

Irving remained confident that his fortunes would improve and worked constantly to bring this about. At this time the sensational Hitler diary hoax was about to break. Irving considered that an opportunity for publicity might serve him well. The controversy was to dominate the Western European press for some time. On 1 April 1983 the distinguished British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper received a telephone call from the Assistant Editor of The Times, Mr. Colin Webb. His call concerned a discovery of great historical significance; the German magazine Stern had discovered the private diaries of Adolf Hitler51. Mr Webb requested Professor Trevor-Roper, as an authority on the period, to fly to Zurich immediately to authenticate the diaries. Professor Trevor-Roper agreed, thereby setting in motion a furore of media speculation about the veracity of these documents. After much equivocation, Trevor-Roper eventually declared the diaries to be true documents.

At the height of the public controversy Irving played a leading part in declining to validate the diaries. Being in desperate need of both money

50 ibid., p. 19.
and a boost for his flagging career, the Hitler diary affair afforded Irving resurgence in personal fortune.\textsuperscript{52} Seeing their circulations threatened after the diaries were declared a hoax, newspapers and magazines, which would have regarded him as a pariah twenty four hours earlier, eagerly solicited Irving for interviews and quotations.\textsuperscript{53}

Irving did not disappoint them. He gave the media fresh injections of publicity. Having always relished his role as a public \textit{enfant terrible}, David Irving increasingly relished being outrageous, "making liberal flesh creep".\textsuperscript{54} Now, however, for the first time because of the Hitler diaries issue, Irving's stand and his declaration that the diaries were fakes had placed him on the side of conventional opinion. This made him uncomfortable, but also more marketable and publicly acceptable.

Irving set about re-focusing his personal and professional goals, a process which reflected his determination to resume control of his destiny. Asked in 1989 what his plans were for his future, Irving replied:

\begin{quote}
Yes, even at my advanced age, I am going to start all over again. I'll find a suitable vehicle and it's going to be all boys in future. No more daughters. Having drawn four times a double zero, my luck is bound to turn. I am convinced of this. [ I want boys], because boys fulfil a useful function. They advance the cause of science, whereas women don't.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

By 1993, Irving was telling the British press and all who would listen that he was about to start a new family, courting much younger women for that purpose.\textsuperscript{56} The search to find a suitable partner ended in March

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., pp. 15-16.  
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 188.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., pp. 305-307. This source is especially for a dissertation about the Hitler diaries fiasco and Irving's role in the debacle.  
\textsuperscript{54} C. Hitchens, 'In Defence of Irving's Revisionism', \textit{Vanity Fair}, June 1996, p. 64.  
\textsuperscript{55} Bishop, op. cit., p. 21.  
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Searchlight}, September 1993, p. 13.
1992. Irving asked friends to help him rent out some spare rooms when two young Danish women, Bente Hogh and Birgit Biher moved in.\(^{57}\)

Irving commenced a relationship with the then twenty-three years old Bente, the daughter of a Danish dentist,\(^{58}\) who presented him with his fifth daughter Jessica, on 5 December 1993.\(^{59}\) In a 1996 interview with Nicholas Farrell of The Spectator, Bente Hogh described some of Irving's character traits. In reply to questions about her attitude to Irving and their relationship, she intimated:

\`(Why did she fall for him?)..."It's very common for nice women to be attracted to bad men"... (Arguments about politics)...."Let's just say we agree to disagree"...(Did she think the father of her child was evil?)...He definitely has an evil streak in him and is a bit of a split personality... No day is the same... He has all these different moods... The other day I gave him a cup of coffee (he likes his coffee pre-heated in boiling water) and he just threw everything into the sink... His beer mug must be served in a frosted glass... David does not like to do anything domestic... He thinks that should be entirely up to the woman... Occasionally he comes and takes the Hoover from me to show me how to work it... When you stick stamps on an envelope they must be completely straight... He likes silly American films. The more people object to David, the more he will carry on... He loves controversy... He loves to see his name in the headlines.\(^{60}\)

The legacy of his life experiences, including his emotional turmoil following the failure of his first marriage, prompted Irving to express some extremely negative views about women:

Women are basically the potato fields waiting to have potatoes planted in them. I have always said that women have only ninety percent capacity of the male brain. So they [women] struggle under this awful biological defect. You can say their brain is a

\(^{57}\) N. Farrell, 'Sleeping With the Enemy', The Spectator, 27 April 1996.

\(^{58}\) See Ms Hogh's interview with P. Ellingsen, in The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 June 1996, in which she disclosed that her involvement with Irving had a dramatic effect on her family, who live in Aarhus, Denmark. Her father, her mother and two sisters have all refused to meet Irving.

\(^{59}\) Orvice, op. cit., p. 38. It appears from this article that Irving's partner, Danish-born Bente Hogh, does not mind that his Mayfair flat is adorned with Hitler memorabilia and a photograph of his ex-wife Pilar, which looks down on the bed.

\(^{60}\) N. Farrell, op. cit.
marvellous miniaturisation on the one hand or on the other you can say: 'what ten percent is missing?' You can try and define what functions the female brain lacks and you can say basic qualities. Women lack the male talents of punctuality and tidiness and the ability to compose and invent design.  

In a recent newspaper interview, Irving described women as "mental chewing gum in that they never produce anything useful". He also claimed that women were created only for "decoration or child bearing". In another interview he opined that the "deviousness of women should not be underestimated". Irving's misogyny was evident during a public lecture in Vancouver on 12 November 1992, which happened to be filmed. Before proceedings resumed Irving remarked to a woman who was setting up a camera: "We now have women presenting the news on BBC. They should leave the serious things to men".

From a young age Irving had a deep and abiding faith in his own destiny, a conviction that if he cultivated like-minded people outside the political establishment, the day would come when he would be recognised as a "leader of vision which the nation so desperately needs". Irving was highly ambitious. His character formation mirrored his perceived sense of destiny in becoming a great author,

---

61 Bishop, op. cit., p. 21.
62 Orvice, op. cit., p. 38.
64 M. McDonald, The Sunday Age (Melbourne), 25 May 1997, p. 5, in an interview with McDonald Irving also revealed: "I am surrounded by women. I have five daughters and there is no doubt the female is more vicious than the male".
67 Searchlight, March 1981, p.9. This publication reported that Irving in 1981 told an interviewer from Newsnight that his life was "running to timetable, but it is very important to keep one's timetable concealed".
historian or politician. When asked in February 1978 about his plans for
the future, Irving replied:

I have distinct ambitions that are in the steel drawers [of those
files there]. All mapped out and planned. I mapped it out
eighteen years ago. I'm about a third of the way there.68

It is revealing to reflect on Irving's own assessment of the way in
which he would like to be remembered:

It is a question of being able to live with myself. I want people,
one or two hundred years from now, to go into their libraries and
pull down a book from the shelf and say that it was not until 1977
that an English author began to find out what really happened
between 1939 and 1945. I want to be that person. It is the need
for a position in posterity. That is what I am steering towards. It is
a glittering star, which is constantly shifting, but you are steering
towards. You hope that when it is all over, your family will say:
'look at these books my father wrote'.69

Ever since Irving commenced to write his historical works more than
three decades ago, his financial security has been of pressing concern
to him. To be sure, the author has managed to live quite well from the
proceeds of his earlier books.70 According to Irving, his biography of
Rommel earned him a remarkable sum of $955,000 worldwide, which
included hardback sales of 65,000 in Germany.71 Professor Cameron
Watt of the London School of Economics stated that publishing in
Germany has been "the key to enormous financial advantages" for
Irving. He has estimated that Irving's book sales have been "quite
respectable" over the years and maintains that:

International sale of his books is crucial to Irving. He'll make a
certain amount in the United States, where someone will publish,

68 ibid., p. 9.
69 Bishop, op. cit., p. 18.
70 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 26. Guttenplan reported that Irving's income once amounted
to £100, 000 a year.
11.
and he makes a tremendous amount of money out of foreign language publications in countries where they are less particular.\textsuperscript{72}

In one respect, Irving's sources of finance were under threat from the time he took his extreme Holocaust denial position in the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{73} Since 1993 he has been banned from Germany, where he spoke and researched extensively. He has also been denied entry into Canada and banned in Austria, Australia and New Zealand. His involvement in the Holocaust denial controversy has threatened a lucrative market\textsuperscript{74} for him in the United States, to the degree that his lecture tours and talk show appearances there are much less frequent and less prestigious.\textsuperscript{75} In contrast, Irving once commanded U.S.$4,000 for each public address.\textsuperscript{76} More recently he apparently lectures for free, taking great care to promote his books for sale on these occasions.

The perception of Irving’s relative financial vulnerability in the last decade has been strengthened by the fact that in 1995, his American lecture circuit involved 36,000 kilometres of driving to espouse his views to small audiences. These lecture tours were augmented by strenuous personal efforts to sell his self-published books, which he physically carried about in a hire car.\textsuperscript{77} His last German appearances were rabble-rousing speeches to extreme right groups. In Britain, his "revisionist

\textsuperscript{72} ibid., p. 11.
\textsuperscript{73} Hitchens, op. cit., p. 65.
\textsuperscript{74} O’Neill, op. cit., p. 11. According to this article, Irving was quoted as being "too ill" to fight when St. Martins, the American Publishers of his Goebbels biography, dropped him after a campaign by Jewish community groups. Suddenly, one of his most lucrative markets seemed closed. Irving admitted it placed his finances on "knife-edge". Thus Irving is removed from his largest markets and increasingly reliant upon self-publishing and donations from the extreme right.
\textsuperscript{75} ibid, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{76} ibid., p. 11.
\textsuperscript{77} Guttenplan, op. cit., 23.
seminars" are now infrequent, harassed by demonstrators and protected by "security guards" from neo-Nazi groups. 78 Despite his self-publishing income, Irving admitted he could not survive without donations from the "David Irving Fighting Fund", a group of some 3000 sympathisers. 79 Professor Watt wrote:

Irving has finally dug his own grave. His damnable views on the Holocaust reach only those who want to hear him, and his better works are regarded as tainted. It's a pity that part of his mind seems permanently contaminated. 80

Quite apart from his precarious financial circumstances, however, the evidence suggests that Irving is a landowner of considerable means. In 1997 his property portfolio reputedly included the flat in which he resides at 11 Duke Street, Mayfair, London. This very upmarket address Irving estimates to be worth £500,000 but costs him a reputed £76,000 per year to maintain. 81 Research undertaken by Kapel 82 into Irving's financial liabilities explains why Irving may well be near destitute. 83

Among other debts registered against him, Irving appears to have a mortgage registered over his Duke Street, Mayfair property in favour of one Bradford and Bingley Building Society and the Order Nisi of the

---

78 Searchlight, October 1992, p. 3.
79 See Fighting Fund, a David Irving circulating letter dated 8 December 1995, in which Irving informs his grateful benefactors: "Thank you for all you are doing. It is now exactly three years since this extraordinary fight for my survival as an historian began with my arrest and incarceration in Vancouver, at the behest, as it has since turned out, of the truth's traditional enemy [read: the Jews]. This is the time of year when I write to my closest supporters around the world to render a private report on how I have used the time and the means which you have steadfastly and generously provided me..."
80 ibid., p. 11.
81 ibid., p. 11.
83 Guttenplan, op. cit., pp. 283-84. It is understood from the findings of the 2000 London libel trial, which Irving lost, that he will probably be required to pay the
High Court in favour of Simon and Schuster Publishers as well as a further charge in favour of Alan G. Kent. Then there is the Grosvenor Estate, which sued Irving for £8,000 in service charges for the property. In 1997, a further £50,000 was listed in unpaid accounts. In 1996 the British High Court jailed Irving after he refused to pay an outstanding account to a creditor.

Various authors have noted that Irving, contrary to his stated dedication to free speech, has behaved in an extremely litigious manner during the preceding three decades of his public activities. Several mainly unsuccessful court actions and imposed, though unpaid, fines explain why the author has contributed to his own plight. These included fines totaling £1726.71 and £1633.33 in Westminster Court, Shoreditch Court for £175,56, Westminster Court again for £1633.33, Uxbridge Court in 1993 for £48,46, Reading Court for £402,72 and £306.44, Central London Court in 1993 for £985.32, Bloomsbury Court in 1988 for £273.67, Horsham Court in 1993 for £478.44 and Westminster Court again in 1992 for £5337.21. These debts do not include many large outstanding international fines incurred by Irving for proselytising about the Holocaust. (See chapter 4).

The outcome of his libel trial in April 2000 exacerbated Irving’s financial situation immeasurably, for he had lost his case and costs were awarded against him. The defence had proved its case and

rumoured three million dollar costs. If this is reliable information, then Irving may well face bankruptcy.

84 Ibid., p. 4.
85 Ibid., p. 4.
86 Ibid., p. 4.
87 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 283.
Irving's libel action was rejected. Immediately after the verdict Irving rose to tell Judge Gray that he intended to appeal.88 He had failed to clear himself on the nineteen cases of alleged falsification.89 Mr. Justice Gray pointed out that an appeal would be allowed only on a point of law and rejected Irving's appeal application, determining that Irving would have to apply for leave to appeal from the Court of Appeal itself.90 However, Irving's application was rejected some months later by the Court of Appeal.91

Back at his Mayfair flat, Irving confronted the prospect of a bill for more than £2 million in costs, should the trial court determine that he must pay it. Did Irving have the funds to pay defence costs? He claimed in court that he was receiving about £2000 a day from his supporters during the trial. One supporter, Irving reported, had handed him $A50,000 in cash in a brown paper bag at Amsterdam airport.92 Most of his supporters, he said, were from the United States, and four thousand or five thousand people had sent him money by the end of the trial, by which time he claimed to have half a million dollars in his 'fighting fund'.93 Yet Irving's Mayfair flat was apparently mortgaged five times over and he "earned little" from his own writings and speeches. Indeed, according to The Guardian, "Irving's only real earnings of late have been in the courts." Such windfalls included an estimated £75,000 paid

89 Evans, op. cit., p. 228. Irving complained to the press that Mr. Justice Gray had failed to understand him.
90 ibid., p. 228.
91 ibid., p. 229. However, a subsequent David Irving Action Report made mention of an intended appeal for 8 June 2001. All attempts to shed light on this are futile.
93 Dodd., op. cit., p.1.
to him out of court by *The Sunday Times* in 1994 as compensation for the newspaper's dropping the Goebbels's diaries serialisation.\(^{94}\) Having overcome much personal and professional adversity in the early 1980s, Irving had seen his fortunes and reputation revived in 1992 by the London tabloid newspaper *The Sunday Times*.\(^{95}\) This newspaper, as we shall discuss in more detail in chapter three, hired the author to translate and serialise the newly discovered Goebbels diaries,\(^{96}\) which had reposéd in a Moscow archive. A full version on glass microfiche plates had been discovered in the former KGB Special Archive in Moscow in early 1992.\(^{97}\) It was assumed the diaries would shed light on the conduct of the Final Solution. *The Sunday Times* paid Irving a significant sum of money, plus a percentage of the syndication fees. Having been given permission to copy two microfiche plates, Irving was later alleged to have violated the agreement by removing a number of microfiche plates.\(^{98}\)

Ten years on another source put his current monthly income from the sale of his books at around $10,000.\(^{99}\) All that Irving achieved by boasting about the scale of his financial backing was to prompt

\(^{94}\) P. Gibbons, 'Author with No Publisher and Few Funds Landed with £2.5m Bill', *The Guardian* (Early Edition) 12 April 2000, p. 5. Glover relates how Irving, unrepentant in his antisemitism, borrowed a phrase from Shakespeare's portrayal of Shylock, the Jewish villain of *The Merchant of Venice*, in the face of the defence's intention of recovering costs: "Undoubtedly they will come for their pound of flesh, but will find I'm made of British beef. I've always suspected they were into money and gold, with a capital G".


\(^{97}\) Evans, op. cit., p. 53.

\(^{98}\) Miele, op. cit., pp. 58-70. The matter of whether Irving had behaved in an unprofessional manner later became an issue in Irving's libel trial in London, and is discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

Penguin's lawyers into obtaining an interim court order requiring him to pay the first £150,000 of the libel defence costs.

The outcome of the libel trial left David Irving unrepentant. Speaking to journalists after the event, he immediately called the judgment "indescribable" and "perverse." He hinted that it was predictable because the judge was "an up-and-coming member of the establishment." Invoking his familiar conspiracy theories, Irving announced that he had been defeated by the closed ranks of an all-powerful 'Establishment.' He had "over-estimated the judge's ability to grasp the intricacies of the German documents." Throughout the trial and long afterwards, Irving continually claimed on his website that the defence was being bankrolled by Jews, both wealthy individuals and organised groups, across the world. There was no secret about the fact that the bulk of the funds came from Penguin Books Ltd., and Penguin's insurers. "Despite Irving's assertions to the contrary," noted Mark Bateman, Penguin solicitor, "it was Penguin that paid the fees of the experts, leading counsel, junior counsel, and my firm." Irving's attempts to brand the defence experts as corrupt tools of a monied Jewish conspiracy went largely unchallenged in his post-trial

---

100 Dodd, op. cit., p. 1.
103 This reflected Irving's propensity to blame "organised international Jewry" for his misfortunes. In the past he would frequently refer to his opponents as "our traditional enemies of the truth."
104 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 284.
105 M. Bateman, 'Why It Was Worth Taking On Irving', The Times, 18 April 2000, p. 11.
radio and television interviews. These were so numerous that the Board of British Jews lodged an official complaint with the BBC.\textsuperscript{106} Irving, nonetheless, tried to rescue some self-respect from the trial debacle. His boast that he had achieved his goals because he had stood alone against a battery of thirty witnesses. This met with general scepticism.\textsuperscript{107} Irving characteristically thought he could make capital out of his media appearances after the verdict:

\textit{I do ITN, Australian ABC live, Today, Radio 4, Radio 5...BBC World TV...Breakfast TV...Newsnight...The phone rings all morning every thirty seconds...BBC Radio 3...Italian radio...Los Angeles Radio...Radio Teheran phones for an interview...How very satisfying it has all been.}\textsuperscript{108}

Thus a week after the verdict, Irving claimed "I have managed to win, because two days after the judgment, name recognition becomes enormous, and gradually the plus or minus in front of the name fades".\textsuperscript{109}

One of the few commentators who agreed with Irving's assessment of the defence's triumph as a Pyrrhic victory was journalist Andrew Roberts. According to Roberts the trial had brought Irving's views to the attention of a worldwide audience:

\textit{The free publicity that this trial has generated for him [Irving] and his views has been worth far more than could ever have been brought for the amount of the costs.}\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{106}Evans, op. cit., p. 232.
\textsuperscript{107}Irving conducted his own case, without any assistance from solicitors and barristers.
\textsuperscript{108}D. Irving, 'A Radical's Diary', 11-17 April 2000, \url{http://www.fpp.co.uk}.
\textsuperscript{109}Glover, op. cit., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{110}A. Roberts, 'Irving's Greatest Triumph', \textit{The Sunday Telegraph}, 16 April, 2000, p. 32.
Roberts argued that it was Irving, rather than Lipstadt who was being interviewed on virtually every television channel: therefore the law had enabled him propagate "his repulsive message."\textsuperscript{111}

Nevertheless, Irving's boast that even if he had lost the courtroom battle he had won the media war was incorrect.\textsuperscript{112} Reports about him in the press were overwhelmingly critical. Stories on the verdict outnumbered those printed during the trial by a factor of three to one.\textsuperscript{113}

The post-trial debate about the implications of David Irving's defeat is beginning to emerge: whatever future assessments of Irving, the evidence from the trial suggests that his reputation has been significantly tarnished.\textsuperscript{114} Moreover, in the trial court context Irving conducted himself with less standing than might be expected from a public figure of his calibre.\textsuperscript{115}

What were David Irving's personal and political aspirations? How were these a function of his evolution as a historical writer? When asked in 1959 by the London newspaper, the \textit{Daily Mail}, about his political views, the young Irving responded:

\begin{quote}
I belong to no political party... You can call me a mild fascist if you like. I have just come back from Franco's Madrid. I returned through Germany and visited Hitler's eyrie at Berchtesgaden. I regard it as a shrine.\textsuperscript{116}
\end{quote}

Soon, his comments to the British press began to proliferate, reflecting the germination of Irving's personal and political development.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{111} ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{112} Evans, op. cit., p. 236. Professor Evans commented: "Irving might have cruised the airwaves with virtual impunity in the first flush of defeat, but over the long haul, his prospects of continuing but neutralised media fame did not look good."
\textsuperscript{113} ibid., p. 235.
\textsuperscript{114} ibid., p. 236.
\end{flushleft}
One aspect of Irving’s growing personal awareness was that in many ways, as he perceived it, there were parallels between Hitler’s life and career and his own aspirations to power. For instance, in the introduction of his first major book *Hitler’s War* in 1977, Irving declared that he sought to write the book about Hitler’s role in the Second World War from the Führer’s perspective.\(^{117}\) Irving reflected often about the coincidence of being in significant measure a reincarnation of the German Führer.\(^{118}\)

This delusion explains a great deal about David Irving. He certainly represented himself in his writings and speeches as a man who had discovered ‘the truth’ about Hitler and the Nazis, rescuing them from the myths and legends perpetrated by historians. Only he, it seems, had refused to believe what other historians wrote, insisting on going back to original sources instead. Using a metaphor alluding to Hitler’s architectural interests Irving wrote in the introduction to *Hitler’s War* in 1977:

> I saw myself as a stone cleaner, less concerned with architectural appraisal than with scrubbing years of grime and discoloration from the facade of a silent and forbidding monument.\(^ {119}\)

Hitler, Irving argued, had been misrepresented by posterity.\(^ {120}\) This began, the author posed, with the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials where international opinion tried to shift the blame to him. Irving portrayed

---

\(^{115}\) Guttenplan, op. cit., pp. 264-66.
\(^{117}\) Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 161.
\(^{118}\) ibid., p. 161.
\(^{120}\) ibid., p. xvi. Irving believed that “such caricatures have bedevilled the writing of modern history ever since”.
himself as a man who had achieved the feat of demolishing these misconceptions about Hitler, restoring a true picture of Hitler and Nazism by extensive, indefatigable research into primary sources that had relied upon a "scrupulously critical attitude to the documents". In a 1983 lecture on "Contemporary History and Historiography" delivered at the Institute for Historical Review International Revisionist Conference in California, Irving said:

When I wrote my now-famous book *Hitler's War* I tried to write it from behind that man's desk. I spent a very great deal of time assembling documentation which I was certain had passed through his hands: intelligence reports, orders, documents, and so forth. At a secondary level, I had also tried to obtain the private diaries of people who had dealt with him, his private secretaries, colonels, the adjutants, the people who had been on his staff, even people like Governor Hans Frank, Goebbels, Himmler, anybody like that. I spent a very great deal of time doing the research for the book [15 years]. And the result was that I came up with a lot of documents that a lot of these so-called experts [historians]...had not found.121

This led to an unusually positive view of Hitler's aims and career:

Adolf Hitler was a patriot. He tried from start to finish to restore the earlier unity, greatness and splendour of Germany. After he had come to power in 1933, he carried out the programme whose realisation he had promised since 1922: he restored faith in the central government; he rebuilt the German economy; he removed unemployment; he rebuilt the disarmed German armed forces, and then he used his newly-won strength to attain Germany's sovereignty once more, and he became involved in his adventure of winning living-space in the East. He had no kind of evil intentions against Britain and its Empire, quite the opposite...Hitler's foreign policy was led by the wish for secure boundaries and the necessity of an extension to the east...The forces which drove Germany into the war did not sit in Berlin.122

---

121 D. Irving, 'On Contemporary History and Historiography', remarks delivered at the 1983 International Revisionist Conference, California, Published in the Journal of Historical Review, vol. 5, nos. 2,3,4, (auspices of Institute for Historical Review), Internet article CODOHmail@aol.com (downloaded 19 June 1997).
122 Evans, op. cit., pp. 40-41.
The identification of Irving with his subject had not gone unnoticed. Reviewing *Hitler's War* in 1977, Hugh Trevor-Roper found a "consistent bias" in favour of Hitler and against his opponents.\(^{123}\) This was, he thought, in part a consequence of Irving's decision to describe the war from the point of view of Hitler and his cohorts. But it went further than this. Given the nature of the sources, which reflected the standards and assumptions of Hitler's entourage, Trevor-Roper concluded that it was surprising that Hitler's view should prevail in Irving's book: "Mr. Irving's sympathies can hardly be doubted, and in his view they were consistently in favour of Hitler and the Nazis."\(^{124}\)

The British journalist Robert Harris, in his meticulous and often humorous account of the 'Hitler diaries' affair in 1983, concurred in this judgment. Harris' description of *Hitler's War* went further than Trevor-Roper's in pointing to the identification of the author with his subject:

Irving's aim was to rewrite the history of the war "as far as possible through Hitler's eyes, from behind his desk." This made for a gripping book, but one, which was by its nature unbalanced. However "objectively" he might piece together the unpublished recollections of Hitler's subordinates, they were still the words of men and women who admired their ruler. And confined to Hitler's daily routine, the biography had a curiously unreal quality: the death camps, the atrocities, the sufferings of millions of people which were the result of Hitler's war were not to be found in Hitler's War as it was reconstructed by David Irving.\(^{125}\)

Interviewing Irving about the "Hitler diaries," Harris noted, perhaps a little mischievously, that some even more alarming aspects of the identification of author and subject were apparent from the book:

\(^{124}\) ibid.
\(^{125}\) Harris, op. cit., pp. 188-89.
Irving admitted that in writing *Hitler’s War* he had "identified" with the Führer..."I don't drink," he would say, "Adolf didn't drink you know."...He shared Hitler's view of women, believing that they were put on the earth to procreate and provide men with something to look at... "They haven't got the physical capacity to produce something creative."...In 1981, at the age of forty-one, he had founded his own right-wing political group, built around his own belief in his "destiny" as a future British leader. With his black hair slanting across his forehead, and a dark cleft, shadowed like a moustache between the bottom of his nose and the top of his upper lip, there were times, in the right light, when Irving looked alarmingly like the subject of his notorious biography.\(^{126}\)

Harris was perhaps indulging in a little journalistic license here. But the fundamental point he was making about *Hitler’s War* seemed convincing and shared by others as well.\(^{127}\) Irving's book, he contended, aimed to humanise Hitler, to make him, as the book's introduction claimed, "an ordinary, walking, talking human".\(^{128}\)

A seeming contradiction between Irving the personality and Irving the ideologue is that although he has many associates, he also remains a very private person. Irving has lamented publicly that he does not have anyone he can rely on to pass on to posterity a balanced and convincing assessment of his personality and intellect. Outwardly Irving appears to experience a need to posture in his relations with the public, to be “on stage” as it were, acting out the part of the controversial persona he has invented for himself:

I want to shock...[the established historical community]... and prove to have been right. The advantage of doing that if you have found something shocking enough...[is that]... it takes your opponents a long time to recover their equilibrium and do sufficient research to try and prove you wrong. So for a long time you are ahead in the field.\(^{129}\)

---

\(^{126}\) ibid., pp. 188-89.


\(^{128}\) Harris, op. cit., pp. 188-89.

\(^{129}\) Bishop, op. cit., p. 4.
Irving's ability as a communicator has made him an effective propagandist, albeit one whose public statements, writings and comments are often intended to conceal the truth as much as to reveal it. With the passage of time, many obscurities about David Irving's life and works are becoming more discernible and the ongoing controversies about him less charged, but there is still ample ground for disagreement about his excesses and contradictions.

In short, Irving is a complex, ambitious personality. He has been successful in establishing a reputation as a prodigious and sometimes controversial writer of books about the Second World War. Some critics have suggested that if Irving's popular histories were intended as entertainment rather than interpretation of what really happened, his writings would not merit serious consideration. Many of his books, *Hitler's War* in particular, have clear-cut and not at all hidden ideological agendas. Why is it that Irving goes to great lengths to downplay the Holocaust's historical significance? As an author of historical books, what caused David Irving to deviate from conventional historiography? The following chapter examines some of these questions concerning David Irving's role as an historian.

---

130 ibid., cit., 4.
CHAPTER THREE

IRVING AS HISTORIAN

"The Holocaust of the Jews in Auschwitz is without basis. The gas chambers were erected in Poland for tourists."

David Irving¹

In a relaxed mood during an interview in 1989 with South African broadcaster John Bishop, David Irving spoke about his approach to writing. His reactions to the problems and complexities of authorship were particularly revealing:

When I sat down in 1961 or 1962 to write my first book, I did not know how to write a book, so I took a book by a man called Correlli Barnett entitled The Desert Generals. I looked at his chapters, how long the chapters were, what tense they were written in, how long the paragraphs were, and I modelled my first book, The Destruction of Dresden² entirely on his book. The way I write a book is not to start at page one. I write it in handwriting and I start with whatever episode in the man's life intrigues me most. Having then written a whole sheaf of episodes in handwriting and clipping them or gluing them together, I then shuffled them to get the maximum sense of drama. When you have got the reader's attention, then you can come to a new context which is less gripping, some economic problem or something, carry the reader through that and have him barely reaching the far shore, struggling and grasping for new life, and then you put in another drama, but you write in whatever

---

¹ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 20 February 1990. These were Irving's words spoken at a public address in a Munich beer cellar.
² K. Phillips, The Adelaide Advertiser, 28 September 1996, pp. 19-20. Karen Phillips reported that at the time of the Dresden publication, this event coincided with Irving dropping out of formal education. Irving had commented: "But it didn't matter; by that time I was a best-selling author".
sequences amuses you first because after six months, that way you end up having a heap of thousand pages and you know you have your book. Then you go back, put it in sequence, you re-type it, you type it again, but never on a word processor. I tried using word processors for the last fifteen years and they nearly bankrupted me. They slowed me down enormously. They produced turgid, overweight books, undigested nothing...  

Further indications about the nature of Irving's literary bent and politics can be gleaned from his very earliest writing in two student magazines at the Imperial College, London, where he was an aspiring student. The first was called Phoenix, edited by the then twenty year old Irving over a short period in 1958. In an editorial called "Ignorance is Bliss", Irving argued:

Available education should be concentrated on providing a super education for the intelligentsia, with a purposeful, yet near-illiteracy for the masses.  

Already elitist in orientation, Irving believed that "the proletariat could not be educated completely, and therefore should not be educated at all".  

Irving's second foray into journalism occurred in 1959 when he took over editorship of a student magazine styled Carnival Times. Irving produced a supplement containing articles in defence of apartheid. He wrote: "seldom has there been a concept so confused, a cause so lost,

---

5 ibid., p. 7.
as that of racial integration." Commenting on the rights and wrongs of the Second World War Irving declared:

Great Britain has often been in the wrong. Somehow we found ourselves lined up with the Bolsheviks in a fight against the first great unifying force Europe has known in six hundred years, and we barely scraped a victory.⁷

Praising the British fascist leader Oswald Mosley's vision of "a strong European working union working for peace",⁸ Irving attempted to persuade his student readers to adopt his views.

At an early age Irving tried to convince the student association at his university to allow him to assemble the next edition of Carnival Times.⁹ Having reassured his fellow students that he would try his best as its editor, he produced a number of advertisements that would help finance the production of the paper. Characteristically, he demanded a free hand in printing a thousand copies of the journal. According to Searchlight,¹⁰ on the eve of publication in May 1959 the student officers of Imperial College were shocked to discover, hidden away at the printers, numbers of pages to be inserted into the magazine that praised Hitler and the Third Reich.¹¹ Attacks on both Jews and black people were contained in the lines of the material written by the young

---

⁶ ibid., p. 7.
⁷ Searchlight, September 1984, p. 12. Shortly after having made this statement, Irving was quoted by The Daily Mail of 1 May 1959 as stating "You can call me a mild fascist if you like".
⁸ ibid., p. 7.
⁹ Bishop, op. cit., p. 20.
¹⁰ Searchlight is a British anti-fascist journal.
¹¹ Searchlight, August 1977, p. 3.
aspiring author, with quotes from Mosley's paper Action\textsuperscript{12} and the obscure publication Combat, the journal of the then tiny extreme right British National Party.\textsuperscript{13} Irving was sacked by his fellow students.


The purpose of this chapter is to examine Irving's major books and analyse his position as an historian. How might we evaluate the significance of Irving's books within a broader historiographical context?

David Irving wrote for people who interest themselves in the Second World War. While controversy about the author's works continues, his contribution to the history of the Second World War has been acknowledged as significant, even by his detractors.\textsuperscript{15} Supporters have lauded Irving's detailed knowledge of a large body of historical material. When evaluating the author's contribution to historical writing, there are two important questions. The first is, what are the boundaries of legitimate disagreement among historians? The second is, how far do

\textsuperscript{12} ibid., p.3.
\textsuperscript{13} In later years the fascist British National Party became part of the National Front.
\textsuperscript{14} Although Irving has written more than thirty books, the books mentioned here represent his major works.
historians’ interpretations depend on selective reading of the evidence, and where does selectivity fade into bias? Both questions are linked. It is in these areas that doubts have arisen about Irving’s scholarship. Here it will be argued that if we mean by historian someone who is concerned to discover the truth about the past, and to give as accurate a representation of it as possible, then Irving is not a historian. If we see his contribution in this light, Irving’s books reveal that he is essentially an ideologue who uses history for his own purposes.¹⁶

Of Irving’s writings, there are three works that merit greater analysis; they are The Destruction of Dresden, The Destruction of Convoy PQ 17 and Hitler’s War. Destruction of Dresden established Irving’s reputation and was his most successful in sales terms.¹⁷ Convoy PQ17 is important in that it resulted in a libel action involving historical misrepresentation. The case was lost by Irving. Hitler’s War is perhaps Irving’s major work in which the author portrays Hitler in a partisan manner, absolving the German leader from complicity in the extermination of the European Jews. The book, especially the later editions, also deals with Irving’s denial of the gassing of Jews.

Throughout his writing career Irving frequently experienced financial difficulties, perhaps because of his right wing orientation. For example,

¹⁷ ibid., p. 149.
during the 1960s, 1970s, and the early 1980s, Irving's books were published by a variety of mainstream publishing houses, including Macmillan, Ullstein, Unwin Hyman, Houghton & Stoughton and Harper Collins. Irving was skillful in uncovering important archival information about the Second World War.\textsuperscript{18} For this reason alone his works remain significant and readable.

Since the mid-1980s Irving ceased to be published by the major publishing houses, forcing him to bring out his later books under his own imprint \textit{Focal Point}.\textsuperscript{19} In 1986 Irving commented perhaps rather ruefully:

\begin{quote}
If I write a bad book, or if I write two or three bad books, with boobs in it which the newspapers pick out, which I'm ashamed to admit are probably right, then of course the time comes when publishers turn their backs on me.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

Irving's subsequent commitment to Holocaust denial may well have been responsible for his diminished reputation; there is ample evidence

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Evans, op. cit., p. 235. Professor Evans described an analysis of 55 newspaper articles published in Britain about Irving from 12 to 17 April 2000, at the time of the outcome of his London trial. The survey revealed that fewer than 15 of these articles had described Irving as a gifted researcher, 40 had emphasised his activities as a Holocaust denier, 37 had stressed the fact that he was a racist, and 35 had declared that he had falsified history.
\item \textsuperscript{19} J. Heilbrunn, 'A Nazi Spin On History', in \textit{The Weekend Australian}, 12 October 1996, pp. 1-3. Irving's first recorded experience of tampering with evidence occurred early in his career. To Irving's chagrin, his publisher Andre Deutsch was sued for bringing out a play by Roland Hochhuth which was based on Irving's sensational account of the death of wartime leader General Sikorsky. Irving eventually admitted that he had "misread" a crucial document.
\item \textsuperscript{20} D. Irving, Video: Canadian Association for Free Expression, Carlton Inn, Toronto, undated, 1986.
\end{itemize}
to suggest that the author's political perspectives made his books difficult to promote.  

 Irving sold his self-published materials to bookstores and meetings. Later, the author offered his books for sale through the Internet and via the Institute for Historical Review, an American Holocaust denying organisation, which will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter. He admitted on a number of occasions that the boycott by the larger publishing houses made it very difficult for him financially. In one of his regular addresses to the Institute for Historical Review Irving lamented his loss of income:

You see, even in the Adolf Hitler biography [Hitler's War] I took a very independent line, which had my [publishing agent] very alarmed when I published that book. He said; You realise you are going to lose a lot of money by claiming that Adolf Hitler didn't know what was going on...didn't know about Auschwitz and so on...He said, well, the first thing is that you're going to lose the Book-of-the-Month Club, the Readers Digest, The Sunday Times in England is going to cancel...And he was right: all the way down the line, we lost every single one of those contracts, every single one of those publishers cancelled the deal...So when people come to me and say: 'David Irving, you write controversial books in order to make money'...they don't realise that ...you are not just losing tens of thousands but hundreds of thousands of dollars...It hurt me a great deal...  

--- 

Irving may well have been right to argue that he could have sold far more of his books had he continued to publish his works through the major publishing houses.\textsuperscript{23}

The author's intrinsic antisemitism began to emerge in \textit{Hitler's War} (1977).\textsuperscript{24} His subsequent misrepresentation of historical evidence can be understood more readily in view of his declared antipathy for Jews.\textsuperscript{25} While he asserted that he is interested only in "historical truth", his real interest appeared to lie in disseminating an antisemitic agenda.\textsuperscript{26} In a 1992 speech at the Clarendon Club Irving began referring to Jews as "our traditional enemies".\textsuperscript{27} By 1992 he was less guarded, bluntly identifying those "enemies" who made his life "unbearable". In conspiracy terms\textsuperscript{28} he told his audience:

\begin{quote}
    Our old traditional enemies[,] [are] the great international merchant banks [who] are controlled by people who are no friends of yours and mine.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

In a 1991 speech to a Toronto audience, Irving declared:

\begin{quote}
    I never used to believe in the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy. I'm not even sure now if there's an international
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{23} M. Horsnell, 'False Witness', \textit{The Times}, 12 April 2000, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{24} The London Irving Libel Trial Court Service transcript, Internet (online) http://www.courtservice.gov.uk/judgments/qb-Irving.htm, 11 April, 2000, (Accessed 2 May 2000), section 13, 163, p. 159. (hereafter referred to as the Irving trial transcript).
\textsuperscript{25} ibid, section 13, 136, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{28} D. Irving, Video: speech at the Clarendon Club, Town Hall, Bromley, 29 May, 1992.
\textsuperscript{29} Evans, op. cit., p. 136.
Jewish conspiracy. All I know is that people are conspiring internationally against me.30

In veiled language, the author reflected his disappointment and outrage against those elements he saw as responsible for decisions not to publish his books. In the process Irving identified "organised Jewry" as exerting undue influence over key professions and institutions.31

The first book: The Destruction of Dresden (1963)

In 1963 Irving, at twenty-five years of age, published his first book "The Destruction of Dresden". To a certain extent the book horrified but fascinated many English readers. Until then little had been published in Britain of the many wartime atrocities that emerged later. The book dealt with a controversial event which occurred early in 1945 when Soviet forces, advancing on Germany from the East drove back not only the German military but also large numbers of German refugees. It was against such a background that the Allies embarked upon a policy of carrying out bombing raids on German cities. Among the principal targets were Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden.

Of the many authors who have written on the bombing raids of Dresden, Irving perhaps attracted the most attention and had the largest popular readership. Destruction of Dresden was probably also

the most widely read of Irving's books. Of particular interest to historians was the way in which Irving handled the issue of the numbers of dead in the Dresden raids and the evidence on which he based his claims.

Dresden was at that time the least industrialised of these German cities that had suffered protracted bombing raids. A historic city, it contained many of Germany's finest old buildings and cultural treasures. There was an extensive industrial sector, including armament factories, but Dresden's main function was as an administrative, transportation and communication centre.

On the nights of 13 and 14 February 1945, British bombers carried out massive bombing raids on Dresden. Ostensibly the purpose of the raids was to disrupt military industrial production. However, the target transpired to be the historic centre of the city rather than the industrial sector. For the most part this consisted of timbered residential buildings. The damage in terms of loss of life and destruction of property was catastrophic: a substantial number of people were killed, consisting almost exclusively of civilian residents and refugees, fleeing the approaching Soviet army. Some fifteen square kilometers of the heart of the city was razed to the ground. Industrial production, although damaged, was not crippled.

32. Evans, op. cit., p. 150.
33. ibid., p. 150.
The destruction of Dresden became the focal point of impassioned postwar debate about the respective crimes of the Allies and the Axis powers. Opinion was divided; some saw the British bombing campaign as effective and justifiable. Others condemned it as morally unjustified and merely calculated terror. The conclusion reached by many historians was that Dresden had been bombed in an effort to undermine German morale, to damage beyond repair the German people's will to resist the invading Allied armies on the Eastern and Western fronts.

Irving's interest in the subject was sparked when he encountered a survivor of what he called "the appalling air raid". The man's stories apparently motivated the author to begin researching and writing, with *Destruction of Dresden* becoming an immediate best-seller. The book later emerged as a central focus in the 2000 Irving libel case. Irving was accused of distorting history to ensure conformity to his political ideology. The defendants, Penguin Books and Lipstadt (et al), citing *The Destruction of Dresden*, alleged that Irving had relied on forged evidence, attached unwarranted credence to unreliable evidence and had falsified statistics. The defendants examined Irving's account of the Allied bombing of Dresden in February 1945 in detail and sought to

---

36 Evans, op. cit., p. 150.
38 Evans, op. cit., p. 177. Irving variously claimed that his interest in Dresden was first awakened by conversing with fellow workers while employed at a steel mill in
prove that the author had systematically and knowingly misrepresented the historical record.

A major criticism related to Irving's claim about the number of people killed in the raids over Dresden. In succeeding editions of *Destruction of Dresden* and in his speeches, these ranged from between 100,000 and 135,000. According to his critics these were inflated figures. Irving himself subsequently modified his tally.

The principal source of evidence used by Irving was information supplied to him by Hans Voigt. A local official in Dresden at the time of the bombing, Voigt had set up a missing persons bureau after the raids, and relied on collections of personal effects to assess numbers of dead. The dead persons department was subsequently able to "clear up the identity of 40,000," a figure Irving described as an "absolute minimum."

Irving ultimately did not accept 40,000 as a total figure of mortality. It seemed that Voigt had told Irving that he estimated that the final number "would have been 135,000". Irving repeated this claim in

---

Mullheim, and another time he told reporters that he had read an article in *Stern* in March 1960.
39 Irving stated on this occasion that there were 1,000,000 refugees in Dresden of whom "hundreds of thousands were killed".
40 *Searchlight*, September 1984, p. 12. Irving subsequently revised the inflated Allied casualty figures.
42 Evans, op. cit., p. 151.
1995, more than likely knowing the figure to be inaccurate. The figure of 135,000 relied on a postwar speculation which many other writers have discounted.

Not long after initial publication of Dresden, Irving announced that he had discovered fresh evidence. The new source seemed not only more plausible to him, but also gave an even higher estimate of the mortality rate/numbers killed than Voigt had supplied.

As was argued in the 2000 libel trial, Irving used forged evidence. Specifically, this was a document entitled "Tagesbefehl" (Order of the Day), no. 47 ("TB47"). Between the English editions of 1963 and 1966 and the German editions of The Destruction of Dresden of 1964 and 1967, Irving had acquired a copy of this document in Dresden, dated 22 March 1945, which he attributed to a Colonel Grosse. This purported to be "a brief extract from the concluding statement of the Police President of Dresden", evidently an earlier document. It put the number of dead at 202,040 and suggested that the final figure would rise to 250,000 by the time all the victims had been recovered.

Significantly, in 1963 Irving had denounced TB47 as spurious and an "ingenious piece of propaganda". TB47 he then described as "false

---

45 ibid., p. 242.
46 Evans, op. cit., p. 152.
47 Irving trial transcript, section 11.9, p. 127.
48 ibid., p. 152. Evans relates that the correct title of the document is Order of the Day no. 47, [Der Hohere SS und PolizeiFührer, Dresden: Tagesbefehl Nr. 47, Luftangriff auf Dresden, henceforth TB 47].
49 Irving trial transcript, section 11.5, p. 126.
50 ibid., p. 126.
and fraudulently invented and published" in a book by Professor Seydewitz.\textsuperscript{51}

But Irving subsequently changed his mind about the authenticity of TB47 when he was provided with an unauthenticated copy of it.\textsuperscript{52} In the 1966 edition of Dresden the author was reluctant about naming his source. The indirect source was a resident of Dresden named Dr. Funfack who, according to Irving, had received the document through official channels.\textsuperscript{53} The defendants in the libel trial contended that Irving should not have made any use of TB47 or the figures contained in it. Yet, despite the lack of verification and the doubts which he himself had expressed about the figures at the time, Irving began to circulate information about TB47, claiming that he was in no doubt as to the authenticity of the document.

Irving also gave the document prominence in the English edition of his book in 1966 and the German edition in 1967. This was the source of his frequently repeated upper estimate of 250,000. The death toll "constantly grows," Irving told the German Stern magazine. "Is that not very impressive?"\textsuperscript{54} Others claimed that his evidence was not sustainable.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., section 11.10, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., section 11.11, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., section 11.11, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{54} D. Irving to Herr Schuler, Stern, 27 January 1965.
\textsuperscript{55} Evans, op. cit., p. 154. Evans described the forged document TB 47 as: "merely a carbon copy of a typed-up transcript of another typed-up transcript of a handwritten transcript of an extract from an unknown document, unauthenticated by any distinguishing marks such as a signature or an official stamp of any description".
Irving repeatedly used document TB47 to promote higher casualty figures, despite having previously denounced it as a forgery.\textsuperscript{56} On 28 November 1964 Irving wrote to his German publisher that the information in TB47 was "sensational".\textsuperscript{57} On 6 December 1964 he wrote to the Provost of Coventry Cathedral in connection with the forthcoming exhibition, enclosing a copy of TB47:

\begin{quote}
To drive home the impact of [your] exhibition I also suggest that you have the text of the Police President’s report on the Dresden raids (attached) printed in large type; I think that it’s nonchalance and the casualties it mentions have a shattering impact...I am myself in no doubt as to the authenticity of the document, having obtained it from the Dresden Deputy Chief Medical Officer responsible for disposing of the victims.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

The 2000 libel trial defendants contended that Irving’s use of TB47 was unconscionable.\textsuperscript{59} They argued that it was worse than irresponsible for Irving to promote the new figures without revealing Dr. Funfack’s denials, and that a number of factors should have alerted him to the suspicious nature of the research material. First, as early as March 1945 an unrelated report had appeared in the Nazi weekly \textit{Das Reich}. This report about the attack of Dresden referred to "a fictitious top-

\textsuperscript{56} Irving trial transcript, section 11.5, p.126.
\textsuperscript{57} ibid., section 11.13, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{58} ibid., section 11.13, p. 128. When the German edition of \textit{The Destruction of Dresden} was reviewed in December 1964, Dr. Funfack was named in the press as the author of the new casualty figures. This prompted the latter to write to Irving on 16 January 1965 to say that he had not been the Dresden Deputy Chief Medical Officer; that he had only ever heard the numbers third hand and that he had not been involved in any official capacity.
secret estimate [TB47] that the casualties had probably reached 250,000".  

It was not until 1995 that Irving admitted that document TB 47 was in fact a product of the Goebbels Propaganda Ministry's machinations. In an about-face he wrote to the Dresden City Museum:

We have recently re-published my work about the massive Allied attack on Dresden, which will be well known to you...In this volume...I have revised the numbers of losses, and independently from the research named by you, I come also to the conclusion that the so-called "Tagesbefehl" 47 is a forgery of the Ministry of Propaganda.  

Irving felt unable to persist with his allegiance to TB47 in the light of the overwhelming weight of evidence, dating back twenty years, that it was a forgery. By continuing to claim in the trial, as he did, that the "best margins" for the death figures which he "would accept" are between 60,000 and 100,000, the author left himself open to the accusation of using unreliable, and probably forged sources. He also contradicted himself. Sometimes a source was reliable; at other times it was not.

Libel court judge Mr. Gray criticised Irving for his use of document TB47. He wrote:

I accept the evidence of Evans that there were features within the document itself, which cast doubt on its bona fides. Irving

---

60 Evans, op. cit., p. 157.
61 ibid., p. 171.
62 Irving trial transcript, section 11.42, p. 131.
63 Evans, op. cit., p. 171.
therefore had every reason to be suspicious about the claim that
the [Dresden] death toll might ultimately be 250,000.64

The court determined:

It was incumbent on Irving, as a responsible historian, to treat the
document with extreme caution. He should have verified the
provenance of the document with anyone in a position to assist.
In the meantime, he should not have made use of so suspect a
document. It would have been regarded by any dispassionate
historian as conclusive proof that the purported copy of
[document] TB47 was a fake and that there was good reason to
suppose that the true death toll in Dresden was in the region of
25,000...still less does it excuse the grossly inflated claims as to
the number of casualties which Irving continued to make in later
editions of his book Dresden and in speeches.65

In Mr. Gray's view, Irving should not have quoted numbers based on
the discredited evidence: "Irving should have taken far greater account
of the doubts about the genuineness of TB47".66 The high estimates of
deaths which Irving continued to promote in the 1990s, in the court's
judgment, "lacked any evidential basis and were such as no responsible
historian would have made".67

The "moral equivalence" paradigm

Even as a young writer Irving appeared to have been prepared to
manipulate evidence of the bombing of Dresden to promote what was
then a relatively benign form of historical denial. Irving declared the

64 Irving trial transcript, section 13,118, p. 152.
65 ibid., section 13,123, p. 153.
66 ibid., p. 153.
crime of the Second World War had not been genocide but "innocenticide," referring to the killing of civilians. By inference the author tried to show that the Allied powers were just as guilty of atrocities as the Germans. For him the Allied bombing of Dresden was a crime. Three decades later, Irving made the parallel explicit. Where he maintained a more balanced tone in his earlier books, his public speeches became increasingly strident. Irving kept alive the myth of a Dresden death toll many times higher than the official estimates.

During a speech in South Africa in 1986 he contended:

I realised that I was being told [about Dresden] of what we would now call a Holocaust I suppose, of which we English at that time, 1961, knew absolutely nothing at all. Of course now everybody talks about Dresden in the same breath as they talk about Auschwitz and Hiroshima. That’s my achievement, ladies and gentlemen. I’m a little proud when I look at the newspapers every 13th or 14th of February, when the anniversary comes and they mention Dresden, because until my book was published on that subject the outside world had never heard of what happened in Dresden when more than 100,000 people were killed in one night by an RAF and American air force air raid on one undefended German town at the end of the war.

Toward the end of the 1980s, Irving began to link the numbers of dead in Dresden to denial of gassings at Auschwitz. In 1989 the author highlighted the effects of Allied atrocities by telling his audience:

---

67 ibid., p. 153.
68 Evans., op. cit., p. 178.
69 D. Irving, in The Times, 7 July 1966 where he asserted that he had no interest in "promoting or perpetuating false legends".
70 Evans, op. cit., pp. 180-81.
71 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 43.
Obviously if the gas chamber now turns out to have been phoney then we have to try and explain what happened to the figures. Now, one possible reason is the large number that turned up in the state of Palestine, what's now the state of Israel. The Jews that were in Israel didn't come from nowhere. Another part of them, when Auschwitz was liberated were set out on the roads to be shipped westwards where they ended up in cities like Dresden. I don't have to tell you what happened in Dresden three weeks after Auschwitz was evacuated by the Germans. There were one million refugees in the streets of Dresden at the time we burned Dresden to the ground, killing anything between 100,000 and 250,000 of them. Large numbers of people on the streets of Europe that winter also suffered normal deaths of exposure and starvation epidemic. I'm offering you alternative solutions to where the people went.\footnote{D. Irving, Videotape: 'Leuchter Report press conference', London, 23 June 1989; also D. Irving, Focal Point video, 'The Truth at Last, Six Million Lies'.}

In ways such as this Irving played a pivotal role in keeping the Dresden attack and his overrating of the deaths it incurred alive in the public mind.\footnote{Irving trial transcript, sections 13.118, 13.119, 13.126, pp. 152-53.} Why did the author maximise the numbers killed?

Irving began with a reasonable supposition that all wars are evil. He argued that there is really no difference in the behaviour of the victors and the vanquished. The author contended that if guilt was to be assigned, it is not the Germans who were guilty of aggression and atrocities during the Second World War; the real crimes were committed by the Allies.\footnote{Searchlight, February 1992, p. 8.}

Irving gradually developed a more sophisticated thesis, which his critics have referred to as his "equivalence paradigm" of Second World
War history.\textsuperscript{75} This is an argument explored in recent years by historian Richard Bessel\textsuperscript{76} who described the phenomenon in terms of Irving's predilection for "equating two or more unrelated sets of circumstances and drawing conclusions to reinforce his ideological position".\textsuperscript{77}

Some historians contend that in \textit{Destruction of Dresden} Irving wished to persuade his readers to accept the relative innocence of the Nazis.\textsuperscript{78} By doing so, they argue, it suited the author's ideological purpose to promote the rehabilitation of Nazi Germany and its leader.\textsuperscript{79}

Few historians have defended the Allied bombing raids on Dresden on 13-14 February 1945, for the atrocity had always been exceedingly difficult to justify. Yet none have gone so far as to falsify evidence. However, Irving for decades presented his interpretations as accurate depictions of the historical record. His rewriting of history precludes balanced discussion of these events.\textsuperscript{80} As an historian his use of evidence is inclined to be flawed.

\textsuperscript{75} Evans, op. cit., pp. 178-79.
\textsuperscript{77} D. Irving, \textit{Nuremberg: The Last Battle}, reviewed by R. Bessel, in TLS, 8 August 1997, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{78} Evans, op. cit., p. 136.
\textsuperscript{79} C.C. Aronsfeld, 'Holocaust Deniers Are Busy in Britain', \textit{Midstream}, January 1993, p. 29.
The Destruction of Convoy PQ 17 (1970)

For many years some historians came to regard Irving as an assiduous collector of original documentation, although there was dispute over how important the documents were. But when it came to Irving's interpretation of the documents, several eminent specialists have been harsh in their criticisms. Moreover, Irving's writings have repeatedly landed him in trouble with the law.

For example, in 1970 The Destruction of Convoy PQ17 caused concern, particularly in British naval circles. A libel action was taken by Captain John Broome, senior officer-in-charge of the original Naval escort, PQ17. In July 1943 thirty-six merchant ships set sail from the United Kingdom for Murmansk with supplies for the besieged Russians. In the Barents Sea, the ill-fated convoy came under heavy attack by German aircraft and U-boats. Captain Broome complained that in Irving's book the blame for the convoy's destruction was placed on him, the inference being that the Navy had abandoned the merchant ships.

Irving accused Captain John Broome of "downright disobedience" and

---

50 Irving trial transcript, sections 13.116-119, p. 152.
51 Evans, op. cit., p. 13.
52 ibid., p. 13. Evans relates how Irving alleged in the 1977 German introduction of Hitler's War that the Diary of Anne Frank was a forgery and that this had led to his publisher being forced to pay damages. Also, Irving had been sued for libel in 1966 by Jillian Page, author of a newspaper article about him, as a result of his allegation that the article had been the result of "a fertile brain." Irving apologised to the High Court and paid costs on the condition that Page agreed to withdraw the action.
53 Searchlight, no. 81, March 1982, p. 6.
"desertion of the convoy." Broome sued Irving for false statements, and won a judgement in August of 1970. Irving's reputation was damaged by questionable "facts" he deployed in writing about the incident.

The case is revealing because of what it says about Irving's motives as an author of historical books. According to The Times, Irving showed a copy of the manuscript to Broome before the publication. Broome objected because of inaccuracies in some thirty passages and threatened to sue Irving if the latter did not make the required changes. William Kimbers Ltd., Irving's publisher, subsequently notified Broome that they would not publish the book as it was then written. Later, however, Irving abrogated his undertaking by publishing the book with another publisher. The court subsequently found that Irving had been "warned from the most responsible quarters that his book contained libels on Captain Broome", charging that Irving, in order to ensure that the book would be a success, had appeared ready to risk libel action. The libel Court denounced Irving's conduct as "outrageous and shocking", describing him as "a slippery and fly character" and "a grasping, conceited and foolish young man".

84 ibid., p. 6.
88 ibid., p. 6.
89 ibid., p. 6.
90 ibid., p. 6.
Captain Broome was awarded £40,000. The award, made in 1970, was very large for the time, and included £25,000 in exemplary damages, which can only be rewarded when it has been shown that the defendant is guilty of a deliberate "tort" or wrong committed with the object of making money.\footnote{Evans, op. cit., p. 13.}

**Hitler's War (1977)**

As a historical writer, Irving established himself as an authority on the Second World War. He focused on developing a vision of the world dominated by the Third Reich. Expressing these views in *Hitler's War*, the book became an integral part of his later political thinking.

As his most sophisticated contribution to historical writing Irving declared Hitler's innocence of the Jewish Holocaust, arguing the German dictator did not know about the existence of the gassing programmes and death camps.\footnote{The *Time*, 22 April 1996, p. 70.} Hitler, Irving contended, was not the ruthless persecutor of the Jews that he is portrayed to have been. Citing *Hitler's War*, Irving wished to persuade his readers that the Führer had not been intrinsically antisemitic. Furthermore, the author maintained, a benign Hitler had actually protected the Jews from the murdering intentions of his henchmen.\footnote{Evans, op. cit., p. 45.}
It is not difficult to understand that *Hitler's War* became a best seller in Germany; it provided those who refused to contemplate certain historical truths with evidence that their Führer had not known about the Holocaust. Adherents of Nazism could believe that they were also blameless.\(^{94}\) *Hitler's War* concluded that the Nazi dictator was actually pusillanimous, irresolute and vacillating, who took “ineffectual measures against the enemies of Germany”.\(^{95}\)

After publishing *Hitler's War*, Irving became interested in questioning the extent of the Holocaust. In the 1977 edition of *Hitler's War* the author did not deny that Jews had been badly treated during the Hitler regime. However, in the 1991 edition of *Hitler's War* he contended that the numbers of dead had been grossly exaggerated. At most, he argued, the Jews were victims of cruel wartime conditions. Irving asserted that Hitler did not order the extermination of European Jews by gassing. He came to question whether there had been any gassings at all.\(^{96}\)

Irving refuted the existence of mass gassing facilities in the extermination camps. He wrote:

---

\(^{94}\) *Searchlight*, op. cit., p. 6. It is reported here that in addition to this claim, the German version of *Hitler's War* contained an introduction stating that “many forgeries are on record, including the "Diary of Anne Frank," an allegation withdrawn from later editions of the publishers (who were also obliged to pay compensation to Anne’s father Otto). Undeterred, Irving told *The Daily Mirror* in November 1979, two years after publication of *Hitler's War*, that he “remained doubtful of the authenticity” of Anne Frank’s diary, and had asked Otto Frank to sight the original manuscript.\(^{95}\) *The Economist*, 13 April 1996.\(^{96}\) ibid., p. 112.
By late 1945 the world newspapers were full of unsubstantiated, lurid rumours about 'factories of death' complete with lethal gas chambers".97

The author sought alternative explanations for the demise of the Jews by emphasising Hitler's earlier policy of resettling the European Jews in Madagascar.98

After writing *Hitler's War*, Irving became radicalised. He is, in *Hitler's War*, a partisan writer who spared no effort in his search for new historical material about Hitler and his role in the Third Reich. British writer Christopher Hitchens wrote that Irving had "unearthed more original material than any other historian which he makes generously available to other researchers".99 According to Hitchens, *Hitler's War* was based on a "wealth of previously unpublished documents, letters and diaries".100 Irving's objective, Hitchens declared, was to "rewrite the history of the Second World War".101

A more critical view was taken by the late Holocaust historian Martin Broszat, Director of the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich. In 1977 Broszat accused Irving of having "manipulated and misinterpreted

98 Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 377. This was Hitler's purported plan to forcibly evacuate European Jews to an island off Africa.
100 ibid., p. 38.
101 ibid, p. 38.
original documents in order to prove his arguments".\textsuperscript{102} Attacking Irving's "incompetence as a historian", Broszat continued:

The discovery and utilisation of contemporary primary and secondary sources has long been a sort of adventuresome passion of Irving the historian. However, the unprejudiced historian and researcher is obstructed by the passionate partisan author whose insistence on primary sources lacks the control and discipline essential in the selective interpretation and evaluation of material. He is too eager to accept authenticity for objectivity, is overly hasty in interpreting superficial diagnoses and often seems insufficiently interested in complex historical interconnections and structural problems that transcend the mere recording of historical facts but are essential for their evaluation. Spurred by the ambition of matching himself against professional historians in his precise knowledge of documents, he adopts the role of the terrible 'simplificateur' as he intends to wrest fresh interpretations from historical facts and events and spring these on the public in sensational new books.\textsuperscript{103}

Broszat had claimed serious flaws in Irving's approach to historical writing. Irving's use of documentary evidence raised many objections in the minds of those historians who knew the field well. Their criticism raised issues of objectivity, bias, and political motivation in Irving's research of history. Yet Irving resisted these accusations. Describing himself as "an expert on the Third Reich" he wrote:

I have spent thirty years now working in the archives in London, in Washington, in Moscow - in short, around the world. [If] I express an opinion it's probably a reasonable (sic) accurate opinion which I have arrived at, over a period of years.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102} Rosenbaum, op. cit., pp. 229-230.
In trawling the archives, Irving claimed to have set high research standards in *Hitler's War*:

[I have]... adopted strict criteria in selecting my source material. I have burrowed deep into the contemporary writings of his closest personal staff, seeking clues to the real truth in diaries and private letters written to wives and friends. For the few autobiographical works I have used I have preferred to rely on their original manuscripts rather than the printed texts, as in the early postwar years apprehensive publishers made drastic changes in them...But historians are quite incorrigible, and will quote any apparently primary source no matter how convincingly its pedigree is exposed.\(^\text{105}\)

After the 1991 edition of *Hitler War* Irving began to view himself as a repository of "historical truth". He became an activist, articulating his contempt for the views of "establishment" historians. His convictions became stronger during the 1990s when the author referred to himself as "waging an International Campaign for Real History."\(^\text{106}\) "My version of history", he conceded in 1992, "may be wrong history":

[But]...I am not so arrogant as to say "thou shalt have no other version of history but mine."...Nobody has the right to stand up and say, only my version of history is right: all other versions are wrong: and nobody has the right to propagate alternative versions...And that's what I say about my book *Hitler's War*; it may be right, it may be wrong! But it is certainly a magisterial work...a book which makes my rivals livid with anger and rage.\(^\text{107}\)

Irving's concession that he might be wrong could not really be taken seriously, unless it was to apply only to minor matters of detail. Asked in

\(^{106}\) Evans, op. cit., p. 21.
1993 whether he thought he was a partisan historical writer in *Hitler's War*, he replied none too benignly:

> Every historian has to be selective. If I write a biography about Adolf Hitler, then the archives have about ten tons of documents on Adolf Hitler, and you have to select which documents you present. And if you're a Jewish historian, you present the facts one way, because they have an agenda to present. I don't have any kind of political agenda, and really, it's rather defamatory for people to suggest that I do have an agenda. The agenda I have I suppose, is alright, I admit it, I like seeing the other historians with egg on their face. And they're getting a lot of egg on their face now, because I'm challenging them to produce the evidence for what they've been saying for fifty years.\(^{108}\)

Irving did not appear to believe that other historians could rise to his challenge. Rather, he asserted that there was an international campaign orchestrated by the Jewish community ("our traditional enemies") in many countries to stop him from telling the truth. On 5 May 1992 he told a Munich court that rejected his appeal against conviction for denying the Holocaust: "My duty as an historian is to establish the truth".\(^{109}\) He informed an audience in Canada on 1 November 1992: "Our traditional enemies [the Jewish people] refuse to debate me. They can't debate me." Describing his continuing "International Campaign for Real History", he wrote:

> It is the word 'real' that frightens my opponents, because they have got away with it now for the last fifty years, with their Madison-avenue, their Hollywood versions of history, their

---


\(^{109}\) Evans, op. cit., p. 22
television versions of history. Real history is what we find in the archives, and it frightens my opponents because it takes the planks out from beneath their feet.\textsuperscript{110}

Here Irving was actually saying that in crucial aspects all other versions of Second World War history apart from his own were wrong in that they were not based on archival documentation. Only "real history", history as he defined it, was correct.

The author's condemnation of other historians became a preoccupation; in the introduction to the 1991 edition of \textit{Hitler's War} he argued that other historians had been uniformly idle in their attitude to the sources and were therefore suspect. Thus Irving almost never cited, discussed, or used the work of other historians in his books.\textsuperscript{111}

Irving's uncompromising demeanour sometimes invited sharp reactions from historians. American historian John Lukacs, an analyst on the Second World War, in 1981 accused Irving of having "engaged in dubious history, relying on manipulation of evidence and falsification of sources".\textsuperscript{112}

Lukacs singled out Irving for censure: "[Irving]...has paid almost no attention to the works of professional historians, dismissing and deriding them often".\textsuperscript{113} Criticising those academics and historians who have borrowed from Irving's writings, Lukacs accused them of "failing to see

\textsuperscript{110} D. Irving, Speech to a packed hall in the Primrose Hotel, Toronto, 1 November 1992. Transcript on Irving's Focal Point website.
\textsuperscript{111} Evans, op. cit., p. 16.
\textsuperscript{112} ibid., p. 12.
where they were being led". He contended Irving has in the past attacked historians for their unwillingness to give credit to Hitler. Lukacs argued that questions should have been raised, and were so seldom raised, about the dubious methods employed by this "tireless, ambitious amateur historian".  

In recent years Lukacs intensified his criticism of Irving. "Few critics of Irving's books", he complained, "have bothered to examine them carefully enough". Believing that Hitler's War contained many inaccuracies, Lukacs wrote:

*[Hitler's War]*...has many errors in names and dates. More important, unverifiable and unconvincing assertions abound. There are references to archives without dates, places or file or page numbers...[Many of the archival references in Irving's footnotes]...are inaccurate and do not prove or even refer to the pertinent statements in Irving's text.*

Lukacs marked Irving as attributing false meanings to historical documents. He exemplified alleged historical misrepresentation by citing Irving's claim that the Soviet Union was ready to attack Germany in June 1941. In Hitler's War, Lukacs cited, Irving wrote there was "clear evidence of a Russian military build-up that could be unleashed against Germany". In refutation, Lukacs asserted there is not "one shred of evidence" for that statement. In other instances, Lukacs maintained

---

115 ibid., p. 21.
116 ibid., p. 22.
Irving invented words attributed to Hitler to support his argument.

Moreover, according to Lukacs, Irving's suspect methodology abounds.

He wrote:

It would be wrong to underestimate his influence, for at least two reasons. One is the not inconsiderable extent of his readership. The other, more significant, is that certain professional and, by and large respected historians, have relied on some of Irving's researches and then given them qualified praise. This is regrettable, but not merely because of the lamentable, unsavoury character of Irving's opinions. Few reviewers and critics of Irving's books, including professional historians, have bothered to examine them carefully enough. Had they done so they would have found that many of Irving's references and quotes are not verifiable. While some of Irving's 'finds' cannot be disregarded, their interpretation...is, more often than not, compromised and even badly flawed.\footnote{\textsuperscript{117}}

During his 2000 libel trial, Irving complained about "damage to his reputation in his calling as an historian".\footnote{\textsuperscript{118}} He referred principally to Lipstadt, although she was not alone in her critique of Irving's methodology.\footnote{\textsuperscript{119}} In a 1977 article, Trevor-Roper, concerned about Irving's approach to history, noted:

When a historian relies mainly on primary sources, which we can not easily check, he challenges our confidence and forces us to ask critical questions. How reliable is his historical method? How sound is his judgment? We ask these questions particularly of

\footnote{\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 22}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{118} Cited in Irving's Summary of Statement of Claims.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{119} W. Laqueur, article in \textit{Anti Defamation League Publications Report}, 1993, (downloaded from the Internet on 14 November 1998). In 1993 Lacquercriticised Irving's "propensity to rewrite history". In this article, Laqueur wrote of Irving: "A little omission and distortion here and there, and how easy it is to rewrite history. There are subjects, however, that should be exempt from such practices. The Holocaust is surely one of them. It should not be a subject for propaganda exercises or demagoguery."}
any man who, like Mr. Irving, makes a virtue—almost a profession—of using arcane sources to affront established opinion.\textsuperscript{120}

Trevor-Roper continued:

[ Irving]...seizes on a small and dubious particle of evidence, using it to dismiss far more substantial evidence that may not support his theory. His works may be described as closer to theology or mythology rather than to history. Irving stands accused of skewing documents and misrepresenting data in order to reach historically untenable conclusions, particularly those that exonerate Hitler. His methodology is defective.\textsuperscript{121}

Holocaust historian Martin Broszat, critical of Irving's research involving members of Hitler's entourage, commented:

The evidence Irving gathered from the reminiscences of Hitler's entourage might provide more exact detail of what went on at Hitler's wartime headquarters, and it might convey something of the atmosphere of the place, but it does little to enlarge our knowledge of the important military and political decisions that Hitler took, and so does not live up to the claims Irving made for it.\textsuperscript{122}

Broszat argued that Irving used suspect testimony:

It is simply incorrect when Irving, in \textit{Hitler's War} claims that "all surviving adjutants, secretaries and official stenographers had uniformly declared that in Hitler's headquarters no word was ever spoken about the extermination of the Jews."\textsuperscript{123}

All this suggested flawed scholarship.\textsuperscript{124} Journalist Gitta Sereny located and interviewed five witnesses of Hitler's entourage, all of whom

\textsuperscript{121} Reported in \textit{The Sunday Times}, 12 June 1977.
\textsuperscript{122} Broszat, op. cit., pp. 187-229.
\textsuperscript{123} Rosenbaum, op. cit., pp. 229-230.
declared that in their presence Hitler had not spoken of the extermination of the Jews,\textsuperscript{125} but they "could not imagine that he did not know about it".\textsuperscript{126}

Broszat further cited Irving's manipulation and misinterpretation of original documents.\textsuperscript{127} He wrote:

Irving pays scant attention to postwar confessions of those who had been privy to secret information about the extermination of the Jews. Thus, for example, certain statements by Otto Ohlendorf, former leader of special killing squads ("Einzatsgruppen"), agree that oral directives to commando leaders in 1941 concerning the extermination of the Jews stemmed specifically from Hitler alone. Irving mentions it but distorts it in the telling.\textsuperscript{128}

Ohlendorf's evidence derived from written declarations on 3 January 1946 before the Nuremberg Tribunal. His testimony actually read:

In late summer 1941 Himmler was in the town of Nikolaev. He ordered the leaders and troops of the Einsatzgruppen to fall in and there and then he repeated the established "liquidation order", saying that it was given on his responsibility together with the Führer's.\textsuperscript{129}

According to Broszat, Irving's interpretation of Ohlendorf's deposition that it was Himmler's responsibility alone, in association with Hitler, is misleading.\textsuperscript{130} The word "alone", Broszat contended, is invented by Irving, with the effect of changing the meaning significantly. Broszat's criticism of Irving was supported by author Charles W. Sydnor, who

\textsuperscript{125} Rosenbaum, op. cit., pp. 229-230.
\textsuperscript{126} Cited in The Sunday Times Weekly, 10 July 1977.
\textsuperscript{127} Broszat, op. cit., pp. 187-229.
\textsuperscript{128} ibid., p. 768.
\textsuperscript{129} ibid., p. 768.
\textsuperscript{130} Irving, op. cit., p. 326.
wrote that Irving portrayed Hitler as "a fair-minded statesman of considerable chivalry".\textsuperscript{131} Sydnor accused Irving of "innumerable inaccuracies, distortions, manipulations, and mistranslation in his treatment of the documents".\textsuperscript{132}

Australian historian Robert Manne identified a "lack of honesty" in Irving's methodology, particularly in the author's approach to Hitler. Irving, he claimed, "showed little capacity for systematic study of the dynamics of Hitler's personality".\textsuperscript{133} Manne concluded that Irving displayed a consistent bias in favour of Hitler.

Irving did not agree with such comments. In his written submission to the 2000 libel court he argued that he was doing no more than to reflect accurately what was in the documentary evidence.\textsuperscript{134} The author contended that when documents were subjected to rigid criteria there was no doubt in his mind that the evidence favoured a benign Hitler. Irving wrote:

A relatively slim dossier of evidence resulted which portrayed Hitler intervening in every instance to mitigate or lessen the wrongdoing against the Jews...There were few, if any, documents of comparable quality - documents which met the same criteria - giving the opposite sense.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{132} Evans, op. cit., p. 11.
\textsuperscript{133} R. Manne, 'Hitler's Objective Englishman', \textit{Quadrant}, January 1978, pp. 64-66.
\textsuperscript{134} Evans, op. cit., p. 46.
Irving maintains he is interested only in writing historical truth as he sees it. Yet the evidence suggests that he interprets documentary material to suit his ideology.\textsuperscript{136}

The author’s refusal to consult the work of other historians was disturbing; his attitude is exemplified in an incident recounted in 1983 by journalist Robert Harris in his book \textit{Selling Hitler}.\textsuperscript{137} The German \textit{ Stern} magazine serialised extracts from what its reporters claimed were diaries written by Hitler. British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper (Lord Dacre), acting for \textit{The Times}, declared them to be authentic after a hasty perusal of the manuscripts in a Swiss bank vault. As a result, serialisation began in \textit{The Sunday Times}. Confronted with doubts about the diaries' authenticity, \textit{ Stern} organised a press conference on 25 April 1983. Irving had independently come into contact with the diaries through August Priesack, an old Nazi who had been one of the first to be approached by the forger in his quest for authentication. Irving appeared in person at the \textit{ Stern} press conference and denounced the manuscripts as forgeries:

\begin{quote}
I know the collection from which these diaries come. It is an old collection, full of forgeries. I have some here.\textsuperscript{138}
\end{quote}

Within a short time he had been proved right. The diaries were quickly shown to be postwar products following tests carried out by the German

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{136} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 161.


\textsuperscript{138} Evans, op. cit., p. 19.
\end{footnotesize}
Federal Archives on the ink and paper. Irving subsequently portrayed his role in this affair as evidence of his unrivalled expertise on the original source material for Hitler and the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{139} Thus, while eminent academics had authenticated them, Irving asserted his superior knowledge of the original documents by recognising them for what they were - a crude forgery. Yet, the fact that other historians had not been allowed to have access was one reason the diary fiasco progressed as far as it did. Professor Trevor-Roper had changed his mind about the diaries immediately after he had sent off his article authenticating them to \textit{The Sunday Times}.\textsuperscript{140} A few days after the Stem press conference where Irving had given voice to his newfound scepticism, he announced he had changed his mind.\textsuperscript{141} According to Harris, he did this because he was uncomfortable about being aligned with majority, respectable historical opinion and because he was impressed by the sheer size of the diaries (sixty volumes), which seemed almost beyond the capacity of any one individual to forge. Also, having seen the diaries for himself, they appeared more convincing than he had expected.\textsuperscript{142} Soon Irving was on the front page of \textit{The Times} declaring his belief in the diaries' authenticity. When forensic tests shortly afterwards revealed them definitely as fakes, Irving issued

\textsuperscript{139} D. Irving, 'David Irving on Freedom of Speech', a speech presented in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 28 October 1992, Transcript on Irving's website.

\textsuperscript{140} Harris, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

\textsuperscript{141} Evans, op. cit., p. 20.

\textsuperscript{142} Harris, op. cit., pp. 338-39.
a statement accepting the finding but drawing attention to the fact that he had been the first person to unmask them as being forged.\textsuperscript{143} When this was read to him, a reporter from The Times commented: "Yes, and the last person to declare them authentic".\textsuperscript{144} As this suggests, Irving's documentary expertise was by no means as flawless and unbiased as he would like to believe; he seemed inclined to apply his research selectively.

What may we say about Irving's motivation in writing Hitler's War? Apart from financial gain it would appear that he sought public recognition as a writer of historical books.\textsuperscript{145} But did the author persistently and deliberately falsify history in the process?

In his evidence to the 2000 libel trial Professor Evans drew on Irving's writings, referring often to Hitler's War. He included many examples of the ways in which Irving was alleged to have portrayed Hitler in a manner at odds with the available evidence.\textsuperscript{146} Evans cited occasions where Irving distorted the historical record, suppressed evidence and made uncritical use of unreliable sources.\textsuperscript{147} Evans highlighted Irving's tendency to write in flattering terms about Hitler:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{143} ibid., p. 359.
\textsuperscript{144} Evans, op. cit., p. 20.
\textsuperscript{145} Heilbrunn, op. cit., pp. 1-3.
\textsuperscript{146} Evans, op. cit., p. 18. Irving wrote that he sees himself as having acted as Hitler's "ambassador to the afterlife" when he wrote his biography of Hitler.
\textsuperscript{147} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 5.5, p. 18.
\end{flushright}
[Hitler was]... a friend of the arts, benefactor of the impoverished, defender of the innocent, persecutor of the delinquent.\textsuperscript{148}

The historian hypothesised that Irving's consistent bias in favour of Hitler stemmed from writing \textit{Hitler's War} from Hitler's perspective.\textsuperscript{149}

General reviews of \textit{Hitler's War} rarely mention Irving's problems with historical objectivity. Yet in \textit{Hitler's War} as well as in his other works, Irving's historical analyses are perceived as flawed because of his partisan commitment to Hitler's legacy.

Reviewers of \textit{Hitler's War} often considered Irving an admirer of Hitler.

Irving did not dissent from this view. He declared:

\begin{quote}
Every time I've written a biography, you find you become closer to the character you're writing about...you're his ambassador then. And if you do your job conscientiously, then you bend over backwards to do it...I don't think it should lead you to adopt an unobjective position.\textsuperscript{150}
\end{quote}

The author was more expansive to an audience of historians and fellow publishers in 1978, when he explained how fate had anointed him Hitler's historian:

\begin{quote}
Basically, Hitler himself determined who should be his biographer. I know that since I found Hitler's ear, nose and throat doctor in Krefeld in early 1970, the man who treated Hitler after the assassination attempt of 20 July 1944, Dr. Erwin Giesing, I called on him in his practice. He had no time at that moment and I had to wait for half an hour for him. Already in the waiting room he gave me a file to read, about 500 typed pages. Can you imagine how one feels when one reads the diary who treated Hitler after the assassination attempt? It begins on 23 July 1944. I ask him, why are you giving this to me, Herr Giesing? He
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{148} Evans, op. cit., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{149} Harris, op. cit., p. 188.
\textsuperscript{150} Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 232.
answers me, read page 387. It's about a conversation between Hitler and Giesing...Hitler said,...Perhaps an Englishman will also come one day who wants to write an objective biography of me. It has to be an Englishman of the next generation. Because a representative of the present generation cannot write the truth about me and certainly won't want to either. It has to be an Englishman who knows the archives and who has mastered the German language. And that is why you are getting the diaries Mr. Irving, the doctor said.\(^{151}\)

As this suggests, Irving saw himself not as a neutral, objective researcher but as Hitler's representative in the world after his death, the historian chosen by the Führer himself.\(^{152}\) The author tells how, as an ardent admirer of the Nazi leader, he had placed a self-portrait of Hitler over his desk.\(^{153}\) Describing his visit to Hitler's mountain top retreat at Berchtesgarden some years ago as a "spiritual experience", Irving declared that Hitler "repeatedly reached out to help the Jews".\(^{154}\) His purpose, he asserted, was to portray Hitler as an "ordinary human being rather than as a diabolical figure of monstrous evil".\(^{155}\)

Irving saw himself carrying on Hitler's legacy.\(^{156}\) In 1991, in a videotaped interview for the television programme "This Week", Irving revealed:

> I think Adolf Hitler made a lot of mistakes. He surrounded himself with people of very poor quality. He was a rotten judge of character. These are the mistakes you have to avoid replicating.\(^{157}\)

\(^{152}\) Lukacs, op. cit., p. 26.
\(^{153}\) Harris, op. cit., p. 189.
\(^{154}\) ibid., p.189.
\(^{155}\) ibid., p.188.
\(^{156}\) Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 223.
The reference to *you* in this context could only really be understood as referring to Irving himself.

Why was Irving so committed to defending Hitler? At one level, the author shared Hitler's ingrained antisemitism. His speeches, articles and writings abound with antisemitic themes. For instance, in a 1992 interview, Irving disclosed his deep-seated loathing for Jews:

> I think the Jews are largely to blame themselves by their knee-jerk responses. Every step they take to control antisemitism produces precisely the opposite effect in my view. I don't think it is antisemitism as much as xenophobia and I think it is built in like the hunting instinct or the mating instinct; it [antisemitism] is built into us as one of God's little tricks.

Irving attitude toward the Jews and the Final Solution can be gleaned from an item printed in the early 1980s in his own journal *Focal Point.*

The cover of this particular issue features a bronze head of Hitler and bears the title *"The Voice from beyond Valhalla"*. The article, *"Hitler Lays it on the Line"*, was from an original passage of a stenographer's transcript dealing with Hitler's policy towards the Jews. Dated December 1922, the excerpt is purported to be a private conversation between Hitler and "one of his financial backers" at the Hotel Regina in Munich. The article begins with the sentence: ""In talks with German financier Hitler revealed his secret plans twenty years before he

---

159 Shermer, op. cit., pp. 4-6, Transcript of interview with David Irving.
161 ibid., p. 5. Irving's own note was added to the article: "The Turks are claimed to have secretly liquidated 1, 500,000 Armenians at the beginning of this century".
implemented them: Dictatorship, War, Conquest, the Jews". Below is a
section concerning the Jews:

[Answer to Some Problems]:

[Hitler speaking]... The Jewish question could be dealt with the
way that Frederick the Great solved it. He eliminated the Jews
from everywhere where they were bound to have a noxious
effect, but on the other hand, he made demands on them where
they could be of use. In our political life the Jews are
unquestionably noxious. They are methodically poisoning our
people. I always used to regard antisemitism as inhuman but
now my own experiences have converted me into the most
fanatical enemy of the Jew, in which connection: I combat Jewry
not as a religion, but as a race. The Jews have no right to rule,
because they are bereft of the slightest spark of organisational
talent...

Hitler continued:

[There are two possibilities]... It is clear that there is nothing Jews
can do about their character and shortcomings. But in our own
case what matters is not whether they are to blame, but whether
or not we are obliged to put up with the Jewish yolk any longer.
The lion is a beast of prey. There is nothing he can do about that,
it lies in his nature. But no way is man obliged to stand for being
mauled by a lion; he must save his skin as best he can, even if
the lion comes to harm. A solution of the Jewish Problem must
come. If the problem can be solved by common sense, then so
much the better for both parties. If not then there are two
possibilities: either a bloody conflict, or an Armenianisation.\(^{162}\)

Irving shared such views. The author consistently played down
allegations that Hitler was antisemitic. Claiming the Führer was only a
tactical antisemist, Irving argued:

[Hitler]... used his antisemitism as a political platform from which
to seize power in 1933, but that after that he lost interest in it,
except for occasional flight of oratory; while Dr. Goebbels and
other lesser Nazi continued to ride that horse to the hounds, to

\(^{162}\) ibid., pp. 5-6. This is a reference to the Armenian genocide in the 1920s.
the mounting irritation of their Führer Adolf Hitler who no longer needed antisemitism.\textsuperscript{163}

In practice, Irving contended, Hitler was not ill-disposed toward the Jews.\textsuperscript{164} But historians continue to be concerned that Hitler’s War exemplifies Irving’s misuse of documentary evidence.\textsuperscript{165} A case in point is the author’s treatment of the demise of the Hungarian Jews.

The Hungarian Jews

As the Second World War progressed, the Nazis began to round up and transport Jews from all over Europe to the death camps. Even where they did not directly control areas with large numbers of Jewish inhabitants, they started to exert pressure for mass murder. The sovereign nation with the largest number of Jews untouched by the Nazis at the end of 1942 was Hungary. During the Second World War, Hungary was ruled by a strongly authoritarian regime led by Admiral Horthy. Following the defeat of the German armies at Stalingrad, Hitler began to put pressure on Admiral Horthy to deliver up the Jews of that country.

Irving reported that Horthy was summoned to a meeting by Hitler on 16 and 17 April 1943, at which the German foreign minister Ribbentrop

\textsuperscript{163} Evans, op. cit., p. 45. Even before 1933, Irving argued, Hitler’s antisemitism was only tactical, and in practice he was not ill-disposed toward the Jews.

\textsuperscript{164} ibid., p. 111.

\textsuperscript{165} Irving trial transcript, section 13.136, p. 155.
was also present. Hitler and Ribbentrop used this opportunity to discuss with Horthy the question of Hungary's Jews, of whom there were perhaps three quarters of a million at that time. The meeting was designed to increase the pressure on Horthy to deport all Hungary's Jews to territories controlled by the Nazi regime.

The minutes of the meeting, according to Irving, were taken by Dr. Paul Otto Schmidt, who, on the second day's meeting, recorded in the minutes one of Ribbentrop's verbatim statements made in Hitler's presence:

On Horthy's retort, what should he do with the Jews then, after he had pretty well taken all means of living from them...he surely couldn't beat them to death...the Reich's Foreign Minister replied that the Jews must either be annihilated or taken to concentration camps. There was no other way.166

Despite this remarkably open language, Horthy remained unconvinced about the need to murder large numbers of Jews.

How did Irving deal with this incriminating document? In Hitler's War he portrays Hitler and his foreign minister von Ribbentrop "arm-twisting" Hungary's regent Horthy to gain compliance with the policy of deportation.167 Irving's summary of the statement read:

The Nazis found it intolerable that eight hundred thousand Jews should still be moving freely around a country in the heart of Europe. For many months Germany had applied pressure for the Hungarian Jews to be turned over to the appropriate German agencies for deportation to reservations in the east. It was

166 Evans, op. cit., p. 92.
167 ibid., p. 93. In the 1977 edition of Hitler's War, Irving, according to Professor Evans, started off by hiding away in a footnote Ribbentrop's statement that all Hungarian Jews had to be either "annihilated or taken to concentration camps."
argued...that so long as they remained, they were potential rumour-mongers, purveyors of defeatism, saboteurs, agents of the enemy secret service, and contact men for an "international Jewry" now embattled against Germany.\textsuperscript{168}

By creating an ambiguity of voices, Irving makes it is difficult to ascertain who is speaking here, Hitler, Ribbentrop, or himself? The reader is left with little doubt that in Irving's view Hungary's Jews were in fact nothing less than saboteurs and enemy agents. He is at pains to obscure this in his account of the meeting with Admiral Horthy.\textsuperscript{169} Irving conveyed the impression that Hitler was actually opposed to the extermination of the Hungarian Jews, demanding merely their confinement in internment camps.\textsuperscript{170} By July 1944, over 430,000 Hungarian Jews had been deported to Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{171}

The 2000 libel trial found that Irving misrepresented the substance of the conversation between Hitler and Horthy about the fate of the Hungarian Jews.\textsuperscript{172} Mr. Justice Gray determined:

I am satisfied that the defendants' criticisms of Irving's treatment of the evidence relating to the [Hitler/Horthy] meeting have substance. In assessing the evidence it appears to me that an objective historian would take into consideration, firstly Hitler's objective in meeting the two leaders: it was to enable the Nazis to get their hands on the Hungarian Jews. Such an historian would ponder whether the language of the minutes...[taken by officials]...can be said to be consistent with a desire on the part of the Nazis to secure the deportation of the Jews and nothing more. It does not appear to me that Irving approached the evidence in an objective manner. In relation to the meeting with

\textsuperscript{168}Broszat, op. cit., pp. 742-745.
\textsuperscript{169}ibid. pp. 742-745.
\textsuperscript{170}Evans, op. cit., p. 96.
\textsuperscript{171}ibid., p. 95.
\textsuperscript{172}Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 197.
Horthy, Irving failed to heed what appears to me to be powerful evidence that on the second day, 17 April, both Hitler and Ribbentrop spoke in uncompromising terms about their general intentions in regard to the Hungarian Jews. In my judgment Irving materially perverts the evidence of what passed between the Nazis and Horthy on 17 April.\textsuperscript{173}

Irving's use of euphemism

In \textit{Hitler's War} Irving used "word-games", glossing over meanings in key translation of original German texts. Irving had not been alone in this, for the Nazi leadership was well known for their use of esoteric language designed to obscure extermination terminology. For instance, in \textit{Hitler's War} Irving deploys semantics in the extermination controversy.\textsuperscript{174} The German word "ausrotten" is generally agreed by historians to mean "to extirpate" or "exterminate".\textsuperscript{175} The word is frequently used in reference to the European Jews by Hitler and many of the top Nazis in their speeches and writings. Irving claimed "ausrotten" signifies "stamping out" or "rooting out".

\textit{Hitler's War} (1977) has Irving translating a conversation between Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi Reichsminister for Eastern Occupied Territories.\textsuperscript{176} In the context of a discussion about the treatment of Jews, the author infers "stamping out" from "ausrotten",

\textsuperscript{173} Irving trial transcript, sections 13.43 and 13.44, pp. 141-42.
\textsuperscript{175} The meaning here is taken from the \textit{Langenscheidt} (1952) \textit{German-English dictionary}. 
concluding that Rosenberg actually meant "transporting the Jews out of the German Reich".\cite{177}

Juergen Pelzer, a professor who teaches German, wrote that "ausrotten" means to "exterminate". In their exchange of correspondence, Irving contended:

The word "ausrotten" means one thing now in 1994, but it meant something very different in the time Hitler used it.\cite{179}

After consultation, Professor Pelzer confirmed that "ausrotten" always meant "to exterminate"; Irving's response, he contended, was another example of post hoc rationalisation. The dispute may have remained academic, except for the fact that Hitler used "ausrotten" in reference to the annihilation of the German people. When speaking about his four-year plan in 1936, the Führer said:

We are going to have to get our armed forces in a fighting state within four years so that we can go to war with the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union should ever succeed in overrunning Germany, it will lead to the "ausrotten" of the German people.\cite{180}

It is difficult to imagine that Hitler meant anything other than the physical liquidation of eighty million German people.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[176] K.S. Stern, op. cit., p. 63.
\item[178] Jaeckel, op. cit., p.31.
\item[179] ibid., p. 32.
\end{footnotes}
Falsification of history-the question of intent

Most historians try to eradicate errors and biases encountered in their research. The evidence suggests that Irving was not so scrupulous when writing the history of the Second World War.\textsuperscript{181}

The 2000 libel trial defendants confronted the task of examining Irving’s writings and speeches over time to apply some benchmarks for evaluating whether Irving deliberately falsified history. This was no easy matter. How could they demonstrate intent?\textsuperscript{182} Was it not all merely a question of interpretation?

Both trial adversaries contended they were credible historians. Yet Irving’s activities were scrutinised in the hostile setting of a libel trial, which was to arbitrate on whether he distorted history and whether he was a Holocaust denier; claims rejected by Irving.\textsuperscript{183} One of the benchmarks applied by the court was to examine allegations against the author of unprofessional behaviour in the matter of the Goebbels diaries affair.

\textsuperscript{180} ibid., p. 31.
\textsuperscript{182} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 181.
The Goebbels diaries affair

As we have seen, a number of historians praised Irving's competence in identifying archival material, frequently obtained through his network of Nazi contacts. In 1992 Irving announced to the British press that he had located Goebbels' original diaries, implying ownership of them. He emphasised to the media that preliminary examination of the diaries showed Goebbels, not Hitler, to be the real architect of the 1938 "Kristallnacht" pogroms.

Irving claimed he was told of the existence in Moscow of the long-lost diaries by Elke Frohlich, the widow of Holocaust historian Professor Broszat, who had previously edited fragments of the Goebbels material. Frohlich informed Irving that the diaries were in the form of microfiches recorded on 1,600 glass plates, each plate holding about 45 pages of the diaries. Frohlich advised Irving to raise the necessary money to access the documentary material and provided the author with the name of the director of the archive.

On 26 May 1992 Irving contacted The Sunday Times editor Andrew Neil, with a view to arranging a financial agreement concerning the diaries. Neil, expressing concern about the authenticity of the diaries,

---

183 Evans, op. cit., p. 38.
184 Ibid., p. 9. Evans cites historian Sir Martin Gilbert, who in 1977 praised Hitler's War as "a scholarly work, the fruit of a decade of wide researches".
185 Jacek, op. cit., p. 13. The "Kristallnacht" pogroms marked the onset of the persecution and later demise of the European Jews.
agreed to the finance needed for Irving's preliminary visit to Moscow to authenticate the diaries. Irving travelled there on 6 June 1992 and was introduced to Vladimir Taraso, the head of the Department of International Contacts at Rosarchiv\textsuperscript{167} by Peter Millar, a *Sunday Times* journalist based in Moscow. Irving, having inspected the material, was satisfied about the authenticity of the diaries. On his return to London, the author entered into an agreement with the *Sunday Times* whereby the newspaper would pay him £75,000 in return for his translation of parts of the diaries.\textsuperscript{168} Irving returned to Moscow on 28 June 1992 and remained there working on the diaries, about which Lipstadt wrote:

The Russian archives granted Irving permission to copy two microfiche plates, each of which held 45 pages of the [Goebbels] diaries. Irving immediately violated his agreement, took many plates, transported them abroad, and had them copied without archival permission. There is serious concern in archival circles that he may have significantly damaged the plates when he did so, rendering them of limited use to subsequent researchers.\textsuperscript{169}

These were serious charges.\textsuperscript{190} The author's treatment of the diaries had become the subject of an acrimonious exchange between Irving and Lipstadt, with Irving taking exception to Lipstadt's accusations.\textsuperscript{191} Irving complained that if Lipstadt's imputation was not corrected, he

\textsuperscript{166} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 12.1, p. 133.  
\textsuperscript{167} ibid., section 12.2, p. 133.  
\textsuperscript{168} *The Sunday Times*, 22 October 1992.  
\textsuperscript{169} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 180.  
\textsuperscript{190} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 132. Irving did not deny smuggling a set of plates out of the archive; nor did he deny removing two more plates to have copies made.  
\textsuperscript{191} Irving trial transcript, op.cit., section 12.3, p. 133.
might be perceives him as an "incompetent historian unfit to be allowed access to archival collections". ¹⁹²

Conceding that he had removed the plates from the Russian archives without permission,¹⁹³ Irving contended that he had done so only because he was concerned to copy the plates before the archive was "sealed from further access".¹⁹⁴

The court accepted the author's explanation that he had not broken any agreement made with the Moscow archive and found that his conduct was not "unbecoming of a reputable historian". Mr. Justice Gray determined: ¹⁹⁵

Accordingly, I have no doubt that it was Irving's intention to return the plates. I am not satisfied that a breach of an implied term of the arrangement has been established by the defendants. In regard to the alleged risk of damage to the plates... I am not prepared to accept that the allegation of risk to the plates is proved.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² ibid., section 12.3, p. 133.
¹⁹³ ibid., section 12.10, p. 133. Unfortunately for Irving the defence in the London libel trial was able to produce Irving's diary entry of 10 June 1992, in which he recorded that he "illicitly borrowed the fiche we had found covering the weeks before the war broke out and took it out of the archives at lunch for copying.", Irving recorded that he took the plates to The Sunday Times photographer, who printed illicit copies to be shown to Neil in London. The plates were returned to the archive the following morning.
¹⁹⁴ ibid., section 12.17, p. 135.
¹⁹⁵ ibid., section 12.4, p. 34.
¹⁹⁶ ibid., section 13.135, p. 155.
Hitler's attitude towards the Jews

Apart from specific critique of Irving's historiography, many historians make the broader criticism of him that he persistently and seriously misrepresents Hitler's attitude towards the Jews, as well as the Führer's role in policies to exterminate them.\footnote{197}{Evans, op. cit., p. 42.}

Did Hitler know about the persecution and genocide of the European Jews? Irving consistently denied that he did. The libel court examined antisemitic public statements known to have been made by Hitler. In each instance, the purpose was to explore to what extent Hitler's antisemitism gave rise to his anti-Jewish policies.\footnote{198}{Ibid., p. 77.}

The defendants contended that any examination of Hitler's role in the persecution of the Jews would indicate that the Führer's antisemitism began very early. By 1920 the German Führer already used derogatory language as "extirpation", "annihilation" and "extermination" when speaking of Jews.\footnote{199}{Irving trial transcript, section 6.4, p. 56.} He referred to Jews as "a plague", "an epidemic", "germ carriers", a "harmful bacillus", a "cancer" and as "maggots".\footnote{200}{Ibid., section 6.3, p. 56.} Hitler consistently sought the removal of Jews from German soil.\footnote{201}{Ibid., op. cit., pp. 168-69.} In Mein Kampf, published in 1926, Hitler acted on his antisemitism by
contemplating the removal of the Jews in the context of a wider theory of the struggle between races for living space.\textsuperscript{202}

When the Nazi Party began to attract mass support in the early 1930s, the antisemitic element, according to the defendants, was played down for political reasons.\textsuperscript{203} Professor Longerich, for the defendants, cited Hitler's role in organising the boycott of Jewish businesses on 1 April 1933 and the enactment, between 1935 and 1937, of various discriminatory laws.

As we have seen, Hitler's antisemitism is inherent in many of his public statements in the 1930s. For instance, on 30 January 1939 the Führer addressed the Reichstag on the "Jewish question". He said:

In my life I have often been a prophet and was generally laughed at. During my struggle for power it was mostly the Jewish people who laughed at my prophesies that I would someday assume the leadership of the state and thereby of the entire Volk and then, among many other things, achieve a solution for the Jewish problem. I believe that in the meantime the then resounding laughter of Jewry in Germany is now choking in their throats. Today I will be a prophet again; if international Jewry within Europe and abroad should succeed once more in plunging the peoples into a world war, then the consequences will not be Bolshevisation of the world and therewith a victory of Jewry, but on the contrary, the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.\textsuperscript{204}

This was a theme to which Hitler reverted on numerous occasions as Nazi policies against the Jews hardened.

\textsuperscript{202} Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. xxxvii.
\textsuperscript{203} Irving trial transcript, section 6.6, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., section 6.7, p. 56.
Irving argued that Hitler "adopted antisemitism only as a means of getting power". The author accepted that Hitler used harsh language in relation to the Jews, but cited the Führer's magnanimity in advocating the solution of the Jewish question by "deportation and resettlement outside the Reich".

Irving claimed justification for his description of Hitler as "the best friend the Jews had in the Third Reich". Dissenting, Mr. Justice Gray found that Hitler's antisemitism had not diminished:

Irving's argument appears to me to be hopeless that after 1933 Hitler lost interest in antisemitism or that he ceased to be antisemitic when he came to power. I am satisfied on the evidence of his public statements that Hitler's antisemitism continued unabated after 1933. I therefore reject as being contrary to the evidence Irving's claim that Hitler ceased to be antisemitic from 1933 onwards.

The Führer's language directly contradicted Irving's claims that Hitler displayed a conciliatory attitude toward the Jews. Mr. Justice Gray held that Irving deserved criticism for denying Hitler's extreme antisemitism.

He said:

The evidence is incontrovertible that Hitler was rabidly antisemitic from the early days. He spoke, in his famous speech of 30 January 1939 and on other occasions, in the most sinister and menacing terms of the fate which awaited the Jews: they were a bacillus which had to be destroyed...I was unconvinced by the strenuous efforts made by Irving to refute the sinister interpretation placed by the defendants on Hitler's pronouncements on the Jewish question from late 1941 onwards.

205 Ibid., section 6.8, p. 56.
206 Ibid., section 6.9, p. 57.
208 Irving trial transcript, section 13.27, p. 139.
"Kristallnacht"

Irving was serious about absolving Hitler from blame for the extermination of the European Jews.\textsuperscript{209} He submitted a series of historical documents\textsuperscript{210} to the libel trial to prove that the Führer defended the Jews of Europe.\textsuperscript{211} His evidence related to the events on "Kristallnacht", a nationwide outburst of anti-Jewish violence on 9-10 November 1938.\textsuperscript{212} Many historians believe that the beginning of the Holocaust can be attributed to events on 9 November 1938 when the Nazi machinery of state unleashed a nation-wide pogrom euphemistically known as "Kristallnacht", or the "night of broken glass". All over Germany, gangs of Nazi and "brownshirt" thugs burned down synagogues, smashed windows of Jewish-owned shops and trashed contents. These elements broke into Jewish houses and apartments, vandalising them and beating up their inhabitants.

Reichminister Goebbels described the activities as a "spontaneous outburst of disapproval" in retaliation for the shooting of a German diplomat in Paris, vom Rath, by a young Polish Jew, Herschel Grynspan, on 7 November 1938.\textsuperscript{213} The occasion, attended by Hitler, \\textsuperscript{209} Rosenbaum, op. cit., pp. 383-384. Rosenbaum here assesses who was to blame for the Jewish pogroms. \\
\textsuperscript{210} These were referred to by the trial defendants as "a chain of documents". \\
\textsuperscript{211} Lipstadt, op. cit., pp. 110-111. \\
\textsuperscript{212} Irving trial transcript, sections 13.14, 13.15 and 13.16, p. 137.  \\
was the anniversary of the failed Hitler "putsch" of 1923, celebrated by various parades and a victory dinner at the Munich Old Town Hall. The attendant demonstrations had been triggered by the murder.

Who was responsible for this mass violence? In his various accounts, Irving blamed Goebbels, claiming that Hitler did not approve of the pogrom. The author argued Hitler did not know about the atrocities until they were well under way, and tried to stop it when he discovered what happened.²¹⁴

The first document produced was an entry in Joseph Goebbels' diary, describing what went on in Munich when Hitler and all the leading Nazis were gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the "putsch".²¹⁵

After Hitler's departure from the building Goebbels made a speech in the course of which he informed his audience of the erupting anti-Jewish demonstrations throughout Germany:

> On his briefings the Führer decided that such demonstrations were neither to be prepared nor organised by the party, but insofar as they are spontaneous in origin, they should likewise not be quelled.²¹⁶

In *Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich*, Irving treated Goebbels' account differently. He wrote:

---
²¹⁴ Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 223. Irving based his claims on interviews with Hitler's entourage.
²¹⁵ Evans, op. cit., p. 53. A full version of Goebbels' diaries was discovered on glass microfiche plates had been discovered by the editor of the Munich Institute for Contemporary history in the former KGB special archives in Moscow in early 1992.
²¹⁶ Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 5.39, p. 22.
Events that evening, November 9, are crucial to the history of what followed. As Goebbels and Hitler set out to attend the Nazi reception in the old city hall, they learned that the police were intervening against anti-Jewish demonstrators in Munich. Hitler remarked that the Police should not crack down too harshly under the circumstances. 'Colossal activity,' the Goebbels entry diary reports, then claims: "I brief the Führer on the affair. He decides: allow the demonstrations to continue. Hold back the police. The Jews must be given a taste of the public anger for a change."\textsuperscript{217}

This seemed solid enough as a source. There was little doubt about the authenticity of the Goebbels diaries. Yet, far from being an accurate account of the German original, Irving's version contained significant errors.\textsuperscript{218} Goebbels' diary passage, accurately translated, reads:

> Big demonstrations against the Jews in Kassel and Dessau, synagogues set on fire and businesses demolished. The death of the German diplomat vom Rath is reported in the afternoon. But now the goose is cooked. I go to the Party reception in the Old Town Hall. Colossal activity. I brief the Führer about the matter. He orders: let the demonstrations go on. Withdraw the police. The Jews must for once feel the people's fury. That is right.\textsuperscript{219}

The principal account of "Kristallnacht" by Irving is to be found in his biography \textit{Goebbels},\textsuperscript{220} but references are also contained in \textit{Hitler's War}. It is revealing how Irving dealt with the evidence.\textsuperscript{221} He wrote:

>[Goebbels and Hitler]...learned that the police were intervening against anti-Jewish demonstrators in Munich. Hitler remarked that the police should not crack down too harshly under the circumstances. 'Colossal activity', the Goebbels diary reports,

\textsuperscript{218} Irving trial transcript, section 13.15, p. 137.
\textsuperscript{219} ibid., section 5.42, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{220} Irving, op. cit., pp. 273-4.
\textsuperscript{221} Gutterplan, op. cit., p.227. Gutterplan cites Irving's reluctance, during the 2000 libel trial, to deal with the various distortions and misrepresentations in his account of the "Kristallnacht" pogrom.
then claims: ‘I brief the Führer on the affair. He decides: allow the demonstrations to continue. Hold back the police. The Jews must be given a taste of the public anger for a change.’

The cumulative effect of Irving’s passage was to convey an impression of a benign Hitler merely ordering the local police not to intervene against some unspecified anti-Jewish demonstrators in Munich. By contrast, the defence contended that Goebbels really recorded Hitler’s order to the police forces to withdraw in case of "demonstrations" against Jews, so that the Jews would feel the "people’s fury". To substantiate Hitler’s culpability, the defendants cited a statement from the memoirs of Hitler’s former press chief Otto Dietrich, written after Germany’s surrender:

Early in November 1938 there took place the burning of the synagogues and the smashing of Jewish shops. These demonstrations were supposed to have been spontaneous. As I learned the following day, they were staged. The inspiration for them was attributed to Goebbels. In reality they had been instigated by Hitler himself. Hitler ordered Goebbels to carry out the action, and Goebbels passed the instructions on to the SA [brownshirts].

Justice Mr. Gray rejected Irving’s argument.

---

222 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., p. 22, section 5.42. Irving also failed to note that the phrase "colossal activity" referred to the meeting in the Town Hall and not to the alleged demonstrations in Munich. "Hold back the Police" was wrong as a translation of the German original, "Polizei zurückziehen". The correct translation was: "withdraw the police". The statement "The Jews must be given a taste of the public anger for a change" was also erroneous as a translation of the last sentence in the diary’s original text. Nowhere did the words "taste" or "for a change" occur.
224 Evans, op. cit., p. 54.
226 Irving, Goebbels, op. cit., p. 277.
In short, the court accepted that all available evidence pointed to Hitler's backing of the pogroms.\textsuperscript{227} According to Mr. Justice Gray, Irving distorted the evidence in his efforts to exonerate Hitler.\textsuperscript{228} He determined:

In my judgment the account given by Irving of the interventions by the Nazi leaders during the night of 9-10 November distorts the evidence...similarly I accept the evidence of Evans that [Hitler's intervention] was not a general instruction to "halt the madness but rather to stop acts of arson against the Jewish shops and the like, so permitting other acts of destruction to continue and Jewish homes and synagogues to be set on fire....[Irving's] claim that during that night Hitler did everything he could to prevent violence against the Jews and their property is in my judgment based upon misrepresentation, misconstruction and omission of the documentary evidence....Goebbels' diary entry... is clear evidence of Hitler's approval of the pogrom.\textsuperscript{229}

Mr. Justice Gray found that Irving deserved censure for "ignoring or deliberately suppressing material when it runs counter to his arguments".\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{227} Irving trial transcript, section 5.38, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{228} ibid., section 13.15, p. 137.
\textsuperscript{229} ibid., sections 13.18, 13.19, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{230} ibid., section 13.18, p.137.
The fate of the Berlin Jews:

If his interpretation of Hitler's responsibility for the events of "Kristallnacht" proved fallible, how would Irving view the important issue of the Führer’s role in the extermination of the European Jews?231

We have seen that Irving regarded his own research as sacrosanct, deriding other historians’ contributions. How may we evaluate the author's account of the fate of the Berlin Jews during the Second World War? In 1941 some 164,000 Jews remained alive in Germany, albeit under increasingly restrictive conditions. Of those, approximately 76,000 resided in Berlin.232 In October 1941, following the invasion of the Soviet Union, the compulsory deportation of Jews from Berlin to the East commenced under worsening conditions.

Advancing German armies were followed by four heavily armed task forces ("Einsatzgruppen") organised by the Security Service of the SS. These task forces indiscriminately started shooting Jews found in the occupied territory. By 15 October 1941, task force A alone, working in the Baltic area, was reporting it had executed 118,430 Jews.233 Actions continued through 1942 and well into 1943, accounting for over a million dead.234

---

231 Evans, op. cit., p. 70.
232 Irving trial transcript, section 5.90, p. 30.
233 Evans, op. cit., p. 71.
234 Lipstadt, op. cit., pp. 78-79.
The arrival of many thousands of German, Austrian, and Bohemian Jews in the ghettos forced the Nazi leadership to make room for them. The SS began setting up special camps designed for rapid mass extermination by poison gas, initially in mobile gassing vans.235

The Nazi leadership paid particular attention to deporting Jews from Berlin for it was considered embarrassing for Jews to be visible in the nation's capital. Goebbels, who as Propaganda Minister, had also been the party Gauleiter236 of Berlin since 1925, noted in his diary on 20 August 1941:

Berlin must become a city free of Jews. It is infuriating and a scandal that 76,000 Jews can still loiter around in the capital of the German Reich, mostly as parasites.237

On 23 September 1942, Goebbels made it clear in a speech to some sixty German newspaper editors in the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin that he wanted the German press to keep silent about what they all knew was the outcome for the remaining Jews in Berlin:

There are still 76,000 Jews in Berlin. They know with deadly certainty that as the war progresses they will be packed off to the East and delivered up to a murderous fate. They already feel the inevitable harshness of physical extermination and therefore they harm the Reich whilst they still live.238

This suggested that there was little doubt about what Goebbels intended to convey. The authenticated speech was transcribed and

---

236 Regional party leaders.
237 Evans, op. cit., p. 72.
passed by the Polish resistance to the British Foreign Office in May 1943. Irving cast doubt on the authenticity of the document, arguing:

It is a very dubious document, which needed a lot more digesting before it was put out to the startling and marvelling world the way it was put out a few weeks ago. The speech was actually on English paper typed out on an English typewriter in the English archives. A lot of work had to be done on it. I found the actual Polish origins of it and the people who have provided it, the Polish intelligence service. I think it is a second hand report, not a direct verbatim transcript in any sense.

The original author of the document, when requested to validate the contents, made it clear that he reported Goebbels’ remarks impartially. If the transcriber had intended to fabricate damning quotes by Goebbels, as Irving alleged, it seemed unlikely that only three sentences were devoted to the fate of the Jews. Still denying the authenticity of the Goebbels speech, Irving retorted:

We have much better sources than that on Goebbels and his role in this particular crime. Goebbels’ true diaries leave no doubt that he knew perfectly well what was going on.

Irving maintained Hitler was neither consulted nor informed about the deportation of Jews from Berlin.

---

238 Broszat, op. cit., p. 143.
239 The Goebbels speech was discovered in 1994.
241 Broszat, op. cit., p. 143.
242 Searchlight, op. cit., p. 7.
The Jews of Europe

Anxious to portray Hitler as adopting a non-confrontational posture towards the Jews, Irving contended that until the autumn of 1943 the Führer had been kept ignorant of the policy of annihilating millions of Jews from all over Europe. As proof of his assertion he referred to remarks made by Hitler claiming the Jews had started the war.244 In *Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich* Irving interprets a conversation between Himmler and Heydrich from Hitler's "Table Talk" ("Tagegesprekke") for 25 October 1941:

Let nobody tell me that despite that we can't park them [the Jews] in the marshier parts of Russia! "By the way", he added, "it is not a bad thing that public rumour attributes to us a plan to exterminate the Jews". He pointed out, however, that he had no intention of starting anything at present: "There is no point in adding to the difficulties at a time like this!"245

According to Professor Evans, Irving's claim was pure invention. The court heard an authorised translation of the identical extract from Hitler's "Table Talk":

In the Reichstag, I prophesied to Jewry, the Jew will disappear from Europe if war is not avoided. This race of criminals has the two million dead of the [First World] war on its conscience, and now hundreds of thousands again. Nobody can tell me: but we can't send them into the morass! For who bothers about our people? Its good if the terror (schrecken) that we are exterminating the Jews goes before us... I'm forced to pile up an enormous amount of things myself; but that doesn't mean that what I'm forced to take cognisance of without reacting to it

243 ibid., p. 7.
244 Irving, op. cit., p. 377.
245 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 5.125, p. 36.
immediately, just disappears. It goes into an account; one day the book is taken out. I had to remain inactive for a long time against the Jews too. There's no sense in artificially making difficulties for one self; the more clever one operates, the better... 246

Mr. Gray noted a number of errors in Irving's version when compared with more authenticated accounts of the conversation: in the German original there was no reference to Russia; the action described was not the innocuous-sounding "park them" as characterised by Irving, but "send them", a more sinister connotation. 247 The murderous implications of Hitler's statement were corroborated by evidence of a Himmler order to the SS in the area of the Pript marshes. On 30 July 1941 Himmler decreed: "All Jews must be shot. Drive Jew-women into the marshes". 248 This language indicated something very different from Irving's euphemistic expression "parking them in the marshier parts of Russia".

Irving's version contained more errors; the author had Hitler saying: "By the way...it is not a bad thing that public rumour attributes to us a plan to exterminate the Jews". Hitler's actual words were: "It's good if the terror that we are exterminating Jewry goes before us". The court found that Irving had changed meaning in several important respects. 249

---

246 ibid., section 5.125, p. 36.
247 ibid., p. 36.
248 ibid., p. 73.
249 ibid., p. 73.
Irving's rendering of the German word "schrecken" as meaning "public rumour" was misleading, according to Mr. Gray,\textsuperscript{250} noting that Irving's use of "rumour" failed to convey the stark element of terror associated with "schrecken".\textsuperscript{251}

If it was Irving's contention that Hitler forbade mass executions of Jews, his efforts to prove Hitler's innocence ran into difficulties in the 2000 libel trial. The defendants introduced more evidence of Hitler's complicity, arguing that it came from an important and reliable witness. In 1941, a general Bruns had been stationed in Riga. In 1945, when in captivity, Bruns spoke about the killings of the Berlin Jews to fellow prisoners.\textsuperscript{252} His words were surreptitiously recorded, so there were no reasons to doubt, as Irving had done, that Bruns was telling the truth. The transcript authentically records Bruns as reporting a junior officer named Altermeyer telling him that the Berlin Jews were to be shot "in accordance with the Führer's orders". According to the same transcript, after Hitler had been informed of the shooting, Altermeyer showed Bruns another order which read:

\begin{quote}
Here is an order just issued, prohibiting mass-shootings on that scale from taking place in future. They are to be carried out more discreetly.\textsuperscript{253}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{250} ibid., p. 73.
\textsuperscript{251} ibid., p. 73. Evans mentions that Irving even claimed that this word meant "a childish kind of spook," confusing it perhaps deliberately, with "Schreckgespenst", which was not the word Hitler used.
\textsuperscript{252} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{253} Irving trial transcript, section 5.113, p.34.
The evidence inferred, the defence believed, that Hitler personally ordered the Riga executions. When informed, Hitler ordered that shootings of this kind should continue but "on a more discreet basis". The exhortation for caution perhaps reflected the Führer's concern about public reaction to the murders should the news emerge.

Irving rejected such interpretation, which ran counter to his argument that Hitler prohibited the mass shootings of Jews. The author cast doubt on the veracity of Bruns' statements, disputing the covertly recorded words of Bruns about events in Riga. Irving equivocated, accepting Bruns as a reliable and credible witness. Nonetheless he doubted parts of Bruns' testimony, in particular those indicating Hitler had personally ordered the shootings. The author interpreted the first part of Bruns' statement as meaning that Hitler ordered the mass killings to cease, dismissing the remainder as nothing more than a "sneering aside by Altemeyer that the shooting should be carried out more cautiously". The court accepted Bruns' evidence of Hitler's knowledge. In summary, Judge Gray determined:

An objective historian is obliged to be even-handed in his approach to historical evidence. I consider that Irving was not even-handed in his treatment in Hitler's War of the account given by general Bruns of the shooting of thousands of Jews in Riga.

---

254 ibid., section 5.113, p. 34.
255 ibid., p. 211.
256 Evans, op. cit., p. 211. Evans describes how Irving suggested that Bruns had sought to exculpate himself before his hidden British listeners by blaming Hitler.
257 Irving trial transcript, section 5.117, p. 35.
258 ibid., section 5.113, p. 34. Reference is made to Bruns in the introduction of the American edition of Hitler's War, where Irving refers to Hitler's "renewed orders that such mass murders were to stop forthwith".
Irving appears readily to accept that part of Bruns' account which
refers to Altemeyer bringing him the order which prohibited the
mass shootings from taking place in the future. On the other
hand Irving takes no account of the fact that, according to Bruns,
it was only shootings "on that scale" which were not to take place
in future.\textsuperscript{259}

Gray continued:

My conclusion is that in these respects Irving has perverted the
sense of Bruns' account. I was unpersuaded by the explanation
offered by Irving for his treatment of the evidence.\textsuperscript{260}

In further efforts to distance Hitler from mass shootings of Jews,
Irving drew on evidence from the Führer's "table talk"
("tagegesprekke"). In \textit{Hitler's War} (1991 edition), the author claimed
Hitler had said: "with the Jews too I have found myself remaining
inactive". From this Irving extrapolated the proposition that Hitler had
"no intention of starting anything at present".\textsuperscript{261} The trial defence
submitted that the statement meant Hitler saw himself "no longer" as
inactive towards the Jews, arguing that the time of inactivity was over.
Hitler, they contended, was talking in the present tense about the Jews,
not in the future sense.\textsuperscript{262}

Undaunted, Irving claimed that Hitler "continued to be the Jews'
friend at least until October 1943". Mr. Gray suggested that the author

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{259} ibid., section 13.24, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{260} ibid., section 13.24, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{262} Evans, op. cit., p. 74.
\end{flushleft}
displayed "a distinct air of unreality" deriving from his persistence in that claim. 263

Irving's methodology: the "snapshot" view of history

Irving introduced further evidence of Hitler's ignorance of the mass killing of German Jews deported to the East. He relied on entries in a telephone log kept by SS leader and German Police Chief Heinrich Himmler, describing his evidence as a key link in his "chain of documents". 264 The log entry for 30 November 1941 appeared often in Irving's works, reflecting the importance which the author attached to his evidence. In 1977 Irving wrote in Hitler's War:

Himmler was summoned to the "Wolf's Lair" for a secret conference with Hitler, at which the fate of the Berlin Jews was clearly raised. At 1.30 p.m. Himmler was obliged to telephone from Hitler's bunker to Heydrich the explicit order that Jews were not to be liquidated. 265

Himmler's telephone log, Irving argued, confirms Hitler's non-complicity in the genocide of Jews. The log entry, a "snapshot of history", he contended, proves that a benevolent Führer ordered the cessation of Jewish deportations, motivated by humanitarianism. From his evidence, Irving extrapolated a "universal Führer order forbidding Jewish deportations". 266

263 Ibid., section 13.26, p. 139.
264 Evans, op. cit., p. 40.
266 Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 232.
The log entry is in Himmler's own handwriting; dated 1.30 p.m. on 30 November 1941, it summarises a telephone conversation between Himmler and Security Minister Heydrich. At the top of the page the entry states:

Telephone conversations 30. 11. 1941. "Wolfschanze." 267

Verhaftung Dr Jekelius
Angeb. Sohn Molotow.
Judentransport aus Berlin.
keine Liquidierung.

(Arrest of Dr Jekelius
Supposed son of Molotow.
Jew-transport from Berlin
no liquidation.)

In *Hitler's War*, Irving interpreted the notation:

At 1.30 p.m. from Hitler's bunker, Himmler had to pass on to Heydrich the explicit order that Jews were not to be liquidated. 268

This suggested a surprising halt to the extermination programmes, well under way at this time. Did Hitler order a change in policy? Irving claimed he did. The entry, he believed signified "incontrovertible evidence of a Hitler order on 30 November 1941 that there was to be no liquidation of the Jews". 269

Yet Himmler's log clearly referred to "one" transport of "Jews from Berlin". The trial defendants were quick to perceive a flaw in Irving's source-information, arguing that Irving's "universal Hitler order to stop

---

267 Hitler's military headquarters in Prussia.
the shootings" was not supported by evidence.\textsuperscript{270} Nevertheless, Irving considered Himmler's logbook entry as a trump card in his refutation of the Holocaust.

Holocaust historian Lucy Dawidowicz noted several discrepancies in the log text.\textsuperscript{271} Himmler's telephone message, Dawidowicz discovered, was entered in four short lines, although Irving had only cited the last two lines:

\begin{center}
Judentransport aus Berlin
keine Liquidierung.\textsuperscript{272}
\end{center}

The two lines constituted the basis for Irving's proof. Dawidowicz reasoned that the telephone conversation between Himmler and Heydrich referred to a "single" trainload of Jews, which was established to be one from Berlin to Riga.

There was no evidence from the log entry that Himmler had been summoned to Hitler's bunker, as Irving claimed. Nor could it be substantiated, as Irving had attempted, that Himmler conducted a conversation with Hitler before talking to Heydrich on the telephone. Irving's assertions, Dawidowicz concluded, were figments of the author's imagination.\textsuperscript{273}

\textsuperscript{270} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 5.97, p. 31. In the introduction to \textit{Hitler's War} Irving describes the note cited as "incontrovertible evidence" that Hitler issued a general order prohibiting the liquidation of the Jews generally.
\textsuperscript{271} E. Alexander, 'What the Holocaust Does Not Teach', in \textit{Commentary}, February 1993, pp. 34-38.
\textsuperscript{272} Literally translated: "Transport of Jews from Berlin. No liquidation".
\textsuperscript{273} Broszat, op. cit., p. 760. In their separate 1977 reviews of \textit{Hitler's War}, historians Broszat, Trevor-Roper and Jaeckel had demonstrated Irving's manipulation of evidence.
Moreover, Dawidowicz surmised, if Hitler had personally intervened to stop the killing of a single trainload of Berlin Jews on their arrival in Riga, then this strongly suggested the Führer was making an exception here, and that he therefore knew that there was a general policy of killing them on arrival.  

What had happened to that particular transport of Jews from Berlin? Had they returned home? Dawidowicz, in collaboration with German historian Jaeckel examined Nazi records in relation to the Riga transport; the particular Berlin Jews who had arrived in Riga on 27 November 1941. Nazi records showed that Friedrich Jeckeln, SS police chief in the region, took the Berlin Jews off the train on 30 November and had them machine-gunned into pits with the rest.

Irving's interpretation of the log message still did not make sense. Dawidowicz returned to the original hand-written Himmler note; to understand the meaning of the text, the preceding two lines of the message needed to be read in conjunction with Irving's two quoted lines. The complete message now read:

---

274 Evans, op. cit., pp. 79-80.
276 Evans, op. cit., p. 80.
277 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 5.106, p. 33. In relation to the entry in Himmler's log for December 1941, Irving said that he misread Himmler's spidery
Verhaftung Dr. Jekelius (name not fully decipherable)
Angeb[l]ich Sohn Molotovs
Judentransport aus Berlin
keine Liquidierung.\textsuperscript{278}

The last two lines now made sense; Himmler had called Heydrich to
instruct him that a Dr. Jekelius, (presumed to be the Soviet Foreign
Minister’s son), was to be taken into custody. The message suggested
that Jekelius could be located in the transport of Jews from Berlin, and
unlike the rest of the transport, was not to be liquidated.

Where was the evidence for Irving’s “wider significance” claim?
Rather, it seemed to Dawidowicz, this revealed evidence of Irving’s
flawed interpretation of primary sources. Other historians also
entertained misgivings about Irving’s “snapshot” methodology.\textsuperscript{279}

Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg subsequently confirmed Jaeckel’s
and Dawidowicz’s argument refuting Irving’s construct of a benign
Hitler.\textsuperscript{280} He wrote:

That transport was liquidated. That order was either ignored or it
was too late. The transport had already arrived in Riga and they
did not know what to do with these thousand people so they shot
them that very same evening. If anything it proves the opposite
from what was intended by Irving: that for Hitler to veto an order
for liquidation implies that liquidation was something that was
ongoing.\textsuperscript{281}

\textsuperscript{278} Alexander, op. cit., p. 35. The actual translation is: “Arrest Dr. Jekelius. Supposed
Molotov’s son. Jew-transport of Jews from Berlin. No liquidation”. In deciphering
Himmler’s Gothic script and its meaning, Dawidowicz acknowledged the assistance of
a Dr. Fred Grubel, director of the Leo Baeck Institute in Germany.

\textsuperscript{279} Irving, op. cit., p. 504.

\textsuperscript{280} Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 234.

\textsuperscript{281} R. Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, Quadrangle Books, Chicago,
Dawidowicz, Jaeckel and Hilberg concurred that it was unlikely that Hitler ordered cessation of mass murder.\textsuperscript{282} Rather, they contended, the evidence confirmed Hitler as the architect of genocide. Irving was forced to concede that a key link in his chain of documents was "without substance."\textsuperscript{283}

Mr. Justice Gray, the Irving libel trial judge, found that Irving was in error in his claim that the instruction "Keine liquidierung" (no liquidation) had emanated from Hitler and intended to apply to Jews generally.\textsuperscript{284} There was no evidence, according to Mr. Gray, of Hitler "summoning" Himmler to his headquarters, "obliging" the latter to telephone an order to Heydrich to halt the liquidation of the Jews. Mr. Gray suggested that Irving's misuse of the evidence was substantial, adding that most historians, unlike Irving, would not tamper with facts or deny ugly truths about the past.\textsuperscript{285}

In this respect Irving conceded his mistake. In mitigation he argued that because he had found the document "difficult to decipher". However, his defence was also rejected by the court.\textsuperscript{286} Mr. Gray summed up his concerns about Irving's research:

\begin{quote}
Whist I accept that an historian is entitled to speculate, he must spell out clearly to the reader when he is speculating rather than reciting established facts. In Hitler's War (1977 edition) Irving
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{282} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{283} Evans, op. cit., p. 81.
\item \textsuperscript{284} Irving trial transcript, section 13.21, p. 138.
\item \textsuperscript{285} Ibid, section 13.21., p. 138.
\item \textsuperscript{286} Ibid., section 13.23, p. 139. Irving claimed that the document had been difficult to decipher.
\end{itemize}
presents Himmler’s note as "incontrovertible evidence" that Hitler issued a general order prohibiting the liquidation of Jews. [The evidence]...supports the view that Hitler was complicit in the deportation and killing of Jews in 1941.287

Selective quotation:

Irving stood accused of biased historical interpretation.288 Despite this, he still tried to convince the libel court of Hitler's innocence of the mass murder of the European Jews. The author submitted an extract from Goebbels' diaries recording a meeting with Hitler on 21 November 1941. Goebbels wrote:

The Führer also completely agrees with my views with reference to the Jewish question. He wants an energetic policy against the Jews, which, however, does not cause us unnecessary difficulties.289

The author contended that Goebbels displayed a far more uncompromising attitude than Hitler towards the Jews. Paraphrasing the Goebbels passage, Irving wrote:

...[Hitler] again instructed Goebbels to pursue a policy against the Jews that does not cause us endless difficulties.290

The defendants accused him of distorting the meaning of the diary entry by omitting reference to "Hitler wanting an energetic policy" towards the Jews. They confronted Irving with having deleted the first

288 Evans, op. cit., P. 4.
289 Irving trial transcript, section 5.127, p. 36.
290 ibid., section 5.127, p. 36.
sentence recording Hitler’s agreement with Goebbels’ views about the Jewish question. The court upheld the contention that Irving misrepresented Hitler’s views on the Jewish question.²⁹¹

Whether or not Irving had manipulated evidence became the subject of a heated debate in the trial courtroom. Professor Longerich presented evidence of a number of authenticated statements by Goebbels, Frank and Himmler in an effort to establish Hitler’s complicity in the Holocaust. Of these, one was of particular significance since it related to a key speech Hitler made to the Gauleiter on 12 December 1941. Goebbels’ diary record verified Hitler’s role in the extermination of the Jews. The Goebbels extract read:

As concerns the Jewish question, the Führer is determined to make a clear sweep. He has prophesied to the Jews that if they once again brought about a word war they would experience their own extermination (“vernichtung”). This was not just an empty phrase. The World War is there, the extermination of Jewry (“Judentum”) must be the necessary consequence. This question must be seen without sentimentality. We are not here to have sympathy with the Jews, rather we sympathise with our own German people. If the German people have now once again sacrificed as many as 16,000 dead in the Eastern campaign, then the authors of this bloody conflict must pay with their lives.²⁹²

Literal translation of this passage leaves little doubt that Hitler was actively contemplating his intention to exterminate the European Jews.

Irving inferred that the reference to extermination was not indicative of

²⁹¹ ibid., section 13.31, p. 140.
²⁹² ibid., section 1.28, p. 37.
what Hitler had said, but rather "Goebbels expressing his own view". When pressed under cross-examination, Irving conceded that it was impossible to deduce which parts of the diary extract record Goebbels' own thoughts and which parts recorded what Hitler said. He remained reluctant to accept the translation of "vernichtung" as extermination. Yet the court was satisfied that the evidence strongly supported the conclusion that Goebbels was reporting what Hitler had said to the Gauleiter on 12 December 1941. It was incontrovertible evidence, Mr. Gray averred, that Hitler had "indeed given instructions for the liquidation of the Jews".

The defendants cited a contemporaneous account by leading Nazi Hans Frank soon after Hitler's speech to the Gauleiter in Berlin. Frank wrote:

In Berlin we were told 'why all this trouble'? We cannot use them [the Jews] in the Ostland or the Reichscommissariat either. Liquidate them yourselves! We must destroy the Jews wherever we encounter them and wherever it is possible in order to preserve the entire structure of the Third Reich.

Mr. Gray accepted that Frank was here passing on a direction by Hitler to the General Government from Berlin to liquidate the Jews. Any doubt about the meaning of this speech was dispelled by a further passage from Frank's diary presaging the extermination of the Jews by gassing:

---

293 ibid., section 5.145, p. 39.
294 ibid., section 13.29, p. 140.
295 ibid., section 5.129, p. 37.
We...cannot shoot these 3.5 million Jews. We can't poison them. But we will, however, be able to undertake interventions which in some way lead to a successful annihilation, and indeed in connection with the large-scale measures to be undertaken from the Reich and to be discussed. The General Government must become just as free of Jews as the Reich is. Where and how that happens is a matter for the institutions which we must put into action and create here and the effectiveness I will report on to you in good time.  

Irving contended that logical interpretation of this statement signified that Frank had challenged the authorities in Berlin to liquidate the Jews themselves and not the other way around. The court rejected Irving's claim that "Hitler could not have been implicated on this occasion" because he happened to be away in East Prussia when the instruction to liquidate the Jews was issued. Dissenting, the Lipstadt/Penguin defence countered that in all probability Hitler was in Berlin at the material time, since it could be reliably established from the records that the Führer did not leave Berlin for the East until 16 December 1941, well after this event.

Justice Gray remarked that the evidence strongly reinforces the conclusion that Frank was "reporting Hitler's instructions to the assembled Gauleiter on 12 December 1941".

---

296 ibid., section 5.129, p. 37.
297 ibid., section 5.129, p. 37.
298 Irving, op. cit., p. 428.
299 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 13.29, p. 139.
The trial court heard fragmentary evidence of an authentic Himmler manuscript noting a conversation he had with the Führer on 18 December 1941. The excerpt contained the words:

Jewish question/ to be extirpated as partisans (ausrotten als Partisane).\(^{300}\)

Irving interpreted the note as meaning that "only partisan Jews were to be executed as partisans". Opposing this, the defendants argued that on the contrary the note demonstrated Hitler's intention to continue and intensify the mass murder of Soviet Jews. The court held the evidence contained in the Himmler note to be incontrovertible and rebuked Irving for his efforts to refute the sinister interpretation placed on Hitler's pronouncements on the Jewish question. In the many instances cited Irving had sought to "misrepresent Hitler's views on the Jewish question".\(^{301}\) The author's portrayal of Hitler and his attitude towards the Jews, according to Mr. Gray, are at odds with the evidence:

I am satisfied that, most, if not all, of the pronouncements made by Hitler which are relied on by the defendants do bear the sinister connotation which they put on them.\(^{302}\)

\(^{300}\) ibid., section 5.130, p. 37.
\(^{301}\) ibid., section13.31, p. 140.
\(^{302}\) ibid., section 13.29, p. 139.
The Schegelberger note

Irving repeatedly referred to another key document "proving Hitler's innocence in the matter of extermination of the Jews."\textsuperscript{303} It was the "Schegelberger note" mentioned in the 1991 preface of Hitler's War:

[This is]...an extraordinary note dictated by Staatssekretar Schegelberger in the Reich Ministry of Justice in the spring of 1942: "Reich Minister Lammers", this states, referring to Hitler's top civil servant," informed me that the Führer has repeatedly pronounced that he wants the solution of the Jewish Question put off until after the war is over". Whatever way one looks at this document, it is incompatible with the notion that Hitler had ordered an urgent liquidation programme.\textsuperscript{304}

The author continued:

No other historians have quoted this document, possibly finding its content hard to reconcile with their obsessively held views about Hitler's responsibility for the extermination of the Jews.\textsuperscript{305}

Describing the note as "the most cardinal piece of proof in this entire story of what Hitler knew about what was going on," Irving asserted:

Hitler didn't know about it. This lie about Hitler must be refuted because it proved the Nazis' determination to liquidate all of the Jews "was not supported by documentary evidence".\textsuperscript{306}

The author claimed the undated document existed from the spring of 1942 and records what Schegelberger had been told by Reichsminister

\textsuperscript{303} Evans, op. cit., p. 82. The document referred to is also a part of Nuremberg trial document BA R 43 II/4023, fol. 2.
\textsuperscript{304} D. Irving, Hitler's War, 1991 ed., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{306} Evans, op. cit., p. 82.
Lammers at the Reichskanzlerat. Irving believed the note represented vital evidence of Hitler's wish in 1942 to postpone the "Jewish question" until after the end of the war.

In 1977 German historian Eberhard Jaeckel had investigated Irving's claim. In a letter to the editor of the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Irving accused Jaeckel of failing to mention several fresh documents supporting evidence of a "Hitler decree for the postponement of the 'Final Solution' until the war's end". The author surmised the "Hitler decree" existed at the time of the Nuremberg trials in 1945, but reported the disappearance of the document since then. Jaeckel subsequently located a copy and the original document respectively among Nuremberg trial data and in the archives of the West German Government.

What did the document actually say? It appeared to Jaeckel that it referred to the "Jewish question". The extract stated in part:

Reichsminister Lammers informed me that the Führer had repeatedly declared to him that he wished to see the solution of the Jewish Question put back until after the war. Accordingly, the

---

309 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 23 September 1977. The Irving correspondence to the editor was published in full in this paper.
310 Jaeckel, op. cit., p. 34.
311 ibid., p. 34. The document has neither a heading nor a signature, according to Professor Jaeckel and for that reason alone an authentication became necessary if it was to become credible. Professor Jaeckel established the document to have been placed in a volume entitled: "Treatment of the Jews", catalogue number R 22/52.
312 Evans, op. cit., p. 82. More precisely, the original document was located in a folder of Reich Ministry of Justice files held at the German Federal Archives in Berlin (R 22/52).
present discussions possess a merely theoretical value in the opinion of Reich Minister Lammers. But he will be in all cases concerned that fundamental decisions are not reached by a surprise intervention from another agency without his knowledge.\textsuperscript{314}

Professor Jaeckel noted that the memorandum was not written on official notepaper; it had no date, no signature, no security classification, and indeed, none of the abbreviations used by the leading officials in the Ministry of Justice when signing memoranda. It did not even have an internal reference number.\textsuperscript{315} Nonetheless, revealing his trump card, Irving contended that this was evidence that Hitler had not authorised the extermination of Jewry.

Jaeckel sought to establish the authenticity of the document, noting the fragment to be part of a miscellaneous Nazi Ministry of Justice file.\textsuperscript{316} It was not, it seemed to Jaeckel, an official file, but rather a collection of loose papers compiled by the Allies after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{317} In particular, the file contained a letter dated 12 March 1942, in which Nazi Minister of Justice Schlegelberger addressed Lammers, Chief Officer of the Chancellery, then at the Führer's Headquarters. Schlegerberger advised that he was "informed of the outcome of a meeting of March 6, 1942, concerning the treatment of Jews and "mischlinge", (part-Jews). The letter dealt with the legal treatment of Jewish "mischlinge" of the "first and second degree". Professor Jaeckel

\textsuperscript{314} Jaeckel, op. cit., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{315} ibid., p. 35.
surmised that the document was probably linked with discussions at that time about the fate of 'half-Jews' and Jews in 'mixed marriages'.

This interpretation was also advanced by several historians of Nazi Germany and by Irving himself.

The question of the treatment "half-Jews" and Jews in "mixed marriages" was originally discussed at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942. However, the Wannsee conference, which had reached consensus about how the European Jews were to be exterminated, left unresolved the question of "half-Jews" and Jews in "mixed marriages," following differences of opinion which had arisen among the representatives from various different agencies involved.

The note, now established to have been written by Schegelberger, was an account of his conversation with Minister Lammers from their meeting on 10 April 1942. The real point of the reference, according to Jaeckel, was that the document detailed procedures to deprive German Jews of their civil rights.

The memo did not, as Irving argued, refer to the timing of the 'Final Solution' of the Jews. Here again Irving manipulated evidence to contrive proof of Hitler's innocence of genocide. Professor Jaeckel thought it significant that the note referred only to the fate of "half-

---

317 Evans, op. cit., p. 83
318 Jaeckel, op. cit., p. 35.
320 Evans, op. cit., p. 83.
321 ibid., p. 84.
Jews" and Jews in "mixed marriages". There was no mention of views expressed by Hitler about postponement of the extermination of Jews. Many historians dismissed Irving's "evidence" of a universal Hitler decree, warning about the gravity of Irving's apparent deception.

The libel court revisited the issue of the Schegelberger note. Mr. Justice Gray found that the memorandum sheds important light on Irving's historiography. Noting a number of irregularities about the document, Mr. Gray said:

It is very doubtful if the Schegelberger note is evidence of a wish on the part of Hitler to postpone the Jewish question until after the war, that is, to take no offensive action against them [the Jews] of any kind until after the cessation of hostilities. I am persuaded that it is likely that the note is concerned with the complex problems thrown up by the question of how to treat half-Jews ("mischlinge"). There is no support in the documentary evidence for Irving's contention that there was on this occasion general discussion of the Jewish question. The balance of the evidence in my view suggests that it was decided to refer the issue of the "mischlinge" to Hitler for his decision. The note simply records what Hitler decided on that limited question, and does not possess the significance which Irving attaches to it.

---

323 Evans, op. cit., p. 85.
324 Jaeckel, op. cit., p. 35; see also Evans, op. cit., p. 86. After the first critique of Irving's interpretation of the document, Eberhard Jaeckel had written that Irving knew full well how limited its significance was. "But", Jaeckel added, "he only ever sees and collects what fits his story, and even now he will not let himself be dissuaded from understanding what he wants to by the phrase 'postponement of the solution of the Jewish question'".
325 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 13.32, p. 140.
326 ibid., section 13.25, p. 140.
It seemed to Mr. Gray that no reputable historian would have contemplated only one possible interpretation of the Schegelberger note, as Irving had done. He summarised:

Irving glossed over many doubts which exist about the document. An unbiased historian would have put before his readers the problems and doubts about the document. I must say that this is another instance of deliberate distortion.\textsuperscript{327}

**Hitler’s knowledge of the final solution**

Few historians doubt Hitler’s complicity in the extermination of the European Jews. Despite Irving’s assertions to the contrary, available evidence supports the view that Hitler was the central instigator of the liquidation of the Jews.

On 19 August 1941 Goebbels recorded Hitler’s determination to exterminate the Jewish people:

The Führer is convinced his prophesy in the Reichstag is becoming a fact: that should Jewry succeed in again provoking a new war, this would end with their liquidation. It is coming true these weeks and months with a certainty that appears almost sinister. In the east the Jews are paying the price, in Germany they have paid in part and they will have more to pay in the future.\textsuperscript{328}

After a visit with Hitler in Berlin on 24 February 1942 Goebbels again reflected on Hitler’s wrath about the Jews. He wrote:

The Führer again voices his determination to remorselessly cleanse Europe of its Jews. There can be no sentimental feelings

\textsuperscript{327} ibid., section 5.161, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{328} ibid., p. 143.
here. The Jews have deserved the catastrophe that they are now experiencing. They shall experience their own liquidation together with the destruction of our enemies. We must accelerate this process with cold brutality. By doing so we are doing an inestimable service to humanity.\(^329\)

Yet Irving claimed there is not one document to show that Hitler ordered the extermination of the Jews.\(^330\) In *Hitler's War* (1977 edition), the author argued in several passages that the mass killings were kept from Hitler's knowledge. He wrote:

> The ghastly secrets of Auschwitz and Treblinka were well kept. Goebbels wrote a frank summary of them in his diary on 27 March 1942, but evidently held his tongue when he met Hitler two days later, for he quotes only Hitler's remark: "The Jews must get out of Europe. If need be, we must resort to the most brutal methods".\(^331\)

In *Hitler's War* (1991 edition), Irving paraphrased Goebbels in describing the horrors of Jewish killing:

> The Jews have nothing to laugh about now", commented Goebbels. But he evidently never discussed these realities with Hitler. Thus this two-faced Minister dictated after a further visit to Hitler on 26 April: 'I have once again talked over the Jewish question with the Führer. His position on this problem is merciless. He wants to force the Jews right out of Europe.'\(^332\)

Professor Evans contended that Irving's treatment of Goebbels' 27 March 1941 diary entry ignores Hitler's awareness of what was

\(^{329}\) ibid., p. 143.

\(^{330}\) W. Lacquer, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of The Truth About Hitler's Final Solution*, Macmillan, London, 1980. Irving's assertion that Hitler was less than an omnipotent Führer who did not order, and did not know about the Holocaust, provoked uproar. In Germany, after a dispute with his publishers, his book was withdrawn from sale. In Britain, he became involved in a furious row with a panel of academics during the live edition David Frost's television chat show. In America, the book was attacked by Walter Lacquer in the *New York Review of Books*

\(^{331}\) Irving, op. cit., p. 392.
happening to the Jews in the East. What did Goebbels actually say on the issue? Goebbels wrote in his authenticated diary:

The Jews are now being pushed out of the General Government, beginning near Lublin, to the East. A pretty barbaric procedure is being applied here, and it is not to be described in any more detail, and not much is left of the Jews themselves. In general, one can conclude that 60% of them must be liquidated, while only 40% can be put to work. The former Gauleiter of Vienna [Globocnik], who is carrying out this action, is doing it pretty prudently and with a procedure that doesn't work too conspicuously. The Jews are being punished barbarically, to be sure, but they have fully deserved it. The prophesy that the Führer issued to them on the way, for the eventuality that they started a new world war, is beginning to realise itself in the most terrible manner. One must not allow any sentimentalities to rule in these matters. If we did not defend ourselves against them, the Jews would annihilate us. It is a struggle for life and death between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus. No other government and no other regime could muster the strength for a general solution of the question. Here too the Führer is the persistent pioneer and spokesman of a radical solution, which is demanded by the way things are and thus appears to be unavoidable. Thank God during the war we have a whole lot of possibilities which were barred to us in peacetime. We must exploit them. The ghettos, which are becoming available in the General Government are now being filled with the Jews who are being pushed out of the Reich, and after a certain time the process is then to renew itself here. Jewry has nothing to laugh about...

In the 1991 edition of Hitler's War Irving failed to tell his readers that Goebbels described Hitler as "having pushed for this radical solution", omitting the entire passage relating to Hitler. In cross-examination Irving contended that Goebbels' diary entry "might be evidence against him as to his state of knowledge but could not be evidence of the state

---

332 ibid., p. 392.
333 Irving trial transcript, section 5.174, p. 44.
of knowledge of Hitler because as against him it is hearsay.\textsuperscript{335} Mr. Gray determined that the diary entry of 27 March 1942 in \textit{Hitler's War} (both 1977 and 1991 editions), was "unsupported by the circumstantial evidence".\textsuperscript{336}

On 20 March 1942 Goebbels recorded Hitler as having remarked on the urgency of expelling the Jews:

\begin{quote}
We speak in conclusion about the Jewish question. Here the Führer remains now as before unrelenting. The Jews must get out of Europe, if necessary, with the application of the most brutal means.\textsuperscript{337}
\end{quote}

In an entry for 30 March 1942 Goebbels reported success in securing Hitler's approval for speedier extermination:

\begin{quote}
Thus I plead once again for a more radical Jewish policy, whereby I am just pushing an open door with the Führer.\textsuperscript{338}
\end{quote}

Irving contended that the Führer must be assumed to have been ignorant of the programme of extermination, since for a time "he continued to speak about deporting the Jews from Europe". In opposition to this argument, Professor Evans submitted that when Hitler spoke of "pushing the Jews out of Europe to the East", he was well aware of their genocidal fate.\textsuperscript{339} Mr. Gray, critical of Irving's interpretation, wrote in his judgment:

\begin{quote}
I do not accept that the evidence of the circumstances as they existed in March of 1942 lends support to Irving's claim that
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{335} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 5.179, p. 45. \\
\textsuperscript{336} Ibid., section 13.37, p. 141. \\
\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., section 5.176, p. 44. \\
\textsuperscript{338} Ibid., section 5.222, p. 51. \\
\textsuperscript{339} Ibid., section 13.59, p. 140.
\end{flushleft}
Goebbels concealed from Hitler the reality of what was happening. I do not consider that Irving was able to point to evidence which controverted the contention of the defendants that by March 1942 the "radical solution" favoured by Hitler was extermination and not deportation. It follows that I accept the submission that the way in which Irving deals with this diary is tendentious and unjustified.\textsuperscript{340}

Further evidence from three Himmler's speeches on 6 October 1943, and 5 and 24 May 1944, testified, the defendants maintained, to Hitler's knowledge of exterminations. In all three extracts Himmler spoke in brutal terms of the mass murder of Jews. On 6 October 1943 the Reichsführer, speaking to a gathering of Reichsleiter and Gauleiter said:

I do ask you to keep secret, to listen to what I am saying and never to speak about it, what I am saying in these circles. We came up against the question, what about the women and children, and I took the decision here too for a clear solution. I did not consider myself justified in liquidating just the men to leave alive the children to act as the avengers against our sons and grandchildren. There had to be taken the grave decision to have this people disappear from the face of the earth.\textsuperscript{341}

The significance of Himmler's address, according to the defendants, lay in whether Hitler knew of the killing. They argued that Himmler would not have spoken in such explicit terms if Hitler was unaware of the killings. Himmler would realise, they contended, that members of his audience would be likely to raise the matter with Hitler.

\textsuperscript{340} ibid., section 13.38, p. 141.  
\textsuperscript{341} ibid., section 5.222, p. 51.
The following year, on 5 May 1944, Himmler spoke to the generals of the Wehrmacht. On this occasion he said:

The Jewish question has been solved in Germany itself and in general within the countries occupied by Germany. It was solved in an uncompromising fashion in accordance with the life and death struggle of our nation in which the existence of our blood is at stake. You can understand how difficult it was for me to carry out this soldierly order ("soldatische Befehl") and which I carried out from obedience and from a sense of complete conviction.\textsuperscript{342}

The reference to a "soldierly order", it was argued by the defendants, indicated that Himmler had taken the matter of the solution of the Jewish question to Hitler, since the Führer was the only person in a position to give orders to Himmler.

Irving concealed the brutal language used by Himmler. Dealing with the speeches in later editions of Hitler's War, the author implicated Himmler:

\begin{quote}
Never before, and never after, did Himmler hint at a Führer order, but there is reason to doubt that he showed this passage to his Führer.\textsuperscript{343}
\end{quote}

This was pure speculation on Irving's part, the defendants alleged. The relevant passage was not shown to Hitler, they claimed, although Irving presented it as an established fact; it was an important part of the narrative because it cast light on Hitler's role in the extermination of the Jews. The court upheld the inference that Irving was here seeking to avoid compromising Hitler.

\textsuperscript{342} ibid., section 5.233, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{343} Irving, op. cit., p. 630. In the 1991 edition of Hitler's War the reference to Himmler's speech of 5 May 1944 has been omitted altogether.
On 24 May 1944 Himmler again spoke to the generals:

Another question which was decisive for the inner security of the Reich in Europe was the Jewish question. It was uncompromisingly solved after orders and rational recognition. I believe, gentlemen, that you know me well enough to know that I am not a bloodthirsty person. I am not a man who takes pleasure or joy when something rough must be done. However, on the other hand I have such good nerves and such a developed sense of duty I could say that much for myself. When I recognise something as necessary, I can implement it without compromise. I have not considered myself entitled, this concerns especially the Jewish women and children, to allow the children to grow into the avengers who will murder our fathers and grandchildren. That would have been cowardly. Consequently, the question was uncompromisingly resolved.\footnote{344}

Himmler's language, according to the defendants, as in the other speeches, confirms Hitler's knowledge of and responsibility for the murders of Jews.\footnote{345}

Mr. Gray expressed concern about Irving's manipulation of the Himmler speeches, which afforded "insight into Hitler's knowledge of and complicity in the murder of the Jews". In his judgment he wrote:

It is common ground that in these three speeches Hitler was speaking with remarkable frankness about the murder of the Jews. The question is whether Irving dealt in an objective and fair manner with the evidence which those speeches afford as to Hitler's knowledge of and complicity in the murder of the Jews. I am satisfied that he did not. Two of the speeches provide powerful evidence that Hitler ordered that the extermination of the Jews should take place. Yet in the 1977 edition of Hitler's War Irving suggests that the existence of a Hitler order was an invention on the part of Himmler. It does not appear to me that the evidence supports that suggestion. The absence of any mention of that speech in the 1991 edition of Hitler's War was in my judgment another culpable omission.\footnote{346}
In other instances Irving further sought to deny Hitler's responsibility. Some historians have criticised Irving for his "deceptive footnote references", exemplified by the author's treatment of Nuremberg prison notes relating to remarks exonerating Hitler attributed to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. In *Hitler's War* (1977 edition) Irving relied on a footnote citing von Ribbentrop's comments when incarcerated at Nuremberg in 1945. Irving wrote:

Writing a confidential study on Hitler in his Nuremberg prison cell, Ribbentrop also exonerated him wholly: "How things came to the destruction of the Jews, I just don't know. As to whether Himmler began it, or Hitler put up with it, I don't know. But that he ordered it I refuse to believe, because such an act would be wholly incompatible with the picture I always had of him".

An additional sentence not included by Irving read:

On the other hand, judging from [Hitler's] Last Will, one must suppose that he at least knew about it, if, in his fanaticism against the Jews, he didn't also order [it].

Confronted with the omission, Irving argued that the sentence concerned was "irrelevant" to the logic of his argument, explaining that he had not "wanted to confuse the reader."

---

347 Evans, op. cit., p. 103.
348 ibid., p. 102.
349 Irving, *Hitler's War*, (1977 ed.), op. cit., p. 851. Moreover, the defendants allege that Irving has unjustifiably ignored the account by Nuremberg prison psychologist Dr. Gilbert, of his conversation with Ribbentrop in which the latter appears to concede that Hitler may have ordered the extermination of the Jews in 1941.
350 Evans, op. cit., p. 102. Irving's interpretation of von Ribbentrop's comments were challenged by journalists Sereny and Chester who identified Irving's reference from original documents in the Bavarian State Archives.
351 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 5.236, p. 53.
Mr. Gray also found Irving's account to have given a false and unbalanced picture of von Ribbentrop's assessment of Hitler's responsibility for the extermination of the Jews.\textsuperscript{353} He wrote:

There is an obligation on them not to give the reader a distorted impression by resorting to selective quotation; in this instance the court found that Irving had failed to observe his duty.\textsuperscript{354}

The trial judge continued:

I have found that, in numerous respects, Irving has misstated historical evidence; has adopted positions which run counter to the weight of the evidence; given credence to unreliable evidence and disregarded or dismissed credible evidence. It appears to me that an analysis of those instances may shed light on the question whether Irving's misrepresentations of the historical evidence was deliberate.\textsuperscript{355}

In his overall determination about Irving as a historian, Mr. Justice Gray recorded in his findings:

I have also found that most of the defendants' historiographical criticisms of Irving set out in this judgment are justified. In the vast majority of these instances the effect of what Irving has written has been to portray Hitler in a favourable light and to divert blame from him onto others. I have held that this is unjustified by the evidence. Examples include Irving's portrayal of Hitler's conduct and attitude toward the events of Kristallnacht and the importance attached by Irving to Hitler's attitude towards the Jewish question as he claims is evidenced by the Schiegelberger note. I have seen no instance where Irving has misrepresented the evidence or misstated the facts in a manner which is detrimental to Hitler. Irving appears to take every opportunity to exculpate Hitler. In my opinion there is force in the opinion that all Irving's historiographical "errors" converge, in the sense that they all tend to exonerate Hitler and to reflect Irving's partisanship for the Nazi leader. One would not expect to find

\textsuperscript{352} Evans, op. cit., p. 102.
\textsuperscript{353} Irving trial transcript, section 13.42, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{354} Ibid, section 13.48, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid., section 13.140, p. 156.
this consistency. I accept the contention that this convergence is a cogent reason for supposing that the evidence has been deliberately slanted by Irving. In the result therefore the defence of justification succeeds. It follows that there must be judgment for the defendants.\textsuperscript{356}

Conclusion

David Irving distorted historical evidence. The author demonstrated his unwillingness to distinguish between writing "genuine history" and "rewriting the established history of the Holocaust".\textsuperscript{357} The following chapter examines in greater detail how this manifested itself in Irving championing the cause of Holocaust denial, by arguing that the annihilation of six million Jews in the Second World War concentration camps is the "hoax of the twentieth century".\textsuperscript{358}

The 2000 libel court agreed with this conclusion and condemned the British author for his treatment of historical evidence. Mr. Justice Gray wrote:

I find that in most of the instances which they cite, the defendants' criticisms are justified. In those instances it is my conclusion that judged objectively, Irving treated the historical evidence in a manner which fell far short of the standard to be expected from a conscientious historian. Irving in those respects distorted and misrepresented the evidence which was available to him.\textsuperscript{359}

\textsuperscript{356} ibid., section 13.168 at p. 159, and section 14.1 at p. 160.
\textsuperscript{357} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. xv.
\textsuperscript{358} Evans, op. cit., pp. 106-107.
\textsuperscript{359} Irving trial transcript, section 13.51, p. 143.
Underpinning Irving's brand of 'revisionism' is an apocalyptic worldview. This involves promoting the idea that he alone is alert to the machinations of unscrupulous historians who have erred in writing the history of the Holocaust. Irving demanded recognition; in defending extreme opinions he repudiated balanced historical discourse, thereby risking his reputation as a historical writer by dint of his active association with Holocaust deniers.

Contrary to the image the author wishes to convey to the world at large, he is not simply a chronicler of Second World War events. Rather, Irving seeks to convince his followers of the attractions of populist history. To achieve that objective, Irving became an apologist for the extreme right of politics. Despite early successes as a writer of historical books, we shall see in the next chapter how the author squandered his reputation by identifying with diverse Holocaust denial causes.
CHAPTER FOUR

DAVID IRVING AS HOLOCAUST DENIER

David Irving's views on the number and manner of deaths of European Jews during the Second World War were illustrated dramatically during his London trial in 2000. One day as he stepped out of the Law Courts on to the Strand a woman confronted him and told him her grandparents had died at Auschwitz. Irving replied: "Well, you can be comforted in the knowledge that they most likely died of typhus, just like Anne Frank".¹ Even if the author was wrong - that victims of concentration camps succumbed from contagious diseases - what is to be made of his contention, namely that mass extermination by gassing of the European Jews did not happen?

We have seen in the first chapter of this study how, standing apart from the scholarly literature on the Holocaust, there was an attempt by a relatively small number of propagandists to deny that there was any systematic or organised extermination of Europe's Jews by the Nazis.² Furthermore, these people claimed that the number of Jews killed was

far smaller than 5 or 6 million and that there were no gas chambers or other specially built extermination facilities.\(^3\)

As this thesis has made clear, a number of historians drew attention to this disturbing stream of historical thought. Lipstadt\(^4\), in her oft-mentioned *Denying the Holocaust* provided a factual account of some of the principal deniers' publications and activities since the Second World War,\(^5\) including David Irving.\(^6\)

But Irving was no stranger to the courts. His writings, as was outlined in chapter two, had repeatedly landed him in trouble with the law. In November 1995 Irving wrote to Lipstadt's English publisher Penguin Books demanding the withdrawal of her book from circulation, alleging defamation and threatening to sue.\(^7\) The publisher refused to withdraw and Irving issued a defamation writ in September 1996,\(^8\) with the matter culminating in the landmark London High Court Irving libel trial, conducted from January to April 2000.

At issue in the case brought by Irving against Lipstadt was whether, as she alleged, he is "an active Holocaust denier".\(^9\) The trial court was to assume responsibility for adjudicating justification for the allegation.

---


\(^4\) Deborah Lipstadt was born in 1947 in New York of a German-Jewish immigrant father who was descended from a prominent family of rabbis. She had been brought up in what she described as a "traditional Jewish home". She studied modern Jewish history, the Third Reich, and the Holocaust at a variety of institutions, including the University of Washington, and the University of California at Los Angeles, before joining the staff of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1993, where she held an endowed chair and was setting up a new Institute for Jewish Studies.


\(^7\) ibid., p. 6. Lipstadt responded to the threat by pointing out that her book mentioned Irving only on six out of more than three hundred pages.

\(^8\) ibid., p. 6.

\(^9\) ibid., p. 112.
The charge was serious and touched upon questions of historical objectivity. The libel court was also placed in a position to determine the truth of what other historians had presented us about the Holocaust.

The stakes were high for all those concerned in the landmark case; it would be up to Lipstadt and her lawyers to prove that what she wrote about Irving was true. In effect, they were forced to prove the reality of the Holocaust. Irving, who represented himself, risked his reputation as well as his livelihood; defeat would mean professional ruin and probably bankruptcy. For Lipstadt and the victims of the Holocaust a loss was likely to be even more serious with the spectre of the Holocaust "erased from the pages of history".

Richard Evans gave expert evidence for the defendants at Irving's libel trial in Court 73, the Royal Courts of Justice, London. Professor Evans, in his report, outlined Irving's historiography, his exculpation of

---

10 R. J. Evans, 'Why History Matters', in The Australian Financial Review, 14 November 1997, p. 13. Professor Evans relates how, in the past couple of decades, historians' works have come under sustained attack by post-modernist literary theory. Since the end of the 1980s the attack has become so pervasive that it has induced a sense of crisis in parts of the historical profession. Historians inject their own meanings into documents, which themselves as texts bear no real relationship to the past to which they are supposed to refer. Evans postulates that post-modernists argue that what history writing is about, is power. They claim there is no single attainable truth about the past, merely the histories which people construct to empower themselves in the present.

11 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. xiv.


13 ibid., p. 9. Evans relates how he became involved in the Irving trial on the initiative of Anthony Julius, of the London firm of solicitors Mishcon de Reya, who was representing Professor Deborah Lipstadt. Julius enjoyed a high media profile for winning a record settlement for Princess Diana in her divorce from the Prince of Wales.

14 D. Jacobson, 'The Downfall of David Irving: Holocaust Denial and Antisemitism have had their Day in Court', The Times Literary Supplement, April 2000, no. 5064, p. 12.

15 Evans, op. cit., pp. 7-8. There were a number of reasons for the choice of Professor Evans as an expert witness in the Irving trial; these included the fact that he was a specialist in modern German history, had a good command of the German language.
Hitler and his denial of the Holocaust, matters that Evans also included in his recent book.\textsuperscript{16}

The initial task for the libel court was to establish a profile of a typical Holocaust denier. We have seen in chapter one that from a reading of available literature it seemed that significant differences emerged among the various analyses of what constituted Holocaust denial. The consensus was that not all Holocaust deniers subscribe to the range of views expressed in Holocaust denial writings. Yet it was clear to the libel court that Holocaust denial involved certain core beliefs.\textsuperscript{17}

In order to clarify what the terms "Holocaust" and "Holocaust denial" meant, the libel court reviewed existing definitions.\textsuperscript{18} Mr. R. Gray, the presiding Judge, accepted Professor Evans' submission that for the purpose the term "Holocaust" might generally be accepted to denote:

The attempt by Nazi Germany, led by Hitler, to exterminate the Jewish population in Europe, which attempt succeeded to the extent of murdering between five and six million Jews in a variety of ways, including mass gassings in camps built for the purpose.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} Simon Wiesenthal Centre Report, op. cit., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{17} Evans, Lying About Hitler, op. cit., p. 110.
\textsuperscript{18} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 277.
\textsuperscript{19} The London Irving Libel Trial Court Service Transcript, Internet (online) http://www.courtservice.gov.uk/judgments/qb_irving.htm., 11 April 2000, [Accessed 2 May 2000], section 8.4, p. 96. (hereafter referred to as the Irving trial transcript).
It followed that any person who "repudiates the established facts of the Holocaust by politically motivated falsification of history" might be defined as a Holocaust denier.\textsuperscript{20}

In those terms, was Irving a Holocaust denier? Did what he had said and written about the Nazi extermination of the Jews conform to the writings of a number of earlier deniers, such as Rassinier, Butz, Faurisson, Staeglich as well as others? Similarly, could it be shown that Irving was maintaining contacts with individual Holocaust deniers or organisations devoted to Holocaust denial?

Despite protestations to the contrary, Irving had for a long time been uncomfortable about the established history of the Holocaust. The author changed his political views from mild disagreement to apparent consensus with radical Holocaust deniers.\textsuperscript{21} His vacillating views on the Holocaust were perplexing. However, his writings and speeches on the subject left little doubt that not only had Irving become a committed Holocaust denier,\textsuperscript{22} but he also contributed substantially to the Holocaust denial cause.\textsuperscript{23} As an active Holocaust denier, Irving's works served to aid extreme right organisations and individuals who have used them as source material.\textsuperscript{24}

Irving protested that he was not a Holocaust denier in the sense of the libel court's definition of that term.\textsuperscript{25} The author argued that he "could

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 96.
\textsuperscript{21} P. Ellingsen, in The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 June 1996. In this interview, Irving's theme was that he is always being vilified by an organised campaign conducted by the "organised Jewish lobby".
\textsuperscript{22} Irving trial transcript, section 8.10, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{23} Griffin, op. cit., p. 335.
\textsuperscript{24} Searchlight, op. cit., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{25} Evans, op. cit., p. 116. Irving suggested on a number of occasions that some 25,000 Jews possibly died in Auschwitz by killing, the rest from disease. On another occasion
not be termed a Holocaust denier"\textsuperscript{26} since, as we shall examine later in this chapter, he "had always accepted that a very large number of Jews were shot and killed by the "Einsatzgruppen" in occupied Soviet Union".\textsuperscript{27} In his written submission to the libel court he dissented from being labelled a Holocaust denier:

> It is a particularly mischievous and damaging libel to call the Plaintiff a "Holocaust denier", a lie worthy of the Nazi propaganda minister Dr Goebbels himself.\textsuperscript{28}

Irving continued:

> If however, the defendant seeks to define the Holocaust as the mass murder of Jews by the Nazis and their cohorts during the Second World War, then the Plaintiff maintains that he has at no time denied it; on the contrary, he has rendered it more plausible by investigating documents, questioning witnesses, and uncovering fresh sources and making no secret of for example the alleged liquidation of 152,000 Jews at Chelmno on 8 December 1941, about which he wrote in \textit{Hitler's War}.\textsuperscript{29}

This suggested that Irving was prepared to concede in part that the Holocaust had occurred. But on closer scrutiny, what did such an apparent concession actually mean?

---

\textsuperscript{26} Irving trial transcript, section 8.14, p. 97. Irving protested in the 2000 libel court that he "could not possibly be regarded as a Holocaust denier because in July 1995 he put the number of deaths of Jews in the Holocaust as high as four million. What the author failed to disclose, however, is the fact that he claimed these deaths were due to epidemics and not to gassings. Citing his \textit{Goebbels: The Mastermind of the Third Reich} biography as further evidence that he is not a Holocaust denier, Irving referred to the index of \textit{Goebbels} containing several references to the deaths of Jews, which he perhaps arrogantly contended, "indicates that the topic is comprehensively dealt with".

\textsuperscript{27} Irving trial transcript, section 8.12, p. 97. Irving claimed that the topic of the Holocaust "bored him". However, he did agree after some questioning, that he had answered questions about the Holocaust as an expert witness in the Canadian prosecution of Zundel in 1988. Irving also agreed that he had told an audience in Toronto in 1988 that he had been going round as many as forty archives relating to Auschwitz, and accepted he had said that he was writing a book about Auschwitz.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{ibid.}, p. 110.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{ibid.}, p. 111.
It is true that Irving made efforts to appear conciliatory about his role as a critic of established Holocaust history. Yet his concessions did not seem credible. According to Professor Evans for the trial defence, the author’s statements were ingenious and did not actually relate to the Holocaust as defined by most historians. For instance, Irving wrote only of an “alleged” liquidation of Jews at Chelmno; he did not accept, therefore, that 152,000 Jews were actually killed there. He referred to concentration camps, but the existence of such camps was not at issue, for nobody had denied that concentration camps were built to imprison those whom the Nazis regarded as their enemies.

At issue was a different category of camp, namely death camps such as Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec and Majdanek, which were built specifically for and exclusively to exterminate Jews by mass gassings. Irving’s admitted murder by shooting of hundreds of thousands of Jews was not the same as the extermination by gassing, starvation, and deliberate neglect of millions of Jews which formed an essential part of the Holocaust as conventionally understood.

Irving had long been critical of the established history of the Holocaust. We have seen in a previous chapter how, upon publication of Hitler’s War in 1977, a number of historians observed that the author maintained strong German sympathies and a record of disregard for historical truth. Scholars noted that the earlier editions of Hitler’s

---

30 Evans, op. cit., p. 219.
31 ibid., p. 112.
32 ibid., p. 111
33 ibid., p. 111.
War found no acceptance in antisemitic circles because in 1977 Irving had not yet disputed the historical reality that the Jews were murdered.

Where earlier Irving was not perceived as a Holocaust denier in the accepted sense of that term, by the end of the 1980s all that had altered. Irving underwent an abrupt change in his attitude toward the Holocaust. For Irving, the turning point seems to have occurred at the time of the 1988 Canadian trial of Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel. From this time onwards, Irving's role as evolving Holocaust denier can be explained chronologically.

Before 1988 the author had already begun to deny the existence of gas chambers. On 26 March 1986 he articulated his doubts in an interview at Christchurch, New Zealand:

I don't want to get into that argument...it's really an unnecessary question [referring to Dachau and the dismantled gas chambers]...these were just an invention of the American Army. That is the only gas chamber that was ever upon German soil. The gas chamber [at Auschwitz] which we all know about is supposed to have existed on Polish soil. I haven't investigated them... I am too valuable for that...

Journalist David Cesarani, writing in *The New Statesman*, reasoned that if Irving was capable of making repeated statements to the British press denying the existence of gas chambers, the author's politics might justifiably be linked to his ideology. Cesarani wrote:

---

38 ibid., p. 31.
39 ibid., p. 112.
40 Irving trial transcript, section 8.17, p. 98.
41 D. Cesarani, in *The New Statesman and Society*, vol. 5, issue 21, 10 July, 1992. An official from the Polish Embassy subsequently declared Irving "mentally unstable" for making such statements.
But Irving is not mad: he is just bad and dangerous. As he has openly stated, he has a mission to convert public opinion (especially Germany) to his way of thinking. This involves denial of the gassing of the Jews, exculpating Hitler's murder of Europe's Jews and denying that the Holocaust took place. If there is one single obstacle to rehabilitating the radical right and the Nazis, it is the crime of genocide. Irving’s pseudo-history and his politics, the man and his views, cannot be separated.  

Irving’s full conversion to Holocaust denial was public and cathartic. The Canadian Zundel trial of 1988, as was outlined in chapter one, provided the ambience for his transformation. The protagonist in this celebrated case was Ernst Zundel, a Canadian resident of German origin, identified as one of the most outspoken contemporary advocates of Holocaust denial. Zundel was known to have been long involved in the distribution of newsletters as well as radio and television broadcasts. His "Samisdat" Publishing Company in Toronto is one of the world’s major sources of Holocaust denial material, including German language publications.  

The court case was a long time in the making; in 1983 a Canadian citizen and Holocaust survivor, Sabrina Citron, filed a private complaint against Zundel for stating that her actions were based on her desire to "raise her profile and status in the Canadian Jewish community". In 1984, based on Citron's complaint, the Canadian Government initiated criminal proceedings against Zundel. The initial trial took place in 1985, resulting in Zundel being sentenced to fifteen months in goal. His

---

42 Ibid.
43 Stern, op. cit., p. 46. Zundel’s books included The Hitler We Loved and Why?, published by White Power Publications, and UFO’s: Nazi Secret Weapons?, which argued that unidentified flying objects were still being deployed by survivors of the Nazi regime from bases underneath the Antarctic.
44 Searchlight, November 1991, p. 3.
conviction was subsequently overturned on appeal and a new trial ordered. The second trial in 1988 became a famous media event in which leading Holocaust deniers Faurisson, Leuchter and Irving were called to give evidence as expert witnesses; the proceedings afforded Zundel an opportunity to publicise his denial cause, enabling him to pose as a "martyr to free speech".46

The trial linked Zundel to Fred Leuchter, another key player in the international Holocaust denial network.47 Leuchter, a self-confessed expert in "execution hardware",48 was recruited by Zundel to go to Auschwitz to collect soil and wall samples from the gas chambers. In 1988 the resulting Leuchter Report claimed scientific proof that the concentration camp gas chambers could not have been used for the gassing of the Jewish victims. For David Irving the revelation represented a key moment in his life and culminated in his steadfast commitment to the cause of Holocaust denial.49

Irving appeared to have abandoned all attempts at historical objectivity after the publication of the Leuchter Report.50 On 15 November 1991, at the Chelsea Town Hall, the author reaffirmed his convictions about the report's infallibility:

[The Leuchter Report]... shows quite clearly that according to chemical analysis, which is an exact science...these samples

48 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 162. Leuchter, who resided in Boston, falsely assumed the title of "engineer" and specialised in the construction and installation of execution equipment in various American states.
49 Searchlight, August 1989.
50 Searchlight, February 1990, p. 3.
yielded no significant trace of cyanide whatsoever, then there has to be a scientific reason for it... So Fred Leuchter is poison for the whole of the Holocaust legend... After Fred Leuchter did his truly epoch-making investigation of the gas chambers at Auschwitz, the forensic laboratory tests which yielded the extraordinary result which converted me, made me into a hard-core disbeliever, the forensic laboratory tests which showed no significant trace whatsoever of cyanide in rooms where apparently millions of people had been gassed with cyanide...

A jubilant Irving penned the introduction to the Leuchter Report, signalling the correctness of Holocaust denial. He wrote:

The infamous gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek did not exist, ever, except, perhaps as the brainchild of Britain’s brilliant wartime Psychological Warfare Executive.

At the 2000 libel trial the author admitted under questioning that he had "changed his mind" since 1977 on the issues of the numbers of Jews killed in the Holocaust and the use of gas chambers. His repudiation of the Holocaust began in earnest soon after the Zundel trial when on 25 April 1988 Irving denounced the "myth" of the Holocaust.

The author declared in evidence:

[ Irving]: "I have carried out no investigation in-depth in equivalent depth of the Holocaust". [Question]: "But your mind changed?" [ Irving]: "My mind has now changed". [Question]: "You no longer believe it?" [ Irving]: "I have now begun to challenge that. I understand it is now a subject open for debate". [Question]: "But your belief has changed even though you didn’t research, is that what you are saying?" [ Irving]: "My belief has now changed because I understand that the whole of the Holocaust mythology is, after all, open to doubt and certainly in the course of what I have read in the last few days, in fact, is in this trial. I am now becoming more and more hardened to this view". [Question]: "As a result of what you’ve read in the last few days [that is, Leuchter]?" [ Irving]: "Indeed".

---

51 Irving trial transcript, p. 101.
53 Kapel, op. cit., p. 8.
54 Irving trial transcript, p. 98.
Soon after he reiterated:

My mind has now changed, [he said], because I understand that the whole of the Holocaust mythology is, after all, open to doubt.  

Did this mean that Irving had suddenly become a hard-line Holocaust denier? The answer to this question is affirmative, although initially Irving did not wish to appear too openly as a convert to Holocaust denial. In a conciliatory gesture, the author typically went over to damage control; it was absurd, he contended, to label him as a Holocaust denier, as if he were "somebody who challenges a figure". Yet he set about proselytising about the "myths of the Holocaust", asserting to anyone who would listen that it was a "physical impossibility that six million Jews were killed by attrition and gassing".

Irving was asked by the defence lawyer at the Zundel trial to comment on the statement: "If the Holocaust were to be represented as the allegation of the extermination of 6 million Jews during the Second World War as a direct result of official German policy of extermination, what would you say to that thesis?" Irving replied:

I am not familiar with any documentary evidence of any such figure as 6 million...it must have been of the order of 100,000 or more, but to my mind it was certainly less than the figure quoted nowadays of 6 million. Because on the evidence of comparison with other similar tragedies which happened in the Second World War, it is unlikely that the Jewish community would have suffered any worse than these communities.

---

55 Evans, op. cit., p. 114.
56 ibid., p. 218.
57 Irving trial transcript, section 8.10, p. 97.
58 Evans, op. cit., p. 115.
Consistent with his changing beliefs it is perhaps not surprising that Irving's Holocaust terminology attenuated in his writings and speeches. Where the 1977 edition of Hitler's War presented references to "extermination of the Jews", "methodical liquidation of Russian Jews," and "extermination machinery", by 1991 these expressions had all been deleted.\(^59\) Indeed, the word "extermination" no longer appeared. Instead, the author referred to "the Jewish tragedy," "the Nazi maltreatment of Jews," or "the entire tragedy."

**Denial of gas chambers**

After 1988 Irving gradually became a more enthusiastic spokesperson for Holocaust denial in the international press. Soon he was tireless about expounding his views on the Holocaust, formally declaring that he was not a Holocaust denier but re-stating his belief that gas chambers were not used by the Nazi as the "principal means of carrying out extermination".\(^60\) Irving aggressively sought to convince his audiences that he was unaware of any authentic archival evidence that Jews were systematically exterminated in any of the concentration camps.

The author confidently argued that all the Nazi leadership wished to do was to deport the Jews to Eastern Europe.\(^61\) Speaking in Toronto on 1 November 1992, Irving persuaded his listeners there were no such

---

\(^{59}\) ibid., pp. 112-113.

\(^{60}\) Irving trial transcript, section 8.10, p. 97.

\(^{61}\) ibid., p. 107.
things as gas chambers, negating any claim that Hitler had presided
over the genocide of the European Jews:

The legend was that Adolf Hitler ordered the killing of six million
Jews in gas chambers in Auschwitz. This is roughly how history
has had its way for the last forty or fifty years...Well, I am not a
Holocaust denier, and that word really offends me, but I am a
Holocaust analyst, I think we are entitled to analyse the basic
elements of the statement: Adolf Hitler ordered the killing of six
million Jews in gas chambers at Auschwitz, and to ask, is any
part of this statement open to doubt? 62

In the international press Irving continued to insist that the Holocaust
was a "myth" invented by Allied propaganda during the Second World
War, claiming that the Nazis' mass murder of millions of Jews by
gassing was fabricated after the war. 63 Casting himself in the mold of
crusader engaged in the "refutation of the Holocaust story", 64 Irving
referred to the Auschwitz extermination camp as a "slave-labour camp
with the highest mortality rate". 65

Career change

Irving's career as a writer and activist was now in the ascendancy. He
was no longer an isolated researcher in the field of Holocaust denial.
The author began to organise networks, journals, and conferences,
exchanging views and disseminating publications on Holocaust denial. 66

62 D. Irving, 'Speech by David Irving to a Packed Hall in the Primrose Hotel, Toronto', 1
November 1992, transcript from Irving's Focal Point website.
63 ibid., p. 116.
64 ibid., pp. 134-135.
66 ibid., p. 109.
Many historians now regarded Irving as a Holocaust denier.\textsuperscript{67} Indeed, Irving himself did not resile from descriptions of him in the press as "activist and agitator".\textsuperscript{68}

Throughout the 1990's Irving's role as radical activist intensified. He expressed himself in uncompromising terms about controversial issues relating to the Second World War.\textsuperscript{69} Writing and speaking trenchantly about "injustices perpetrated against the vanquished German people," the author saw himself as a polemicist for "freedom of speech", seeking to establish "truth in history".\textsuperscript{70} Many of his audiences and readers came to regard him as an undisputed authority on Second World War themes.

Despite acclaim, the author also generated controversy and made many enemies.\textsuperscript{71} Historians and commentators increasingly viewed him with suspicion, denigrating his denial advocacy by citing repeated inaccuracies and distortions.\textsuperscript{72} For instance in 1996, an editorial in The Economist dismissed Irving's partisan stance in a book review of Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich:

Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich by David Irving, which is due to be published in Britain on April 18, 1996, has been withdrawn from publication in a hurricane of controversy. In the United States trade journals that publish advance reviews for the book business have denounced the biography which seeks to show that neither Hitler nor the German public shared Goebbels's "satanic antisemitism". [The book] is a scurrilously

\begin{footnotes}
\item 67 ibid., p. 110.
\item 68 ibid., p. 148. Irving told a 1991 audience in Calgary, Canada: "Until 1988, I believed that there had been something like a Holocaust. But since then [it had been clear to him] that story was just a legend".
\item 71 Evans, op. cit., p. 138.
\end{footnotes}
misleading biography of a major Nazi leader-by a fellow traveller, if not a card-carrying member, of the movement of Holocaust denial. It can only be described as "repellant". Irving uses enough pejoratives to sustain the illusion of objectivity regarding Hitler and his propaganda chief.\textsuperscript{73}

Irving's quest for publicity gained him instant newsworthiness as a disseminator of Holocaust denial propaganda.\textsuperscript{74} The British press accorded the author unlimited access to talk shows, documentaries and commentaries.\textsuperscript{75} By 1996 most of the media seemed unwilling to recognise growing signs that Irving, in solidarity with his newfound extremist international associates,\textsuperscript{76} had become an active propagandist for the Holocaust denial cause.\textsuperscript{77} Media outlets failed to acknowledge the difference between the author's urbane conversational style and his aggressive Holocaust denial propaganda, which to some observers amounted to posturing.\textsuperscript{78} A sense of Irving's Holocaust denial activities was aptly conveyed in a \textit{British Guardian} editorial:

For David Irving is both dangerous and evil. His apparent concern for history masks his profoundly pro-Nazi position. He is in fact not an historian but an apologist for genocide and for a man who was nothing but a brutal, ruthless butcher on behalf of German big capital. His efforts to whitewash Hitler and Nazism are undertaken with his eyes open and with full knowledge of the historical facts. His denial of those facts is an insult to the fifty million dead that was the price of his hero's attempt to enslave the world.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Searchlight}, February 1990, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{75} ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{76} Kapel, op. cit., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{The Independent} of 3 July 1992 labelled Irving a "Hitler Apologist", a tag that seems to have been widely adopted. Irving was usually described as a "right-wing Historian" (see \textit{Independent} and \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 13 January 1992), a "controversial historian," \textit{The Observer}, 12 January 1992), or "just a historian", in \textit{The Sunday Telegraph}, 19 January 1992. Some British and Australian newspapers persist with this flattering nomenclature until this day.
\textsuperscript{78} Irving trial transcript, section 5.38, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{The Guardian}, (editorial), 24 February 1993.
For a time the British and international press continued to permit their publications to be dominated by the "guru on Nazi history." Irving revelled in public attention; he became an instant celebrity and a "controversial" figure.

Most critiques, when they did appear, as we shall examine in the next chapter, did not address his neo-fascist or denial connections. Irving asserted many times that he only aspires to be a serious author engaging in factual historical scholarship. Yet, as a consequence of his involvement with Holocaust denial it should have been obvious to the author and his followers alike that his growing predilections served to harm his reputation as a writer of historical books.

Irving's attempts to relativise Nazi policies also left him open to accusations of Holocaust denial. According to his critics he reached historically untenable conclusions, particularly those relating to denial of the Holocaust. By raising doubts about the established history of the Holocaust the author may well have transcended the position adopted by a number of extreme right German relativist historians. In 1986 these scholars engaged in the German historical revisionist debates referred to as the "intentionalist-functionalist-Historikerstreit".

---

80 The Times, 22 April 1996, p. 70.
81 H. Gibson, 'History Wins, Irving Loses', reported in The Time, 24 April 2000, p. 43.
82 Evans, op. cit., p. 5.
84 Evans, op. cit., pp. 206-207.
85 Rosenbaum, op. cit., p.230.
86 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 110. Lipstadt describes the term 'Historikerstreit' as an effort by some German historians, particularly those with conservative political tendencies, to normalise and "relativise" the history of the Nazi period by arguing that many Nazi policies, including persecution of Jews, were defensive reactions to foreign threats and were no different from what other countries have done in the past.
The German "functionalist" historians argued publicly, as Irving has done, that some form of Holocaust may have happened, but if it did it occurred almost by spontaneous combustion. They contended that although Hitler might have known about the Final Solution of European Jewry, the Holocaust represented the bureaucratic by-product of wartime circumstances and the complicity of Nazi leaders lower than Hitler in the hierarchy. The higher-ranking Nazis Himmler, Goering, Goebbels and Heydrich, they asserted, along with senior regional authorities in the occupied Eastern territories, acted on their own initiative. As an adherent to the latter category, Irving as we have seen, opposed conventional views of Hitler as the instigator of the Holocaust.

By contrast, "intentionalist" historians in the debate contended that the Holocaust did occur and was the result of a carefully prepared plan by the German leadership to exterminate by gassing the entire European Jewish people.

Ripe for the time, the "Historikerstreit" became a heated public controversy, initiated by an article published in the German national newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung by German historian Ernst Nolte. The debate was fuelled by two further articles written by historian Jurgen Habermas in Die Zeit newspaper. The "Historikerstreit," claimed Habermas, was evocative of many basic issues ranging from the nature of historical understanding to the self-conception of Germany by the German people. Whatever their personal motives or agendas, the views of revisionist historians were, according to Habermas,

---

87 ibid., p. 108.
symptomatic of a neo-nationalist resurgence that was most prominent on the part of conservative forces. These extremist elements, Habermas contended, wanted to rewrite the Nazi past in order to promote the rehabilitation of the German identity. In short, they were engaged in relativising Nazi antisemitism as a legitimate historical response.

Nolte widened the debate by arguing that Nazi policies, including those involving the persecution of the Jews, were no different from those perpetrated by other countries in the past. Such sentiments were grist to the mill for David Irving’s beliefs that the Allies were at least as much to blame for atrocities as the Germans.

Strengthened by these concepts, Irving now argued for absolving the Nazi regime from crimes committed during the Second World War. In 1996, journalist Peter Ellingson encapsulated Irving’s position on these issues:

Irving is a stubborn, complex man, who insists his widely respected talent for historical research has left him no choice but to rebut the orthodox view of the Holocaust, including Hitler’s innocence of the genocide. He does not now claim, as he is reported to have that the Holocaust never happened. The word Holocaust rankles with him, but he concedes at this moment that Nazi genocide accounted for some three million Jewish lives, half the number the world has long accepted. It leaves you wondering about his coherence. He makes what most experts claim as repellant claims then switches back. You no sooner recoil from his attack on the credibility of the Holocaust survivors than he flicks over to argue that the whole thing is “needless” as he is happy to admit the Nazis did drive hundreds of thousands of Jews into pits and then machine-gunned them.  

---

88 Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 176.
89 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 298.
90 Griffin, op. cit., p.324.
91 Ellingsen, op. cit., p. 85.
Nevertheless, Irving's efforts to rewrite Holocaust history were not to remain unchecked. To any critic wishing to examine the author's contributions to Holocaust denial there were his public utterances. Far more significant were the two main approaches deployed by Irving to justify his beliefs. These will be examined here in turn. First, the minimisation of the numbers of Jews killed by shooting in the Second World War; second, the denial of the use of gas chambers.

As a way forward the 2000 libel court considered possible testing of Irving's works over time in order to determine whether the author qualified as a Holocaust denier. Empirical assessment of Irving's contributions to Holocaust denial was not an easy task; how could benchmarks be established to determine the degree to which, and on what terms the author sought to embrace Holocaust denial? Nonetheless, this method of examination was adopted by the libel court.

From the inception of this process Irving strongly opposed the court taking what he termed a "reputational approach" to his works. The author strenuously resented the court sitting in judgement of him by means of examining "what others had said about him". During ensuing tactics, Irving unsuccessfully opposed the court's preferred method, arguing that his works should "stand alone" and proceedings should not be guided by principles of "guilt by association". Opposing Irving's objections, the court determined that Irving was to be confronted with a

92 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 91.
93 Irving trial transcript, section 13.95, p. 149.
94 Ibid., p. 234.
95 Evans, op. cit., p. 185.
consideration of his own views by others. What did these views amount to?

Professor Evans for the defendants listed what were described as Holocaust-denying claims made by Irving since 1988:

1. His minimisation of the numbers of Jews killed in occupied Soviet Union.

2. The author's claim that the number of Jews who died at Auschwitz was 100,000, "most of them from epidemics".

3. His claim made expressly or by implication that the Jews had brought the Holocaust on by themselves.

4. His assertion that the conduct of the Nazis in exterminating the Jews could be excused by the fact that they or their families had suffered in the Allied bombing raids.

5. The manner in which Irving dismissed the totality of the evidence of eye-witnesses from Auschwitz as unrealistic because "it is the product of mass hysteria".

6. His claim, often repeated, that the gas chambers at Auschwitz are a lie invented by British intelligence.

7. His claim, made many times, that the myth of the Holocaust is a product of a well-financed campaign by Jewry to legitimise the substantial payments made by Germany to the state of Israel since the Second World War.\textsuperscript{97}

Since the late 1980s, as we have seen, Irving argued consistently that the number of Jews deliberately killed by the Nazis was far less than 6

\textsuperscript{96} Irving trial transcript, section 8.4, p. 96.
million. The death toll amounted to only a few hundred thousand, he
maintained, and was thus similar to, or fewer, than the number of
German civilians killed in Allied bombing raids, which he portrayed as
crimes of a greater order. Beyond that, Irving contended, gas chambers
were not used to kill Jews at any time; if Jews died in large numbers, he
maintained, it was a result of epidemics for which the Allied bombing
raids were in large measure responsible.

Mass killings by shooting

Irving denied both the scale and cause of the mass annihilation of
European Jews in Poland and occupied Soviet Union. Specifically, the
author would not accept that that Hitler had ordered the extermination
programme.

The first implementation phase of Hitler's Jewish extermination
policies occurred as early as 1939, when, after the successful Nazi
invasion of Poland, part of the newly acquired territory was absorbed
into the Reich. Ethnic cleansing of Polish Jews began in earnest. In
order to make way for German settlers from other parts of Eastern
Europe, the Jews were initially deported eastwards into central ghettos
where living conditions were atrocious.

---

98 Evans, op. cit., pp. 119-20. Irving believed the evidence for the Holocaust to have been fabricated.
99 Irving trial transcript, section 13.95, p. 149.
100 Evans, op. cit., p. 72.
Most historians agree that following the Nazi invasion of Russia in June 1941 there was a change of policy. As we have seen in chapter three, German task forces called "Einsatzgruppen" set about the large-scale, systematic shooting of Jews.\footnote{These were termed Special Action Groups.}

The 2000 trial defendants broadly outlined the sequence of events in the East; that on 19 May 1941 Wehrmacht guidelines were issued calling for "ruthless, energetic and drastic measures" to be taken against the Jews generally. They submitted that although there was no explicit evidence of authorisation for the Jewish executions, Heydrich identified the categories of Jews to be killed in his order of 2 July 1941, giving instructions to the "Einsatzgruppen" to shoot Jews "in party and state functions".\footnote{Irving trial transcript, section 6.13, p. 58. Professor Browning, for the defendants, gave evidence that in the initial stages the Jews who were targeted were males in leadership positions and in selected professions. He stated that in the event Heydrich's instructions were interpreted broadly: the "Einsatzgruppen" reports show that large numbers of Jews were immediately put to death whether or not they held state or party positions.} In August 1941 the killing campaign escalated to include Jewish women and children. On 1 August 1941 Himmler issued an explicit order to SS units: "All Jews must be shot. Drive the female Jews into the swamp".\footnote{Ibid., section 6.16, p. 58.}

The defendants argued that the total number of Jews killed in the East can be extrapolated from reports based on information supplied by the "Einsatzgruppen," citing in particular a report of 26 December 1942 which informed that 363,211 Jews were exterminated over the four months from August to November of that year.\footnote{Ibid., section 6.20, p. 59.} The scale of the killing
was so immense that it is difficult to conceive of Irving's position that Hitler's authority was not obtained.  

The defence relied on strong circumstantial documentary evidence implicating Hitler in any policies of systematic shooting. The first part of such converging evidence consisted of 3 March 1941 instructions given by Hitler to General Jodl, Chief of the Army Leadership Staff, dealing with revised guidelines to be followed in the areas of Russia expected to be conquered.  

Hitler decreed:

This coming campaign is more than a struggle of arms; it will also lead to the confrontation of two world views. In order to end this war it will not suffice merely to defeat the enemy army... The Jewish-Bolshevik intelligentsia, the hitherto oppressor of the people, must be eliminated.

There followed what Professor Longerich described as a "package of measures with which Hitler was intimately involved", for the implementation of that imminent war. On 13 March 1941 Jodl issued a directive, which stated in part:

In the operation area of the Army, the Reichsführer SS is granted special responsibilities by order of the Fuhrer for the preparation of the political administration; these special responsibilities arise from the ultimate decisive struggle between two opposing

---

105 ibid., section 6.43, p. 62. Irving expressed doubts about the logistical feasibility of the "Einsatzgruppen" having been able to carry out executions on the reported scale, given their limited numbers and equipment. The "Einsatzgruppen" consisted of only 3000 men. However, Professor Browning pointed out that the army was called on to provide support. In this way, according to Professor Longerich, the total number involved in the shootings would have been around 30,000.

106 ibid., p. 252.

107 ibid., op. cit., p. 72.

108 ibid., op. cit., section 6.28, p. 60.

109 ibid., pp. 29-30. Professor Peter Longerich, a German, formerly of the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, is now teaching at Royal Holoway College in the University of London. He had recently completed a massively documented overview of the making of Nazi policies toward the Jew between 1933 and 1945. Professor Longerich was commissioned by the defence to provide reports on the evidence for Hitler's antisemitism and the systematic nature of the killings.
political systems. In the context of these responsibilities, the Reichsführer SS will act independently and at his own risk.\textsuperscript{110}

The defendants surmised that the reason for Himmler being given undefined special responsibilities was engendered by the German army's unwillingness to accept responsibility for the immense policing and security operations. Contradicting this interpretation, Irving argued that the directive derived from Himmler's wish to enlarge his area of responsibility, claiming that Hitler's attitude was to give Himmler \textit{carte blanche} without any "requirements to let him [Hitler] know what he was doing".\textsuperscript{111}

In the context of whether Hitler's knew about the shootings, the defendants referred to an instruction issued on 1 August 1941 to the "Einsatzgruppen" by Muller, head of the Gestapo within Heydrich's Security Police, in which Muller stipulated:

\begin{quote}
The Führer is to be kept informed continually from here about the work of the Einsatzgruppen in the East.\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

These instructions, together with similar utterances by Hitler at this time, provided strong evidence of Hitler's central role in converting Nazi ideological thought into concrete action.\textsuperscript{113}

As we have seen, deportations preceded the mass shootings. Hitler's "hard-line" policy toward the Jews commenced from the autumn of 1941 with the deportation of Jews from Central Europe into the ghettos in Eastern Europe and thence further east, where they would perish by the activities of the "Einzatsgruppen". On 18 September 1941 Himmler

\textsuperscript{110} ibid., section 6.28, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{111} ibid., section 6.48, p. 63.
\textsuperscript{112} ibid., section 6.30, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{113} ibid., section 6.38, p. 62.
wrote to Greiser, "Gauleiter" in Warthegau, informing him of Hitler's order:

The Führer wishes that the Old Reich and the Protektorat be emptied and freed of Jews from west to east as quickly as possible. I am therefore striving to transport the Jews to the Altreich and the Protektorat in the Eastern territories that became part of the Reich two years ago. It is desirable that this be accomplished by the end of this year, as a first and initial step in deporting them even further to East next spring. I intend to remove a full 60,000 Jews of the Altreich and the Protektorat to the Litzmannstadt ghetto for the winter. This has, I have heard, the space to accommodate them.114

The deportations were summarily executed. Irving maintained that the scale of the deportations was nowhere near as large as the numbers cited by the defendants,115 but he was forced to concede the emergence of a policy of wholesale deportation of European Jews. He accepted that Hitler was an advocate of this policy but his position remained that deportation continued to be Hitler's preferred solution to the Jewish question until 1942.116 The author continued to dispute that the deportation of the Jews was a prelude to their extermination, arguing the deportation was an end in itself.117

Similarly, Irving was to effect an about-face on the issue of Hitler's complicity in the mass killings. In the light of fresh evidence implicating the Führer in the killings,118 the author perhaps surprisingly continued to dispute only the "scale of the killings",119 This was different from the

114 ibid., section 6.65, p. 66.
115 Irving trial transcript, section 6.44, p. 62.
116 ibid., section 6.67, p. 66.
117 Evans, op. cit., p. 118.
118 Irving trial transcript, section 6.11, p. 57.
119 Evans, op. cit., p. 115. In his evidence to the Zundel trial of 1988, Irving cast doubt on the reports filed by "Einsatzgruppen" leaders giving numbers of Jews shot by their forces. "I don't trust the statistics they contain", he said. "Soldiers who are out in the field doing a job, they don't have time to count". Each leader, he suggested, submitted
denial position Irving had previously adopted when he informed audiences in Australia, Canada and the US that the shooting of the Jews in the East was "arbitrary, unauthorised and undertaken by individual groups or commanders".  

For many years Irving had denied the intentionality behind the atrocities committed by the Nazis in the conquered areas of the Soviet Union. On 11 October 1992, speaking at the 11th Institute for Historical Review conference he advised:

Now you probably know that I'm a Revisionist to a degree, but I'm not a Revisionist to the extent that I say that there were no murders of Jews. I think we have to accept that these were My Lai-type massacres where SS officers-the Einsatzkommandos-did machine-gun hundreds if not thousands of Jews into pits. On the Eastern Front, at Riga, at Minsk, and at other locations, this kind of thing did happen. Most of these SS officers-the gangsters that carried out mass shootings-were, I think, acting from the meanest of motives...[refers to Bruns]... And two days later the order comes back from Hitler: 'these mass shootings have got to stop at once'. So Hitler intervened to stop it. Which again fits in with my theory that Hitler was in the dark that this kind of mass crime was going on. I suspect that the SS officer concerned [Altemeyer] was only 23 or 24. That was the age of the gangs that were carrying out these kinds of crimes. Rather like [US Army] LT. Calley in MY Lai. I don't know why people do that kind of thing.  

This suggested that Irving admitted the shooting of many thousands of Jews in the East by "Einsatzgruppen" but challenged the proposition that the killings represented a systematic programme,

---

reports whose aim was to "show he's doing a jolly good job", and by inference, therefore, seriously exaggerated or even invented the numbers killed.

120 Irving trial transcript, section 6.47, p. 63. At one stage during the libel trial Irving appeared to accept that the massacre of the Jews was carried out on the authority of Hitler. However, later he contended the initiative for the orders came from the Nazi High Command rather than from Hitler.
121 ibid., section 13.58, p. 144.
122 ibid., section 8.19, p. 104.
123 The "Einsatzgruppen" were special paramilitary groups totalling approximately 3000 personnel in number, set up by Himmler and operating behind the German army lines to exterminate Jews and Soviet political functionaries.
ordained at high level, to exterminate European Jewry. Their existence came about, he argued, "like an act of spontaneous combustion".

Contrary to his previous convictions, Irving was now on record as conceding that the killing by shooting had been on a massive scale of between 500,000 and 1,500,000 and that the programme of execution had been carried out "in a systematic way". Mr. Justice Gray, in an effort to soften the author’s humiliating reversal, summarised by stating that he understood Irving’s present position to be that he "accepts that Hitler knew and approved, but that he had not known at the time of writing his material".

Irving’s denial of gassing

We have seen that Irving had not previously denied the establishment of concentration camps by the Nazis. However, closely linked to this position was the author’s denial of the existence of gas chambers. In his written submission to the 2000 libel court, Irving declared:

It is denied that the Plaintiff has denied the gas chambers were used by the Nazis as the principal means of carrying out that extermination... they may have used them on occasion on an experimental scale, which fact he does not deny.

---

124 Evans, op. cit., p. 126.
125 Irving trial transcript, section 6.50, p. 63.
126 G. Fleming, Hitler and the Final Solution, University of California Press, Los Angeles, pp. 76-77.
127 Irving trial transcript, section 6.13, p. 57.
128 ibid., section 6.13, p. 57.
129 ibid., p. 121.
This inferred a remarkable contradiction. Was Irving saying that he accepted that the gas chambers were the principal means of killing, or that their use was only possible ("may have been used") and if it did occur, was Irving merely asserting that it was only experimental in scale? What was the author's actual position? As a consequence of strong evidence presented in the trial by the defendants, Irving now reluctantly conceded that from the end of 1941 onward several thousands of Jews in the East were killed by gassing "on an experimental basis" in the so-called "Reinhard" death camps (Treblinka, Belzec, Majdanek and Sobibor).\(^{130}\)

In the autumn of 1941 German extermination policy was extended by means of mass gassings. The gassing of Jews by carbon monoxide commenced in December 1941 at an extermination centre called Chelmno.\(^{131}\) In November 1941 construction of another death camp commenced at Belzec, situated south east of Lublin. Jews were murdered in crude gas chambers at this camp. Three further extermination camps were established the following year at Sobibor, Treblinka and Majdanek.

The gassing facilities were not an innovation; more than sixty years have passed since the origins of the Nazi practice of killing by the administration of poison gas. Irving conceded the existence of Hitler's "euthanasia" programme from September of 1939, a policy which permitted specified doctors to put to death those suffering from mental

\(^{130}\) Fleming, op. cit., pp. 76-77.
\(^{131}\) Browning, op. cit., ibid., p. 219.
or physical disabilities.\textsuperscript{132} Thousands were killed, mostly by the administration of carbon monoxide gas kept in bottles. In addition, many were killed using gas vans which the victims were induced to enter, whereupon the exhaust gas of the vans was pumped inside, killing those inside within 20 minutes or longer. The euthanasia programme was discontinued in August 1941 on Hitler's order because it was causing public disquiet.\textsuperscript{133}

Irving accepted that after cessation of operation in Germany, the gas vans and associated personnel were transferred to the East, where the killing equipment formed the prototype of the later gassing programmes. Mr. Justice Gray noted that the author's concession represented a significant change from his earlier denial position.\textsuperscript{134}

The Nazis moved from the gassing of the disabled to the gassing of able-bodied Jews in the period from 1939 to early 1942.\textsuperscript{135} The trial court heard evidence that in September 1941 the first experimental gassing of Soviet prisoners of war occurred in a prototype chamber at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{136}

Professor Browning for the defendants, testified to deportation of Jews on a massive scale to the newly created extermination camps at Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka.\textsuperscript{137} Reliance was placed on eyewitness accounts to support the contention that gas chambers were

\textsuperscript{134} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 146.
\textsuperscript{135} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 6.68, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., section 6.70, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., section 6.47, p. 67
used at these "Reinhard" death camps to kill hundreds of thousands of Jews. Eyewitness testimonies to support these claims were divided into a number of categories, including German visitors to the camps, German personnel stationed there, Ukrainian guards assigned to the camps and Poles living within the vicinity of the camps. \textsuperscript{138}

Professor Longerich argued that it appeared from the evidence that the Jews who were sent to the death camps were in the first instance Jews from villages and ghettos in the region but quickly absorbed deportations of German and European Jews. \textsuperscript{139} The defendants estimated the number of those deported for "Sonderbehandlung"\textsuperscript{140} (special treatment by gassing) to be in the vicinity of 2 million victims. \textsuperscript{141}

How substantial was the evidence to support the contention that so many Jews were killed? Of critical importance was Eichmann's testimony, the essence of which concerned his experiences as an eyewitness in the autumn of 1941. In his memoirs\textsuperscript{142} Eichmann described viewing a building under construction at Belzec, which he was told was used as a gas chamber to kill Jews with monoxide gas. \textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{138} ibid., section 6.100, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{139} Evans, op. cit., p. 111.
\textsuperscript{140} Lipstadt, op. cit., pp. 154-55. This was a euphemism the Nazis used for what was to happen to Jews once they were taken to the death camps in the East.
\textsuperscript{141} Irving trial transcript, section 6.98, p. 71. It was the defendant's case that between 750,000 and 950,000 Jews were killed by gas at Treblinka; 550,000 at Belzec; 200,000 at Sobibor and 150,000 to 200,000 at Chelmno. Those were the estimates based on expert German witnesses and accepted in the German criminal prosecutions in the 1960s.
\textsuperscript{142} ibid., section 6.101, p. 71. The Israeli government had just released fresh documentary evidence, for the exclusive use of the libel trial, of what Eichmann said under interrogation to Israeli prosecutors in 1961.
\textsuperscript{143} Evans, op. cit., p. 122.
The following summer he saw Jews about to enter the gas chamber at Treblinka and witnessed the gassing of Jews at Chelmno.\footnote{Ibid., p. 122.}

Irving expressed ambivalence about the authenticity of the Eichmann's memoirs\footnote{Irving trial transcript, section 6.101, p. 71.} as well as the quality of his evidence of gassings.\footnote{Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 224.} Nevertheless, the author conceded that gas vans were employed to kill Jews at camps in the east. He argued that he had not seen any evidence of the use of gas vans at Treblinka, Sobibor and Belzec, but was forced to accept that on the evidence contained in the Eichmann private papers gassing occurred in vans at Chelmno.\footnote{Irving trial transcript, section 6.101, p. 71.} Such knowledge made it difficult for Irving to adhere to his well-known position on denial of gassing.\footnote{Ibid., section 6.101, p. 71.} The author compromised by conceding the practice of "limited gassing" at the "Reinhard" camps:

He [Eichmann] also describes - and I have to say this being an honest historian - going to another location a few weeks later and being driven around in a bus; then being told by the busdriver to look through a peephole into the back of the bus where he saw a number of prisoners being gassed by the exhaust fumes. So I accept that this kind of experiment was made on a very limited scale, but that it was rapidly being abandoned as being a totally inefficient way of killing people. But, I don't accept that the gas chambers existed, and this is well known. I've seen no evidence at all that gas chambers existed.\footnote{Evans, op. cit., p. 122.}

Another visitor and credible eye-witness to the gassing in concentration camps was a German officer Kurt Gerstein,\footnote{Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 10.} who described how he was delegated to take 100 kilos of Prussic acid to
Lublin, Poland, in August 1942. Accompanied by a chemistry professor named Pfannenstiel, Gerstein deposed that he travelled to Belzec where he claimed to have witnessed about 750 Jews being driven into four gas chambers.\(^{151}\)

Summarising his findings on the issue of deaths by gassing, Justice Gray dismissed some of the arguments deployed by Irving to support his argument that the gassings in the "Reinhard" concentration camps amounted to nothing like the scale as alleged. Mr Gray wrote in his judgment:

> Irving did ultimately accept that the camps at Chelmno, Treblinka and Sobibor were Nazi killing centres. He claimed, disingenuously in my opinion, that he made his concession so as to progress the trial. I readily acknowledge that he disputed the estimates put on the number gassed to death by Longerich and Browning. But, given the huge numbers of deaths accepted by Irving, little appears to me to turn on the disparity in their respective estimates.\(^{152}\)

**Denial of gas chambers at Auschwitz**

Few of Irving's denial assertions have attracted as much enduring controversy as his refutation of gas chambers at Auschwitz.\(^{153}\)

Auschwitz was a case on its own. The author long advanced the proposition that no convincing evidence exists of gas chambers at Auschwitz. On 13 February 1990 in one of his taped speeches at Dresden Irving declared:

\(^{151}\) Gerstein, on his way back to Berlin told a Swedish diplomat what he had seen. His account was written in April 1945. Gerstein died shortly afterwards. Professor Browning, for the defendants, accepted that many aspects Gerstein's testimony are problematic and that he was prone to exaggerate, but concluded that on vital matters of which he was to speak from his own knowledge he is reliable.

\(^{152}\) Irving trial transcript, section 13.63, p. 144.
The Holocaust of Germans in Dresden really happened. That of the Jews in the gas chambers of Auschwitz is an invention. I am ashamed to be an Englishman.\textsuperscript{154}

Irving contended that no documentary evidence exists to show that any Jew at Auschwitz lost his or her life as a result of being gassed.\textsuperscript{155} He would only concede many Jewish deaths from epidemics due to the appalling lack of hygiene at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{156}

In terms of numbers of victims, we have seen in the previous chapter that Irving relied on selective interpretation of incomplete historical data to argue his case that far fewer Jews perished than had been estimated by historians.\textsuperscript{157} The problem was that the author often changed his mind about the numbers and causes of deaths. In \textit{Nuremberg: The Last Battle} (1996), Irving claimed that the Auschwitz "death books" gave 46,000 names of people who had perished in the camp, mainly from disease.\textsuperscript{158} Extrapolating from the narrow base of these figures he argued that these represented the true death toll in the concentration camp.\textsuperscript{159} Citing British decrypts of German code messages, Irving suggested on a number of occasions that some 25,000 Jews possibly died in Auschwitz by killing, the rest from disease, the cause given in most of the "death books".\textsuperscript{160} Irving reiterated that "real" figures for the

\textsuperscript{153} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 147.
\textsuperscript{154} Irving trial transcript, p. 100. The speech was later reported in the \textit{Journal of Historical Review}, and reproduced at the 10th conference of the Institute for Historical Review, a leading Holocaust-denying organisation.
\textsuperscript{155} ibid, section 13.68, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{156} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{157} Irving trial transcript, section 13.87, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{159} Irving trial transcript, section 7.130, p. 95. The trial court recognised that there was moreover a natural concern on the part of the Nazis to observe the greatest secrecy about the gassing operations.
\textsuperscript{160} N. Jackson, \textit{The Case For David Irving}, Veritas Publishing Company, Cranbrook, Western Australia, 1994, p. 88.
total number of those killed at Auschwitz are to be found in the camp 'death books' maintained by the Nazis. The author defended the reliability of the "death books" on the premise that the Nazis failed to mention gassings in any of these surviving records.\textsuperscript{161} This was immediately disputed by the libel trial defendants, who contended that the "death book" figures are unreliable since they take account only of those victims who were registered at the camp and not those who were murdered in the gas chambers on arrival there.\textsuperscript{162} The Jews who were selected on arrival to die were taken straight to the gas chambers without being registered. The court concurred that it was unlikely that mention of the cause of death of those Jews could be found in the "death books".\textsuperscript{163}

At other times Irving suggested that all the Jews who died in Auschwitz died from disease.\textsuperscript{164} In 1993 he declared: "Probably 100,000 Jews died in Auschwitz, but not from gas chambers, they died from epidemics".\textsuperscript{165}

Irving’s claims remain controversial; nonetheless, trial Judge Mr. Gray observed, as we have seen, that the author appeared conciliatory where it concerned estimates of death. Irving placed less reliance on numbers than he had done in his previous press statements over the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{161} Evans, op. cit., p. 122.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Irving trial transcript, section 8.26, p. 107.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Ibid., section 13.88, p. 148.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Evans, op. cit., p. 116. Irving cited the late British Intelligence chief Sir Harry Hinsley as a source for his claim that all the deaths at Auschwitz were due to disease. However, Evans established that in fact Hinsley did not make this claim and that all Hinsley wrote was that the British decrypts of encoded radio messages sent from Auschwitz did not mention gassings, which was hardly surprising given the Nazis’ policy of not mentioning the gas chambers explicitly in any of their communications.
\item \textsuperscript{165} D. Irving, Video: ‘The Search for Truth in History’, 1993.
\end{itemize}
last decade.¹⁶⁶ This seemed curious. Irving was now cautiously prepared to concede that gassing of human beings had taken place at Auschwitz but "on a very limited scale".¹⁶⁷ However, he continued to assert that Auschwitz was not a death factory ("tötesfabrik") as "alleged by Holocaust historians".¹⁶⁸ There was no question, Irving argued, of 500,000 Jews having perished in crematorium II alone at Auschwitz-Birkenau, as alleged by the defendants.¹⁶⁹ He denied that there were any functioning gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau; no Jews or other victims of Nazism were killed in them, he declared, with perhaps the sole exception of a small number he conceded were gassed during experiments.

In short, Irving remained adamant that the available evidence fails to establish that Jews were killed in gas chambers at Auschwitz on anything approaching the scale claimed by Holocaust historians.¹⁷⁰

In a recorded speech at Calgary, Alberta on 29 September 1991 he told his listeners:

Until 1988, I believed that there had been something like a Holocaust. I believed that millions of people have been killed in factories of death. I believed in the gas chamber. I believed in all

¹⁶⁶ Irving trial transcript, section 7.11, p. 79.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid., section 13.69, p. 145. In the course of the trial Irving modified his position; he now accepted that there was at least one gas chamber (or "cellar") at Auschwitz, albeit used mainly, if not solely, for the fumigation of clothing. He also accepted that gassing of Jews had occurred "on some scale", but did not indicate on what scale.
¹⁶⁸ Ibid., section 13.69, p. 145. Irving used the German term "Tötesfabrik" (death factory) to refute evidence from Professor van Pelt that contrary to Irving's claims, almost one million Jews were put to death in the gas chamber at Auschwitz. Irving firmly rejected the defendant's claim that 500,000 Jews were killed in morgue 1 of crematoria 2 at Auschwitz. Irving's modified position on gassings at Auschwitz during the course of the trial came about when he suddenly departed from his usual stance by accepting that there was at least one gas chamber (or "cellar") at Auschwitz, albeit used solely or mainly for the fumigation of clothing. He also, perhaps surprisingly, accepted that gassing of Jews had taken place at the camp "on some scale", without clarifying the extent of this.
¹⁶⁹ Ibid., section 7.13, p. 79.
¹⁷⁰ Ibid., section 7.13, p. 79.
the paraphernalia of the modern Holocaust. But 1988, when I came to Canada and gave evidence, in the trial of Ernst Zundel, as an historian, I met people who knew differently and could prove to me that that story was just a legend. I've changed my mind and I have now revised the Hitler book so that all reference to Auschwitz and the gas chambers and the factories of death have now been totally removed and eradicated. ...  

Linked with the author's views on Auschwitz gas chambers was his outrage about the origins of the gassing "myths". On 8 November 1990 in the Latvian Town Hall, Toronto, a video made on this occasion recorded him as saying:

More people died on the back of Senator Kennedy's motor car at Chappaquiddick than died in the gas chambers at Auschwitz. [Applause].  

On 5 March 1990 Irving again declared to an audience in Germany, as he had done many times, that there were no gas chambers in Auschwitz:

There were no gas chambers in Auschwitz, there were only dummies which were built by the Poles in the postwar years, just as the Americans built the dummies in Dachau...these things in Auschwitz, and probably also in Majdanek, Treblinka and other so-called extermination camps in the East are all just dummies.  

The callous remarks offended many libel trial participants. Irving defended his comment, claiming that he had in fact referred to the Auschwitz gas chamber "shown to the tourists", that is, the gas chamber which was reconstructed after the war. He contended he had always added the words "shown to the tourists", arguing that applause from the audience had drowned the words of the sentence.

171 ibid., pp. 101-02.
172 ibid., p. 100.
173 Evans, op. cit., p. 125.
174 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 249.
When the video was played in court, Irving was forced to accept that he had not added the words "which are shown to the tourists".\textsuperscript{175}

Who originated the "gassing stories"? Irving believed the history of the gas chambers to have been concocted, rejecting all evidence to the contrary. His denial exhibited two major characteristics. First, he possessed ingrained antisemitic views. His low opinion of the Jews was fuelled by conspiracy theories purporting to prove that all Jews are liars and tricksters holding the world to ransom and continuing to extract war reparations from Germany. The implication is that to achieve their objectives, it was the Jews who were to blame for "rumours" about gas chambers.\textsuperscript{176} After his conversion to Holocaust denial in 1988, Irving rapidly moved into line with these views. The author appeared ready to accept that the "gas chamber stories" were disseminated by Jewish historians. In 1993, he used the phrase: "We independent historians, shall we say, the non-Jewish historians, the ones with an entirely open mind".\textsuperscript{177} Irving's antisemitic assumptions surfaced again in 1988 when he declared:

Nobody likes to be swindled, still less where considerable sums of money are involved [in atonement for the "gas chambers of Auschwitz]...And this myth will not die easily...Too many hundreds of millions of honest, intelligent people have been duped by the well-financed and brilliantly successful post-war publicity campaign which followed from the original ingenious plan of the British Psychological Warfare Executive in 1942 to spread to the world the propaganda story that the Germans were using "gas chambers" to kill millions of Jews and other "undesirables".\textsuperscript{178}

\textsuperscript{175} Irving trial transcript, section 9.14, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{176} Seidel, op. cit., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{177} D. Irving, Video: The Search for Truth in History, 1993.
\textsuperscript{178} Evans, op. cit., p. 134.
The author's speeches "exposing the gas chamber myth" sometimes contained a threat of violence against Jews. For instance in 1991 he warned his audience:

And gradually the word is getting around in Germany. Two years there from now too the German historians will accept that we're right. They will accept that for fifty years they have believed a lie. And there will come about a result not only in Germany, but around the world, which I deeply regret and abhor. There will be an immense wave of antisemitism. It's an inevitable result. And when people point an accusing finger at me and say, "David Irving, you are creating antisemitism", I have to say, "It is not the man who speaks the truth who creates the antisemitism, it's the man who invented the lie of the legend in the first place. [Applause]."

Second, in a number of speeches and writings Irving claimed that the "Holocaust legend" was invented by the British Government. "British Intelligence", he said in Toronto on 13 August, 1988, "deliberately masterminded the gas chamber lie":

[Paul Norris]... found documents in the British archives showing quite clearly that British Intelligence deliberately masterminded the gas chamber lie. In 1942, 1943 and 1944 the Joint Intelligence Committee deliberated with the Psychological Warfare Executive on ways of blackening the German name, on ways to enrage the soldiers so they would fight even harder.

Yet again on 9 March 1990 in a speech at Moers, Canada, Irving questioned the "invention of the myth of the gas chambers". His audience was advised to ponder:

Where did this myth come from? And for me as an Englishman, that is the most interesting question: who invented the myth of the gas chambers? Representatives of the victorious powers. We did it. The English. We invented the lie about the gas chambers, just as we invented the lies about the Belgian children with their hands hacked off in the First World War. The department, the

---

180 Irving trial transcript, section 8.29, p. 107.
committee of the British Psychological Warfare Executive, psychological warfare...  

Repeated over the BBC, this myth, Irving claimed, was soon common currency among the Germans:

There's hardly a German who hasn't been listening clandestinely to the BBC who hasn't heard about the gas chambers. And they begin mentioning it in rumours to each other. From one washerwoman to the next, the rumour goes around Germany, until finally they've actually seen about it and their son's working in a unit and he's heard about it too. And that's how the legend gained credibility from the German side too.  

Did Irving really believe the English were responsible for the gas chamber "story"? It appears that he did. In extracts from his Churchill biography Irving wrote that details of the "myth" were supplied to the British in 1942 by Gerhard Riegner, director of the Geneva Office of the World Jewish Congress. According to Irving, the British Foreign Office disbelieved Riegner and thought the whole story might have been invented. When the British used the account as propaganda, reasoned the author, they knew it to be untrue. Irving was quick to quote Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, Foreign Office Chairman of the Intelligence Committee, as having said:

I think that we weaken our case against the Germans by publicly giving credence to atrocity stories for which we have no evidence.  

Capitalising on the statement, Irving went on:

---

181 ibid., section 8.29, p. 108
183 Evans, op. cit., p. 129. Evans cites the evidence from the British Public Records Office revealing that on 8 August 1942, Riegner informed the Foreign Office that he had been told by a well-connected German that the Nazis were intending to exterminate 3 to 4 million Jews. The methods under consideration included hydrogen cyanide.
184 ibid., p. 130.
We have had a good run for our money with this gas chamber story we have been putting about."... [Irving commenting]... it has got out of control... the Auschwitz propaganda lie that was starting to run in 1944 is now out of control and it is going to take he-men of the kind of stature of Ernst Zundel to kill that particular hare.\textsuperscript{185}

In his desire to justify denial of gas chambers Irving failed to show evidence to support his contention that the Foreign Office considered reports of gassings to be a lie. It is true that later evidence suggests that the gassing reports were not acted upon because the Foreign Office was simply "unsure about them".\textsuperscript{186}

Deliberating on Irving's claim that the gas chambers were a "propaganda lie" invented by British Intelligence, Justice Gray determined:

Irving was unable to present any evidence that the British invented the story. It was provided to the Foreign Office by the secretary of the World Jewish Council, who in turn had received it from a source from Berlin. As to whether the British disbelieved the story, the only evidence to which Irving was able to point was the note made by Cavendish-Bentinck that there was no evidence to support the claim. That appears to me to be a far cry from disbelieving the story. As to whether British Intelligence made propaganda use of the story, the evidence produced by Irving extended no further than second-hand accounts of BBC broadcasts about the gassing. There was no indication that British Intelligence played any part in these broadcasts. In my judgment the evidence does not support the claim made by Irving.\textsuperscript{187}

How may we assess the evidence for the existence and use of gas chambers at Auschwitz? A variety of sources indicated beyond reasonable doubt that they were used to exterminate Jews on a massive scale.\textsuperscript{188} Moreover, Auschwitz played a pivotal role in the Nazi

\textsuperscript{185} Irving trial transcript, section 8.29, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{186} Evans, op. cit., p. 131.
\textsuperscript{187} Irving trial transcript, section 13.99, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{188} Evans, op. cit., pp. 104–05.
scheme to exterminate European Jewry.\textsuperscript{189} Only the Nazis, using the
gas chambers, tried to systematically eliminate a whole people, marking
the regime as something unique; it is significant that the gas chamber is
both the "emblem of Nazi inhumanity and the ultimate obstacle to any
rehabilitation of the Nazi period".\textsuperscript{190}

As we have seen, the trial defence relied on evidence to prove that in
the period from late 1941 to 1944, more than one million Jews were
murdered by the use of gas at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{191} Had Irving approached the
Auschwitz evidence in an objective manner, argued the defendants, he
could not have failed to appreciate that the gas chambers at Auschwitz
were real.\textsuperscript{192} Professor Evans asserted that the author's denial "flies in
the face of the evidence and is explicable only on the basis that Irving is
driven by his own extraordinary ideological views".\textsuperscript{193}

Auschwitz is a large town in southern Poland, located at a rail
junction. When the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, there was a Polish
army barracks there, which was converted into a Polish slave labour
camp.\textsuperscript{194}

In 1941 a decision was made to build a giant extermination-slave
labour complex called Birkenau, a few kilometres away from the original
Auschwitz camp.\textsuperscript{195} It was capable of housing over 200,000 inmates.
Fitted with five huge gas chambers each with a crematorium capable of

\textsuperscript{189} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 149.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{191} Irving trial transcript, section 7.6, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., section 7.7, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., p. 78.
\textsuperscript{194} D. Dwork and R. J. van Pelt, Auschwitz: 1270 to Present, W.W.Norton and
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., pp. 364-367.
2-3 corpses of victims per minute; it became the centrepiece of the Nazi's final solution plans.\textsuperscript{196} The crematoria and gas chambers were not completed until 1943.

In the interim, a smaller gas chamber, on which Irving based his gassing denials, existed at Auschwitz camp.\textsuperscript{197} When the much larger Birkenau gas chambers began operating, the original one was no longer needed and was converted into a storeroom, incorporating some alterations to the internal walls. After the Second World War the chamber was reconstructed according to original Nazi plans, with the altered walls restored.\textsuperscript{198} Irving referred to this prototype gassing facility when he spoke of "fake" gas chambers at Auschwitz.

The question for the libel court was to determine whether the evidence supported the defendants' contention that deaths in Auschwitz ran into the hundreds of thousands or whether Irving was right when he claimed that the killing by gas was on an exceedingly modest scale, "practically non-existent".\textsuperscript{199} In his judgment Mr. Gray wrote:

I have to confess that, in common I suspect with most other people, I had supposed that the evidence of mass extermination of Jews in the gas chambers at Auschwitz was compelling. I have, however, set aside this preconception when assessing the evidence adduced by the parties in these proceedings.\textsuperscript{200}

What was the true death figure for Auschwitz? The answer depends on the sources from which the figures are derived. The defendants rejected Irving's estimates of deaths.\textsuperscript{201} Since no records were kept by

\textsuperscript{196} ibid., pp. 219-225.
\textsuperscript{197} Gilbert, op. cit., p. 173.
\textsuperscript{198} Dwork and van Pelt, op. cit., p. 318.
\textsuperscript{199} For Auschwitz, please also read Birkenau, the satellite extermination camp.
\textsuperscript{200} Irving trial transcript, section 13.71, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{201} ibid., section 8.28, p. 107.
the Nazis of the numbers put to death in the gas chambers upon arrival, accurate numbers could not be obtained.\textsuperscript{202} The difficulty was compounded by the undoubted fact that many inmates died from diseases. However, based on the known capacity of the crematoria, they held, 4 million died.\textsuperscript{203} This figure was compared with other sources. Höss, commandant of Auschwitz, gave varying estimates, ranging from 1.1 to three million.\textsuperscript{204} However, analysis of the number of Jews transported to Auschwitz produced a lower estimate of around 1 million.\textsuperscript{205}

Research carried out more recently, notably by Holocaust historians Raul Hilberg\textsuperscript{206} and Dr. Franciszek Piper of the Auschwitz Museum,\textsuperscript{207} established the number of deaths at Auschwitz in the region of 1.1 million, of whom the vast majority perished in the gas chambers.\textsuperscript{208} The majority of historians concerned in this field confirmed this figure. The libel court accepted that between February 1942 and January 1945 between 900,000 and 1 million Jews died at Auschwitz. Death outside the gas chambers account for about 100,000 victims, leaving the figure reliably at 800,000 to 900,000 murdered by gassing.\textsuperscript{209}

These figures far exceed Irving's estimates, which as we have seen, vary considerably.\textsuperscript{210} Mr. Justice Gray found that the evidence of the

\textsuperscript{202} ibid., section 8.21, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{203} ibid., section 8.22, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{204} Taylor, op. cit., p. 363.
\textsuperscript{205} Irving trial transcript, section 8.22, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{206} Lipstadt, op. cit., pp. 58-59.
\textsuperscript{207} Evans, op. cit., p. 123.
\textsuperscript{208} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 8.22, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{209} ibid., section 8.22, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{210} ibid., section 8.24, p. 107.
numbers of Jews killed by gassing and from other deaths at Auschwitz tended to converge:

My conclusion is that the various categories of evidence about the total deaths at Auschwitz do "converge" in the manner suggested by the defendants. I accept their contention which I have summarised. My overall assessment of the totality of the evidence that Jews were killed in large numbers in the gas chambers at Auschwitz is that it would require exceedingly powerful reasons to reject it. Irving has argued that such reasons exist.\textsuperscript{211}

Evidence from eyewitnesses

The most significant evidence for the Auschwitz genocide came from two sources. First, while there were problems with accuracy of memory, most eyewitnesses wanted to tell about their recollections. Second, there were documentary accounts from both concentration camp inmates and German personnel.

Historically, as early as November 1941, some reports had begun to emerge about of a violent camp at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{212} In March 1943 a radio message to London from Polish resistance sources confirmed reports of the gassing of more than 500,000 at Auschwitz. Cipher reports from Auschwitz to Berlin confirming this were being intercepted by British intelligence at Bletchley, near London.\textsuperscript{213}

In mid-1944 two young Slovak Jews, Rudolf Vrba\textsuperscript{214} and Alfred Wetzlar, who had escaped from Auschwitz, gave accounts of the systematic extermination of Jews at Birkenau (or Auschwitz II),

\textsuperscript{211} ibid., section 13.78, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{212} Gilbert, op. cit., pp. 160-70.
\textsuperscript{213} Evans, op. cit., p. 117.
commencing in the summer of 1942 and involving the use of specially-constructed gas chambers and crematoria. Vrba worked in "Canada", a section of the Birkenau extermination camp, an area in which the belongings of those who had been gassed were sorted for dispatch to Germany. The site provided something of a vantagepoint from which Vrba had been able to observe victims being marched into the underground gas chambers. Vrba remembered being marched into "Canada" where hundreds of workers worked frantically to sort, classify and segregate clothes, food and valuables of those whose bodies were still burning. He wrote:

It was an incredible sight, an enormous rectangular yard with a watchtower at each corner and surrounded by barbed wire. What struck me was a mountain of trunks, cases, rucksacks, kitbags and parcels stacked in the middle of the yard. Nearby was another mountain, of blankets this time. I was so staggered by the sight of these twin peaks of personal possessions that I never thought at that moment where their owners might be.

Of the other eyewitness accounts, the trial court heard from David Olere, an Auschwitz inmate who produced over fifty detailed, accurate drawings. Olere was a painter, born in Warsaw and later moved to Paris, where he was arrested and deported to Auschwitz. He worked in the "Sonderkommando" for Crematorium 3. Living in the attic, he was able to observe the building and related activity. Among the sketches Olere produced were architectural drawings of Crematorium 3 which show the basement level with the underground dressing room and the

---

215 Irving trial transcript, section 7.16, p. 80.
216 Dwor and van Pelt, op. cit., pp. 231-32.
218 "Sonderkommandos" consisted of Jewish inmates selected for removal and disposal of gassed victims.
gas chamber.\textsuperscript{219} Olere depicted people filing into the compound from the road and moving into the dressing room. A sketch from 1946 shows the dressing room, the benches and hooks for clothes. One of the wire mesh columns (through which the defendants alleged Zyklon-B was inserted), is visible in the background.\textsuperscript{220}

Olere's evidence was considered reliable and important. Dissenting, Irving disparaged the drawings, arguing that Olere was describing chambers which were used for fumigation purposes rather than killing. The author cast doubt on their accuracy, pointing out that flames as well as smoke can be seen emerging from the top of the main chimney in one sketch. Since Irving denied gassings and consequently, smoking chimneys, he suggested that Olere's drawings "may have been based on post-war reports".\textsuperscript{221}

Among German personnel employed at Auschwitz, some provided reliable accounts of the use of gas at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{222} One of these was Rudolf Höss, the captured Auschwitz commandant. In 1945 Höss produced a detailed list of the numbers of people transported to Auschwitz from various countries in Europe. He later swore an affidavit in which he admitted having overseen the extermination, by gassing and burning, of at least two and a half million people.\textsuperscript{223}

It is illuminating how Irving treats the testimonies from the Nuremberg confessions, including the testimony of Höss.\textsuperscript{224} Nuremberg

\textsuperscript{219} Irving trial transcript, section 7.23, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{220} ibid., section 7.26, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{221} ibid., section 7.110, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{223} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 7.29, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{224} Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 288.
confessions are unreliable,\textsuperscript{225} Irving claimed, because it was a military tribunal run by the victors and therefore biased. Previously he had argued:

[The testimony]...consists largely of extorted confessions, spurious testimonies, and fraudulent documents. The post-war Nuremberg trials were politically motivated proceedings meant more to discredit the leaders of a defeated regime than to establish truth.\textsuperscript{226}

Irving contended that since as many as 6,000 have survived the camp, the proportion of witnesses confirming the existence for gas chambers "is remarkably small".\textsuperscript{227} The author sought to convince the libel court that some eyewitnesses are inaccurate or inconsistent in their accounts. Others, he maintained, provided evidence through fear or in order to curry favour with their captors. Irving claimed that the evidence of many eyewitnesses was the result of "cross-pollination" with the recollection of other supposed witnesses.\textsuperscript{228}

Despite Irving's protests, the 2000 libel court accorded credence to testimony of Jewish deaths at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{229} Dr. Johan Paul Kremer, working as a physician at Auschwitz from August to November 1942, kept a diary\textsuperscript{230} in which he recorded evidence of activities of what had taken place at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{231} He admitted having taken part in gassing people on several occasions in September and October of 1942.\textsuperscript{232} He recorded being present at "special actions" by comparison with which

\textsuperscript{225} Evans, op. cit., p. 40
\textsuperscript{226} Shermer, op. cit., pp. 54-56.
\textsuperscript{227} Irving trial transcript, section 7.109, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., section 7.110, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., section 13.78, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{230} J. Garfinski, \textit{Fighting Auschwitz}, William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., Glasgow, 1975, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{231} Gilbert, op. cit., p. 144.
\textsuperscript{232} Irving trial transcript, section 7.30, p. 81.
"Dante's inferno seems almost a comedy". The diary contains an entry that justly described Auschwitz as a concentration camp.

In November and December 1947 Kremer was interrogated before the Supreme National Tribunal in Cracow. He described the selection process, after which the victims were required to undress before being led into the gas chamber. He testified how an SS man threw the contents of a Zyklon-B tin through a side opening and wrote about an occasion when 1,600 Dutch Jews were gassed.

Other testimony was equally graphic; SS-Hauptsturmführer (Captain) Hans Aumeier became the Lagerführer (Camp Leader) of Auschwitz in 1942 and was responsible for the inmate compound of the concentration camp. He remained in that position until the end of that year. According to Professor van Pelt for the defendants, Aumeier was present during the transformation of Auschwitz into an extermination camp. After his arrest in the summer of 1945 he admitted that gas chambers were in operation in Auschwitz and that on many occasions they had been used for killing Jews. He stated that everyone was sworn to secrecy. In describing the initial gas chambers in bunkers 1 and 2 at Birkenau, Aumeier told how each chamber accommodated 50-

233 Goldhagen, op.cit., p. 387.
234 Irving trial transcript, section 7.30, p. 81.
235 Galinski, op. cit., p. 87. Kremer's position as SS-doctor required him to be present at the selections and the gassings. One of his diary entries reads: "18.10.42. In cold and rainy weather I was present today, Sunday morning, at the eleventh special operation. Terrible scenes with three women who begged for their lives".
236 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 7.30, p. 81.
237 ibid., section 13.72, p. 146. The trial court held that Aumeier's evidence, along with that of other Auschwitz eyewitnesses, confirms the existence, in the court's view, of "convergence" of evidence, which is that hundreds of thousands of Jews were systematically gassed to death at Auschwitz, mainly by the use of hydrogen cyanide pellets called Zyklon-B.
238 Dwork and van Pelt, op. cit., pp. 219-221.
150 people.\textsuperscript{239} He gave a further account of the construction of crematorium 2 and crematorium 3 and their gas chambers which had a much larger capacity and began operating in April and May 1943 respectively.\textsuperscript{240}

Irving’s ambivalence about the testimonies of former Auschwitz functionaries Höss, Kremer and Aumeier was well known. On 8 November 1998 the author raised doubts about the veracity of their statements:

That’s what converted me, when I read that in the report, in the court room in Toronto, I became a hard core disbeliever. I thought, well, whatever the Nazis are doing to the Jews, they were not killing them on a conveyor belt system in gas chambers in Auschwitz, against which has to be said that I’ve read the manuscript memoirs of two commandants of Auschwitz [Höss and Almeyer (sic)] and they both refer to people being gassed in Auschwitz, and this is a methodological problem for a historian then. You have to look at that and say: well, there’s no trace of cyanide in the building, but you’ve got these confessions by these Germans. How do you explain that? That is where you enter a grey area; you don’t know what the explanation is... I don’t know what the answer is.\textsuperscript{241}

Filip Muller, a "Sonderkommando",\textsuperscript{242} gave an account in the 1970s of the harrowing process used to insert corpses into the ovens at Auschwitz crematorium 1.\textsuperscript{243} Muller described how trucks were used to transport the bodies to the ovens, how corpses were placed into the

\textsuperscript{239} Irving trial transcript, section 7.30, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{240} ibid., section 7.32, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{241} ibid., section 8.15, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{242} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 224. These were the camp prisoners selected to carry out the gas chambers the gassed bodies of Jewish victims.
\textsuperscript{243} Dwork and van Pelt, op. cit., pp. 179-180. Filip Muller, a Slovak Jew who arrived in Auschwitz in April 1942 with one of the earliest Jewish transports, was put to work as a stoker in the crematorium. By the time Muller, a slave labourer, was detailed to the "Sonderkommando" (special Squad), the morgue had evolved to execution facility by gas. It was Muller’s job to drag the corpses from the gas chamber to the crematorium and to keep the fires burning steadily.
ovens, the numbers of corpses disposed of and the technical problems that arose during the process.\textsuperscript{244}

Although in some quarters there may be some doubt about the authenticity of Muller’s letter, the libel court determined that it was not to be dismissed as a forgery, as Irving had done.\textsuperscript{245} Indeed, the court accepted the authenticity of the Muller document and acknowledged that the account provides further cogent evidence of genocidal gassing.\textsuperscript{246}

Summing up eyewitness testimony, trial Judge Mr. Gray determined:

\begin{quote}
Whilst I acknowledge that the reliability of the eyewitness evidence is variable, what is to me striking about the category of evidence is the similarity of the accounts and the extent to which they are consistent with the documentary evidence. No objective historian would dismiss [this testimony] as invention unless there were powerful reasons for doing so. The accounts are corroborated and marry up with Olere’s drawings. The evidence of other eyewitnesses, such as Höss, would in my view appear credible to a dispassionate student of Auschwitz. There is no evidence of cross-pollination having occurred [as Irving submitted]. It is in the circumstances an unlikely explanation for the broad similarity in this category.\textsuperscript{247}
\end{quote}

Irving’s antipathy toward eyewitness testimonies was well known. His views were represented in a [banned] video entitled \textit{The Search for Truth in History}, which he released for his Australian audiences in 1993:

\begin{quote}
...and this is why the Holocaust legend has survived until now because nobody has come forward really with any kind of credibility and has rattled at the foundation of that legend and said OK, prove it... Now, I said that the eyewitnesses are in fact a matter for the psychological examination I think. Psychiatric examination even...but I don't mean that in an offensive way. I wouldn't if somebody said about me that some of my statements need to be psychiatrically analysed because the human being,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{244} Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 7.44, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{245} ibid., section 13.73, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{246} ibid., section 13.76, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{247} ibid., section 13.78, p. 147.
the psyche, is a very complex instrument. The eyewitness survivor testimony is very shaky. It's far too shaky on which to base the condemnation of an entire nation, namely the German nation, in my view, and I think probably any sober and independent judge would probably back me up on that.\(^{248}\)

In categorically dismissing evidence from concentration camp eyewitnesses, Irving was scathing in denouncing many Auschwitz survivors. He suggested they had fallen prey to "distortions of memory".\(^{249}\) In a 1990 interview with the extreme right magazine \textit{CODOH}\(^{250}\) Irving judged the credibility of Holocaust survivors:

I say that the psychiatrists should concern themselves with this matter sometime. There are many cases of mass hysteria.\(^{251}\)

At other times the author was pejorative and dismissive of Holocaust survivors. On 29 September 1991 in a speech at Calgary, Alberta he spoke in derisive terms:

And there are so many survivors of Auschwitz now, in fact, that I get very tasteless about this. I don't see any reason to be tasteless about Auschwitz. It's baloney, it's a legend. There are so many Auschwitz survivors going around, in fact the numbers increase as the years go past, which is biologically very odd to say the least. Because I'm going to form an Association of Spurious Auschwitz Survivors, Survivors of the Holocaust and Other Liars, or the A-S-S-H-O-L-S. [Laughter].\(^{252}\)

At the libel trial Irving explained that the purpose of his reference to the "Association of Spurious Survivors of Auschwitz" was to mock the so-called eyewitnesses who tell lies about what happened to them. He told the court that the reference to their needing psychiatric treatment was admittedly "tasteless" but he wanted to draw attention to the

\(^{248}\) ibid., section 8.15, p. 102.  
\(^{249}\) Evans, op. cit., p. 131.  
\(^{250}\) Jackson, op. cit., pp. 83-86.  
\(^{251}\) Cited in Evans, op. cit., p. 131.  
\(^{252}\) Irving trial transcript, section 8.17, p. 101.
problem that these witnesses are "deluding themselves about their experiences". Irving claimed that the reference had been greeted by "renewed applause from the audience" because he is a good speaker and not because "the audience was composed of like-minded antisemites and neo-Nazis".\textsuperscript{253}

Extermination camp survivors, according to Irving, went to considerable length to prove their stories, "even the ones who've got tattoo marks on their arms". On 8 November 1990 he informed his audience at the Latvian Hall, Toronto:

> Because the experts can look at a tattoo and say, "Oh, yes, 191219, that means you entered Auschwitz in March 1943". So if you want to go and have a tattoo put on your arm, as a lot of them do, I'm afraid to say, and claim subsequently that you were in Auschwitz, you've got to make sure (a) that it fits in with the month you said you went to Auschwitz, and (b) that it's not a number which anyone has used before.\textsuperscript{254}

When confronted with actual survivors, the author selected technical aspects of their testimony which he used to discredit their memories.\textsuperscript{255}

**Forensic evidence of Auschwitz gassing**

Forensic evidence for genocide by gassing was presented to the 2000 libel court by a number of official sources. The first of these came from the Soviet State Extraordinary Commission set up after the Soviet liberation of Auschwitz in January 1945 to investigate what had occurred at Auschwitz. The Commission issued its findings on 6 May

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{253} ibid., section 9.15, p. 120.
\item \textsuperscript{254} Evans, op. cit., p. 132.
\item \textsuperscript{255} ibid., p. 133.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
\end{flushleft}
1945, concluding principally that on the basis of evidence from inmates, Nazi documents found at the camp and an inspection of the remains of the crematoria, more than four million people had been annihilated in the camp. The enquiry found that gas chambers had been used to kill people at Auschwitz, their remains having been incinerated in crematoria. The study reported that zinc covers used in connection with the gas chamber ventilation system had been tested in a forensic laboratory. Since these were found to contain traces of cyanide, the defendants argued, it is further evidence of the use of the chambers to gas Jews.

The Nazis obliterated the source material after closure of the Auschwitz death camp. Systematic destruction of the gas chambers rendered it difficult to obtain evidence. Although the archive of the camp "Kommandantur" had been destroyed, documents and drawings of the Central Auschwitz Construction Office survived intact, apparently by an oversight, its contents having been recovered by the Russians.

Davidovski, a Polish specialist in combustion technology, compiled a report on the technology of mass extermination, utilising available source material at Auschwitz. Based on the blueprints for the construction and adaptation of the crematoria and morgues, as well as on visits to the sites, Davidovski noted terms such as

---

256 Irving trial transcript, section 7.19, p. 80.
257 ibid., section 7.2, p. 80.
258 ibid., section 13.75, p. 146. Mr. Justice Gray commented that although some of the categories of documentary evidence may be vulnerable, it appeared to him that the cumulative effect of the evidence for the genocidal operation of the gas chambers at Auschwitz is considerable.
259 ibid., section 7.20, p. 80.
260 ibid., section 7.20, p. 80.
"Spezialeinrichtungen" (special installations) used in the documents to describe the crematoria. There was a specific reference in the blueprints to a "Vergasungskeller" (gassing cellar).\textsuperscript{261}

Evidence from Forensic Institute of Cracow- the Markiewicz Report

The 2000 libel court dealt in greater detail with forensic matters contained in the Leuchter Report outlined in a previous chapter. Since the findings of this report were the basis upon which Irving had so vehemently denied the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz, Mr. Justice Gray determined this approach to be appropriate justification for rebuttal of the report's conclusions.

In February 1990, prompted by the propagandistic nature of publicity accorded the Leuchter Report, Auschwitz Museum Director Dr. Franciscek Piper enlisted the expert assistance of Professor Markiewicz, Director of the Forensic Institute of Cracow, who collected further samples, as Leuchter had done, from the Auschwitz gas chambers for analysis.\textsuperscript{262}

Professor Markiewicz and his team adopted alternative "microdiffusion" techniques\textsuperscript{263} to test for cyanide samples from the crematorium, the delousing chamber as well as a control sample from elsewhere within Auschwitz.

\textsuperscript{261} Ibid., section 7.20, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid., section 7.73, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., section 7.74, p. 87. Markiewicz decided that the so-called Prussian blue test relied on by Leuchter, was unreliable because its formation depended on the acidity of the environment which was particularly low in the alleged gas chambers.
According to Professor van Pelt for the defendants, the Markiewicz Report demonstrated positively that Zyklon-B had been introduced into the supposed gas chambers, albeit with variations, in the test results.264 The results for crematoria 4 and 5 were less conclusive because they had been demolished at the end of the war, rendering sample access difficult. The defendants contended that the evidence of the Markiewicz Report, to any dispassionate mind, was overwhelming that the Nazis systematically murdered hundreds of thousands of Jews by gassing, mainly by the use of Zyklon-B pellets.265 Mr. Justice Gray accepted the findings of the Markiewicz report as important contemporaneous scientific evidence that large-scale gassings occurred in Auschwitz-Birkenau.266

Irving rejected the entire body of evidence adduced by the Markiewicz Report. He affirmed opposition to the existence and operation of gas chambers at Auschwitz, arguing in support of Leuchter's conclusions negating killing by gas at Auschwitz.267

Evidence from the Leuchter Report

So far this study examined two aspects of the Leuchter Report - one relating to its discredited findings and the other from perspective of the impact of the report on Irving.268 The author's abiding position on the

264 Dwork and van Pelt, op. cit., pp. 219-221.
265 Irving trial transcript, section 7.75, p. 87.
266 ibid., section 13.75, p. 146.
268 Searchlight, November 1991, p. 3.
Leuchter Report, together with his denial of the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau, seemed to lack credibility. On a number of occasions Irving appeared to distance himself from the report's conclusions, explaining that he did not regard himself as "an expert on the Holocaust". Yet he continues to embrace the fallacious conclusions of the report, repeating in evidence at the 2000 libel court that the chemical analysis of Leuchter's samples taken from gas chambers "still has a profound impact on my thinking".

Leuchter claimed that gas chambers did not exist and could not have been used by the Nazis. In 1988 he removed 31 samples of brickwork and plaster from various Auschwitz crematoria and one sample from a delousing chamber where cyanide was known to have been used. On his return to the US Leuchter had these samples analysed by a laboratory in Massachusetts. The object of the test was to discover whether the residual cyanide of the samples was consistent with exposure to high levels of cyanide over a prolonged period of time.

Chemical analysis of the control sample, according to Leuchter, revealed a heavy concentration of cyanide content, namely 1050 mg/kg. By contrast, the analysis of the other samples, taken from the

---

269 Griffin, (eds.), op. cit., p. 334.
271 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 179.
272 Ibid., p. 179.
273 Irving trial transcript, section 7.79, p. 88.
274 Miele, op. cit., pp. 58-70. Zundel called Leuchter as an expert witness as to the existence of the gas chambers in the Nazi concentration camps. Also, Zundel's defence paid $30,000 to perform an analysis on samples from the gas chambers, which Leuchter obtained without the knowledge or consent of the Polish authorities. This was strictly illegal.
275 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 167.
276 Stern, op. cit., p. 45. Howard Sattler, a top-rated radio broadcaster in Perth, interviewed Fred Leuchter, who told the Australian radio audience that Jews died from
alleged gas chambers, resulted in either negative findings or findings of very low concentration levels ranging from 1 mg/kg to 9mg/kg. From these findings Leuchter concluded:

[This]...supports the evidence that these facilities were not execution gas chambers. The small quantities detected would indicate that at some point these buildings were deloused with Zyklon-B as were all the buildings at these facilities. Additionally the areas of blue staining show a high iron content, indicating ferric-ferro-cyanide, no longer hydrogen cyanide. One would have expected higher cyanide detection in the samples taken from the alleged gas chambers [because of the greater amount of gas allegedly used there] than that found in the control sample. Since the contrary is true one must conclude that these facilities were not execution gas chambers, when coupled with all other evidence gained on inspection.277

Apart from this conclusion, Leuchter made a number of observations about the structure of the five crematoria at Auschwitz, claiming the crematoria had been "too poorly and dangerously designed to have served as execution gas chambers".278 He argued that the evidence showed there was no provision for gasketed doors, windows or vents. The structures, he maintained, were not coated with tar or other sealant to prevent leakage or absorption of gas, "creating the potential for an explosion".279 The exposed porous brick and mortar, Leuchter contended, would have accumulated hydrogen cyanide and render the facilities dangerous to humans for several years.280

Crematorium 1, Leuchter asserted, is adjacent to the SS hospital and has floor drains connected to the main sewer of the camp, which would

---

277 Irving trial transcript, section 7.82, p. 88.
278 Searchlight, February 1990, p. 4.
279 Irving trial transcript, section 7.83, p. 88.
have resulted in "liquid cyanide being carried into every building of the camp". \(^{281}\)

There were no exhaust systems to vent the gas after usage, Leuchter contended, and no mechanism could be found for be introduction and evaporation of Zyklon-B pellets. If indeed, according to Leuchter, the Zyklon-B pellets were fed into the chamber through roof vents or windows, there were no means of ensuring the even distribution of the gas. The facilities would always have been damp and unheated, which conditions might be considered unsuited to the use of Zyklon-B. \(^{282}\)

Moreover, Leuchter considered the gas chambers to be too small physically to contain the number of occupants claimed. The doors, he alleged, open inwards which would inhibit the removal of bodies. With the gas chambers fully packed with occupants, the hydrogen cyanide would not circulate within the room. If the gas eventually did fill the chamber, anyone feeding the pellets into the vents on the roof would die from exposure to the poisonous gas. \(^{283}\)

Of the crematoria, Leuchter calculated, their combined theoretical daily incineration capacity was 353.6 corpses. However in practice the maximum number of corpses capable of being burned could not have exceeded 156. Over the period the incinerators were being operated, Leuchter concluded, the total number of cremations would have been 193, 576 in theory but no more than 85,092 in practice. \(^{284}\)

\(^{281}\) Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 7.84, p. 89.
\(^{282}\) Ibid., section 7.84, p. 89.
\(^{283}\) Ibid., section 7.85, p. 89.
\(^{284}\) Ibid., section 7.86, p. 89.
Yet Leuchter's confident "best engineering opinion" was that none of the facilities examined were ever used for the execution of human beings and that the crematories could "not have supported the workload attributed to them". Leuchter's assessment of crematory capacity contradicts the numbers of corpses cremated within the generally agreed time frame.

Irving accepted that there were "methodological flaws" in the report although he continued to endorse the main findings, arguing that "forensic chemistry is, I repeat, an exact science". In a recent interview the author declared:

I was shown the reports on the tests on the walls of the gas chambers at Auschwitz, and I became quite satisfied having studied forensic chemistry at university that this is an exact science and that there's no traces of cyanide compounds in the walls of those gas chambers...That's when we decided we had to cut the word 'gas chamber' out of my book. So what started out as a historical footnote in my Hitler's War in 1977 has now become so important that prime ministers and presidents have to denounce it.

It was put to Irving in cross-examination that the greatest fallacy in the Leuchter Report was an underlying assumption that a far higher concentration of cyanide, in the region of 3,200 parts per million ("ppm"), would be required to kill people in the gas chambers than would be required for the purpose of delousing clothing. It was actually the other way around, the defendants argued; high levels of

---

285 Jackson, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
286 Searchlight, 5 February 1990, p.2.
287 Irving trial transcript, section 7.88, p. 89.
288 Rosenbaum, op. cit., p.234.
289 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 7.89, p. 89.
cyanide are required for delousing purposes whereas in the region of 300 ppm will suffice for the purpose of killing human beings.\textsuperscript{290}

Irving remained recalcitrant; while conceding that some of the defence's arguments "had to be taken on board and probably concessions have to be made at both ends of this scale",\textsuperscript{291} the Leuchter report, the author contended, had the desirable consequence of promoting public debate about the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{292} Whatever its flaws, the author maintained, the conclusions of the Leuchter Report were based on "chemical analysis, offering incontrovertible proof that gas chambers were never used".\textsuperscript{293}

Contradictorily, the author accepted that if the concentration of cyanide required for delousing clothes is far higher than the level required to kill humans, one is more likely to find 40 years residual traces of the cyanide in the fabric of the delousing chambers than in the fabric of the supposed gas chambers.\textsuperscript{294} The court found that Irving was "irrational in his persistent defence of the Leuchter Report findings in circumstances where the results on which Leuchter relied had no validity".\textsuperscript{295}

Mr. Justice Gray summed up by finding in favour of evidence given by the defendants proving the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{296}

\textsuperscript{290} ibid., section 7.89, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{291} ibid., section 7.89, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{292} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 153.
\textsuperscript{293} Irving trial transcript, section 13.79, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{294} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 152.
\textsuperscript{295} Irving trial transcript, section 7.74, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{296} Evans, op. cit., p. 29. Professor Robert Jan van Pelt, author of a standard work on Auschwitz, prepared a report for the Defendants in the Irving trial on the evidence for the existence and use of gassing facilities at the camp.
Commenting on the validity of the Markiewicz Report, Mr. Gray determined:

No objective historian would have regarded the Leuchter Report as a "sufficient reason for dismissing, or even doubting the convergence of evidence on which the defendants relied for the presence of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz." 297

Documentary evidence relating to the design and construction of the Auschwitz gas chambers.

The "no holes in the roof - no gas chambers" argument became a popular "set piece" in Irving's addresses to his audiences.298 For some years the author adhered to the proposition that gas chambers could not have been used at Auschwitz since there is no conclusive evidence of holes in the roof of these chambers through which poison gas pellets could be poured.299 Irving contended at the 2000 libel trial that the Auschwitz-Birkenau remains of the roof at crematorium 2 shows no sign of the chimneys which, the defendants argued, penetrated through the roof so as to enable Zyklon-B pellets to be tipped down into the morgue below.300 Irving maintained that if Zyklon-B pellets were fed into the

297 Irving trial transcript, section 13.80, p. 147.
298 Irving claimed that the "pan-caked" roof of the gas chambers show no signs of the chimneys, therefore the rooms underneath could not have functioned as gassing facilities. The defendants pointed out that this represents a new argument which Irving appears to have seriously introduced as late as November 1998.
299 Ibid, section 13.81, p. 147.
300 Dwork & van Pelt, op. cit., p 350. Filip Muller's evidence was considered by the trial court to be of prime significance. Muller testified that: "Down the length of the room concrete pillars supported the ceiling. However, not all the pillars served this purpose: for there were others, too. The Zyklon-B gas crystals were inserted through openings into hollow pillars made of sheet metal. They were perforated at regular intervals and
chamber by means of wire mesh columns and chimneys protruding above roof level, then the roof to this day would have five holes in it when where the chimneys passed through the roof. Irving argued this was not the case; no holes were visible.  

Irving knew well that this was a "circular" argument for which conclusive proof was lacking. The defendants accepted that the physical evidence remaining at the site of Auschwitz provides little evidence to support their claim that gas chambers were operated there for genocidal purposes. The explanation is, they argued, that late in 1944 Himmler ordered the dismantling of the extermination installations in the crematoria at Auschwitz. Professor van Pelt for the defendants conceded the roof of the gas chamber to be in such a derelict state and most of it is so inaccessible that it is impossible to verify whether or not the holes existed nearly sixty years ago. Rebutting Irving's allegation, the defence submitted that it could be reasonably assumed that after the 1944 dismantling of the gas chambers, the chimneys were removed and holes cemented over so as to "remove incriminating evidence".

Irving argued less strongly in court for Leuchter's "proof" negating the existence of the gas chambers; this was remarkable since he had previously rejected all alternative explanations. The author's change of emphasis on the absence of cyanide in the brick and plaster to the

---

301 Irving trial transcript, section 7.91, p. 90.
304 Irving trial transcript, section 7.118, p. 93.
305 Ibid., section 7.120, p. 94.
condition of the roof of crematorium 2 was perhaps prompted by the strength of defendants' arguments for the existence of gas chambers.\textsuperscript{307}

But Irving persisted; to support his contention, the author provided a photograph of part of the collapsed roof which displayed no evidence of the apertures through which the chimneys would have protruded.\textsuperscript{308}

Irving's reliance upon wartime photographs was intriguing; in 1993 he had begun to develop his theory about lack of holes in gas chamber roofs.\textsuperscript{309} In his video "The Search of Truth in History, the author told his Australian audience:

We have truth on our side. The aerial photographs don't only show how we have right and truth on our side, but how the enemies have faked the pictures. Because you know the American or Canadian or South African plane which took these pictures [in] 1944 or 1945. [They] took not only the one picture, but also a whole set of pictures, every five seconds a picture. One sees how the buildings, the people the lorries etc., have moved in the five seconds. But one also sees how the one picture published fifteen years ago by the CIA at the behest of world Jewry with the supposed holes in the roof of the gas chamber where the cyanide was poured in, with the supposed lines of people who queue to be gassed. If one looks at the surrounding pictures then one suddenly notices that on these surrounding pictures the holes are not present. And that the lines of people are not present. One sees conclusively that the CIA has faked these photos, retouched them to the benefit of world Jewry, who somehow wanted to prove that the gas chambers had existed.\textsuperscript{310}

According to Mr. Justice Gray, Irving's denial argument possessed some curious features. In the first place, Mr. Gray noted, Irving extended his proposition relatively recently, in late 1998, so that it

\begin{footnotes}
\item[306] Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 113.
\item[307] Dwork & van Pelt, op. cit., pp. 350-352.
\item[308] Irving trial transcript, section 13.81, p. 147.
\item[309] Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 166.
\item[310] Irving trial transcript, section 8.15, p. 103.
\end{footnotes}
cannot have been the basis for his denials before that date of the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{311}

Second, Mr. Gray held, the author appeared at one stage to accept that there was a gas chamber in morgue 1 at crematorium 2, albeit it one that was used for fumigation and not for killing.\textsuperscript{312} In that case, according to Mr. Justice Gray, it would seem that ducts or some other form of apertures would have been required to introduce the pellets into the chamber, since the morgue had no windows and a single gas-tight door.

Either way, Mr. Justice Gray concluded, it is a task for historians to weigh the evidence of the absence of signs of holes in the roof of the morgue against the opposing evidence that there were chimneys running through the roof. The court upheld the view that it is difficult after so many years to verify whether or not holes at one time existed in the roof which collapsed so long ago as 1944. Mr. Gray determined:

\begin{quote}
It is unclear how much of the roof can be seen in the photograph on which Irving relied. In these circumstances an objective historian, taking into account all the evidence, would conclude that the apparent absence of holes in the roof of the morgue at crematorium 2 falls short of being a good reason for rejecting the cumulative effect of the evidence of the defendants.\textsuperscript{313}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{311} Irving trial transcript, section 7.120, p. 94. Professor van Pelt repeated that there exists powerful evidence for the presence of chimneys, namely the photographic and eyewitness evidence, including Olere's drawings. The court accepted this testimony.
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid., section 7.120, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{313} Ibid., section 13.83, p. 148.
The issue of redesign of the gas chamber at Auschwitz

Surviving Auschwitz architectural plans reveal changes made to the gas chambers. Both libel court adversaries conceded that captured Auschwitz plans disclosed significant alterations to the functioning of certain buildings in the extermination camp. Controversy surrounding the redesign in 1942 of crematorium 2 at Auschwitz-Birkenau became a significant issue in the 2000 libel trial.\textsuperscript{314} The defendants dismissed as nonsensical Irving's claim that the reason for the redesign of the crematorium was to facilitate "the fumigation of objects and corpses".\textsuperscript{315}

Contemporary plans, the defendants argued, signify that the new design incorporated an underground undressing room ("Auskleiderkeller"), as well as a facility which indicated that the redesign was "effected for people to walk downstairs".\textsuperscript{316}

Under cross-examination Irving failed to explain what need there would have been for an undressing room if the facility were to have been used only for fumigating dead bodies and inanimate objects.\textsuperscript{317} Professor van Pelt, for the defendants, argued that there would have been no need for a metal-protected, reinforced spy-hole if only corpses and metal objects were to be gassed. Despite Irving's argument to the contrary, the court determined that the redesigned facility constituted

\textsuperscript{314} Guttenplan, op. cit., pp. 171-72.
\textsuperscript{315} Irving trial transcript, section 7.95, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{316} ibid., section 7.121, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{317} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 155.
"powerful evidence that the morgue was to be used to gas live human beings who had been able to walk downstairs".\textsuperscript{318}

Similarly, the court rejected Irving's alternative contention that reconstruction work at crematorium 2 was carried out to convert it for use as an air raid shelter. The defendants pointed out that since crematorium 2 is some 1.5 miles away from the SS barracks, it would have been too far away for members of the SS to reach in the event of a raid.\textsuperscript{319} The shelter, the defence contended, would in any event have been too small to accommodate more than a fraction of the SS personnel.

The court was unable to accept that Irving's argument displaced convergent evidence in respect of "the purpose of the redesign work".\textsuperscript{320}

**Evidence of fuel used to burn victims at Auschwitz-Birkenau.**

A gruesome dispute emerged between the libel court parties about quantities of fuel required to burn cadavers at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{321} Irving contended that the quantity of coke required to burn one body would have been 30-35kg.\textsuperscript{322} This proved, the author argued the impossibility of disposal of so many gassed victims. In his video *The Search for Truth in History*, made for Australian audiences in 1993, Irving maintained:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{318} Irving trial transcript, section 13.76, p. 146.
\item \textsuperscript{319} ibid., section 7.122, p. 94.
\item \textsuperscript{320} ibid., section 13.86, p. 148.
\item \textsuperscript{321} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 173.
\end{itemize}
You can work out for yourselves, ladies and gentlemen, how many thousand tons of coke one needs for that. But we have aerial photographs, where one can't see a single mound of coke. And not only that, but no railway, no railway siding leads to the crematorium to bring these masses of coke, these huge masses of coke, thousands of tons per day. No lorry convoys are to be seen, where the coke, under the circumstances, might have been delivered by lorry. 323

During a speech at Tampa, Florida, on 6 October 1995, the author elaborated on this:

Elie Wiesel and the rest of them come up with these legends. The basic part of the legend is 65,000 of these people were being cremated every day...But by their greed they exposed themselves as liars. Because to cremate 65,000 bodies a day you are going to need 30 or 40 kilograms of coke for each cadaver. There is no way around that figure. It is a basic law of the rather macabre thermodynamics of the crematorium business that it takes 35 or 40 kilograms of coke or an equivalent amount of other fuels available to cremate a cadaver. 324

In short, Irving maintained that the amount of coke recorded as having been delivered to Auschwitz was not enough to kill the number of Jews alleged by the defendants to have been killed in the gas chambers. 325

Opposing Irving's argument, the defendants successfully submitted that the given estimate is based on documents indicating that no massive amounts of fuel were required since the incinerators were operated continuously and many corpses were burnt together. 326 The libel court endorsed this view. 327

322 Irving trial transcript, section 13.90, p. 148.
323 ibid., section 8.15, p. 102.
324 ibid., section 8.17, p. 103.
325 ibid., section 8.15, p. 102.
326 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 182.
Trial court's finding on Irving as a Holocaust denier

Mr. Justice Gray determined that David Irving qualifies as a Holocaust denier. In his finding, Mr. Gray deposed that he had prioritised Irving's principal writings and speeches in categories comprising denials of the existence of a broader policy to exterminate Jews, statements about the number of Jews killed at Auschwitz and in the Holocaust, as well as the author's claims that the gas chambers were a lie invented by British Intelligence.

In summarising Mr. Gray found:

Even so, it appears to me to be incontrovertible that Irving qualifies as a Holocaust denier. Not only has he denied the existence of gas chambers of Auschwitz and asserted that no Jew was gassed there, he has done so on frequent occasions and sometimes in the most offensive terms. By way of examples, I cite his claim that more people died in the back of Kennedy's car at Chappaquiddick than died in the gas chambers at Auschwitz; his dismissal of the eye-witnesses en masse as liars or as suffering from a mental problem; his reference to an Association of Auschwitz Survivors and Other Liars or "ASSHOLS" and the question he asked of Mrs. Altman about how much money she had made from her tattoo. I reject as being untrue the claim made by Irving in his evidence that in his denial of the existence of any gas chambers at Auschwitz, he was referring solely to the gas chamber constructed by the Poles after the war for the benefit of visitors to the site.
Conclusion

General histories of the Holocaust rarely mention Irving's contributions to Holocaust denial discussed in this chapter. The author has combined truth and fallacy in denying the events of the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{331} Irving misrepresented historical facts by repeated statements that there is no evidence of systematic extermination of Jews and that no gassings occurred in the major extermination camps.\textsuperscript{332} If Jews did die in large numbers, the author contended, it was as a result of epidemics.\textsuperscript{333}

Irving contended that the number of Jews deliberately killed by the Nazis was far less than 6 million; it amounted to only a few hundred thousand, and was thus similar to, or less than, the number of German civilians killed in Allied bombing raids, which he portrayed as crimes of a similar or greater order.\textsuperscript{334}

Irving continues to assert that the Holocaust is a myth invented by Allied propaganda during the war and sustained since then by the Jews who wished to use it to gain political and financial support for the state of Israel or even for themselves.\textsuperscript{335} The supposed evidence for the Nazi wartime mass murder of millions of Jews by gassing and other means, he claimed, was fabricated after the war. He described himself as being engaged in a "refutation of the Holocaust story."\textsuperscript{336}

\textsuperscript{332} Jaecckel, op. cit., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{333} Evans, op. cit., p. 147.
\textsuperscript{334} ibid., pp. 148-184.
\textsuperscript{336} Evans, op. cit., p. 147.
When Irving's speeches and writings are examined, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that he became a Holocaust denier in 1988.

How is Irving to be judged post-trial? The author continues to assert that the Nazi state had no concerted policy of exterminating Europe's Jews; all the Nazi leadership wished to do was to deport them to Eastern Europe.

In short, Irving goes to great lengths to refute the Holocaust's historical significance, implying that the impact and extent of the catastrophe has been magnified. The author's analyses resonate Holocaust denial with his claims that the systematic destruction of European Jewry in the Final Solution was scientifically and logically impossible.\textsuperscript{337} Such beliefs left the author open to charges of becoming an apologist for Nazi genocide.

Irving is not simply a writer of historical books. Some historians have argued that Irving should be categorised as a political activist and an agitator, embracing extreme right causes in Europe and elsewhere. In the following chapter we shall examine whether Irving is an extreme and violent ideologue, capable of inciting public violence.

\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., pp. 128-129.
CHAPTER FIVE

IRVING - THE HISTORIAN AND THE FAR RIGHT.

"Ich mache im Moment Wuhlarbeit"…¹

By the early 1990s a coalition of individuals and interest groups had become sufficiently cohesive to be styled the Holocaust Denial lobby. Their identity was rather obscure, although it was true that they evolved from existing right-wing impulses. The emerging Holocaust denial lobby embraced some changes in tactics and orientation. This chapter examines the movement and analyses Irving's contribution.

It is generally well known that a variety of extreme right groups, individuals and organisations exists throughout the world. It is arguable whether some extremists stand further to the right in the political spectrum than others. The participants themselves differ in their structure; some are formally constituted and readily identifiable, others are loose-knit and difficult to identify. By virtue of their policies and chosen political methods, including on occasion the use of violence, some of these groups may be characterised as right-wing extremists.²

The same is true for individuals who make up these groups and organisations. Some are neo-Nazis, dedicated to overthrowing by

¹ Deutsche Allgemeine [newspaper] article, 5 July 1990. The words: "I like stirring things up" are attributed to David Irving.
violent means democratic systems of government and replacing them with the machinery of national totalitarianism. Others are less extreme; they may themselves be non-violent and opposed to incitement of violence by rabble-rousing public speakers and demonstrators. The political objectives of some of these individuals may be limited to the adoption of right-wing policies on such issues as immigration, housing and social policy within the framework of existing demographic structures. Others subscribe to doctrines of racial supremacy, ethnic purification, national expansion as well as policies which advance the allocation of resources along racial lines.²

One of the most important tenets characterising organised Holocaust denial asserts that Nazi Germany's systematic genocide of the Jews of Europe is not unconscionable.³ They believe that antisemitic actions by the Nazi government were in large part a legitimate response to Jewish misdeeds and disloyalty.⁴ They lament, as David Irving does, that Germany is singled out for special condemnation because they lost the war. Griffin aptly reveals the deniers' rationale for exonerating the Nazi legacy:

The more intelligent deniers, like Irving, who are concerned about preaching to the non-converted, have recognised the need to launder away the annoying historical stains of National Socialism. The detergent they use is history itself, rewritten as if the mass destruction, the state terror, and the eugenic and genocidal atrocities of the Third Reich could somehow be spirited

³ ibid., p. 111.
⁴ J. Jones, in the Australian Journal of Historical Review, vol. 1, no. 1, December 1994, p. 169. In this article, Jones quotes Walter Reich as arguing that "primary motivation for most deniers is antisemitism" and that for them the Holocaust is an "infuriatingly inconvenient fact of history".
away. The most blatant attack is therefore Holocaust denial, which involves such techniques as claiming that the systematic destruction of European Jewry in the Final Solution was scientifically impossible and dismissing it as a "lie" or "a hoax", or accusing establishment historians to be "bent on fabricating a legend. 6

While it is true that Holocaust denial has become an article of faith among extremists and followers of the contemporary hate movement, its success does not necessarily depend on converting members of the general public. 7 It is enough for some proselytisers of Holocaust denial to promote scepticism about the historicity of the Holocaust. 8

We have seen in the first chapter of this study how organised Holocaust denial became prominent and significant in the 1990s. The global denial movement emerged as an important ideological voice for diverse malcontented individuals. 9

Many deniers like to portray themselves as individuals or groups engaged in a legitimate, dispassionate quest for historical knowledge and truth as they define it. 10 Some, like Irving, have adopted "pseudo-academic garb", intent upon embracing respectability in a strong desire to legitimate their speeches and writings. 11 Irving prefers to define himself as a writer of unconventional history and a martyr of "free speech". 12 It seems curious that his claims have not in the past been subjected to scholarly investigation. A growing body of evidence advances the proposition that Irving is not simply a writer of historical

8 Braun and Scheinberg (eds.), op. cit., p. 6.
11 Stern, op. cit., p. 7.
books. It has been alleged that the author has sought to obscure his extreme right activities in international networks of extremist and neo-Nazi groups. Moreover, persistent voices point to Irving's enmeshment in rabble-rousing, accusing him of demagoguery and instigating public unrest.

Why should the author have taken extraordinary risks? Irving's engagement with extreme right politics eventually resulted in his exclusion from a large number of countries. In the late 1980s and 1990s the author preferred to remain secret about his sojourns in Germany and elsewhere. However, a number of historians and commentators began to report on his activities. For instance, Australian journalist Sean O'Neill assessed the author's involvement in addressing disaffected crowds in Britain and Germany. He wrote:

> Irving's many German appearances were rabble-rousing speeches to hard-right groups, often dominated by neo-Nazi youths...In Britain, his so-called "revisionist" seminars are harassed by demonstrators and protected by 'security guards' from neo-Nazi groups.

Lipstadt also marked Irving as an agitator. In *Denying the Holocaust* she lamented Irving's far right activities: "Most media reviews of Irving's books rarely address his neo-fascist or denial connections".

---

12 Evans, op. cit., p. 145.
13 ibid., p. 145.
15 C. Rubinstein, in *Quadrant*, June 1993, p. 3.
16 Sean O'Neill was a political journalist employed by *The Age (Melbourne)* newspaper.
17 *The Age (Melbourne)*, 16 April 1996.
Whatever the truth of these allegations, Irving continued to travel widely; international engagements took him to Canada, the US, Australia and Germany.

So great was the public outcry against neo-Nazi resurgence that German authorities moved to forbid Irving’s public appearances in that country. In 1993 a Munich Court expelled him on national security grounds, finding his behaviour constituting “a danger to the inner security of the Federal Republic of Germany”. The same court placed a permanent prohibition on him preventing engagement in public activity within the district. In 1993 Irving was fined DM10,000 in Germany for “defaming the memory of the dead”. When he appealed, the fine was increased to DM30,000.

It is a curious fact that despite his legally imposed ostracism from Germany since the early 1990s, the author continued to appear on many occasions. For the German Ministry of the Interior Irving’s clandestine appearances in Germany remain a source of irritation. Having registered Irving on a list of undesirable aliens, authorities attempted to prevent him from entering at border crossings. Despite such actions, the author somehow repeatedly managed to evade these restrictions, appearing at numerous lectures and neo-Nazi gatherings since his banning. Irving seemed to enjoy the “cat and mouse” game

---

19 Kapel, Australia/Israel Review, op. cit., p. 10.
21 Braun and Scheinberg, (eds.), op. cit., p. 108
23 Rubinstein, op. cit., p. 3.
with German authorities. In a telephone interview with The London Times from Munich he boasted:

Yes, I am here and have been in and out of Germany for twenty times since the ban was imposed. This last time I came across the border in a rented truck at 4.00 a.m. and had no difficulty whatsoever. I was in Austria yesterday where there is an arrest warrant out for me.  

Yet Irving's escapades had a purpose; his peripatetic activities served to enhance his newfound role as public speaker. As we shall examine later in this chapter, the author's flirtation with the extreme right of politics in Germany intensified in the early 1990s, with his appearances at rallies becoming more prolific.  

Encouraged by growing recognition as a significant spokesperson of the far right, Irving addressed many rallies attended by swastika-draped youths calling for a "new German Reich". He relished appearing at forums of extreme right political parties.  

Despite the adulation, Irving risked being perceived as an agitator capable of inciting the masses, for it was widely reported in the German press that assaults and bashings followed his speeches to over-stimulated audiences. In 1991, for instance, Irving was guest speaker at a rally of the extreme right political party Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) at Passau, Bavaria. After listening to Irving, three hundred followers rioted, assaulted pedestrians, smashed windows, and injured a number

---
25 Jackson, op. cit., p. 150.
27 Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 226.
28 Stern, op. cit., p. 31.
29 The London Evening Standard, May 1992, p. 2. This article also reveals that Irving's German press relations were handled by Ewald Althans, a leading neo-Nazi, who was subsequently convicted for making Holocaust denying remarks.
of people. Forty Deutsche Volksunion members were arrested for giving
Nazi salutes and being in possession of weapons.\textsuperscript{32}

The author's attendance at the rallies provided drama and immediacy.
Proudly, Irving encouraged the filming of his speeches. Evidence has
been preserved in a number of videos prepared for propaganda
purposes. In a 1991 video Irving can be seen preparing to address
diverse groups of people, many of them in uniform, marching towards a
designated meeting place.\textsuperscript{33} Irving is identified on the platform after
being introduced to the crowd. As the author speaks, a "voice-over"
conveys the "eyewitness" immediacy of his address:

The truck has stopped in the City Square and the five hundred
or so neo-Nazi youths gather around it. Then he appears. From
the rear he makes his way through the crowd. He is taller than
one may expect. David Irving clad in a trenchcoat. He clammers
aboard the rear of the truck and seize the microphone\textsuperscript{34}...

It is indeed Irving the young Nazi "skinheads" have come to hear and
the anticipation in the crowd is palpable as the "britische Historiker"
barks at them in fluent German:

I honour this opportunity to speak to the German youth. The
process of reunification is not over yet. There is still a German
question. There are still German countries, German territories,
not only here in Germany, not only in Europe but also scattered
all over the world.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{31} The New Statesman & Society, 7 October 1992, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{33} The Irving London Trial Judgement, Internet (online) http://www.courtservice.
gov.uk/judgments/qb-irving.htm, 11 April 2000, [Accessed 2 May 2000], section
13.113, p.151. (hereafter referred to as the Irving trial transcript).
\textsuperscript{34} Searchlight, November 1991, p. 10. This anti-fascist British journal had arranged for
one of their staff journalists to provide an eyewitness account of a number of Irving
rallies through Germany.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 10.
The crowd grows spellbound; Irving continues to speak:

I commemorate the great Rudolf Hess, a martyr for Germany and in his name.\footnote{This is a reference to Hitler's former Vice-Führer.}

The neo-Nazis go wild. "Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil," they scream.\footnote{Searchlight, op. cit., p. 10} Passers-by disperse. Local residents, peering out from high rise apartments, withdraw and close windows. The members of the press are apprehensive. Police prepare formations. the author stands on the platform and grins. After his speech, Irving agrees to talk to a camera crew. He is excited: "You're seeing the soul of German nationalism emerging",\footnote{ibid., p. 10} he informs them. By early evening the demonstrators have turned violent. There are running street battles between police and left-wing student protesters. Arrests follow. There are assaults; the injured are taken away in ambulances.\footnote{ibid., p. 10}

Irving complained during the 2000 libel trial that this particular video had been re-edited to present him in a prejudicial light.\footnote{Jackson, op. cit., p. 164. The eyewitness account is depicted here to indicate the recklessness exhibited by Irving.} He claimed not to have been present at the time of public incitement, contending he spoke at the Halle rally "early in the afternoon and left soon afterwards".\footnote{D. D. Gutenplan, The Holocaust on Trial: History, Justice and the David Irving Trial, Granta Books, London, 2002, p. 246.} However, evidence from his diary entry on the day recorded him as having left at 5 p.m. Mr. Justice Gray was dismissive about the author's defence:

I believe that he [Irving] remained at the meeting for longer than he was prepared to admit. The significance of the video of the Halle meeting, in my judgement, is that it evidences Irving's
willingness to participate in a meeting at which a motley collection of militant neo-Nazis were also present.\textsuperscript{43}

To the press Irving dissembled about speaking from the back of a truck,\textsuperscript{44} informing sceptical journalists that he "does not choose who comes to my street meetings".\textsuperscript{45}

There is little doubt that Irving craved legitimacy and recognition for his views.\textsuperscript{46} This factor, together with his desire for publicity, led the author to diligently cultivated support from other Holocaust denial groups and individuals.\textsuperscript{47} It suggested a rationale for his links with significant Holocaust denial organisations all over the world.\textsuperscript{48}

Throwing all caution to the winds, Irving revealed a predilection for adventurism, encouraged by honours bestowed on him by extreme right organisations. It is little known, for example, that during one of his speaking tours sponsored by the neo-fascist German Deutsche Volksunion in the late 1980s, Irving was awarded a prize by a leading German neo-Nazi, Dr. Gerhard Frey. The accolade was in recognition of the author's "masterly use of historical research methodology and discourse".\textsuperscript{49} His particular contribution lay in "casting doubt on whether the attempted genocide of European Jews was part of the Third Reich's

\textsuperscript{43} ibid., section 13.113, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{44} Rosenbaum, op. cit., p.223.
\textsuperscript{45} Searchlight, no. 81, March 1992, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{46} D. Lipstadt, 'Holocaust Denial and The Extreme Right', Address to the Sydney Institute, 21 July 1994, in Sydney Papers, vol. 6, no. 4, Spring 1994, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{48} Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 224.
\textsuperscript{49} Griffin, op. cit., p. 336. Dr. Gerhard Frey was the chairman of Deutsche Volksunion (DVU), or German People's Union. The DVU has antisemitic, supremacist and neo-fascist policies.
official policy, and whether camps such as Belsen and Auschwitz were ever used as extermination centres".50

Nor was this all; secretly filmed videos of Irving regaling German neo-Nazis, replete with jokes about the Holocaust, reveal another side to David Irving’s character.51 Among Holocaust deniers Irving was publicly proclaimed as a "freedom fighter, daring to champion free speech".52 Some German neo-Nazis touted him as "pivotal in drawing aside the curtain of Zionist propaganda".53 Irving was given credit for revealing Jewish world conspiracy to the public:

[ Irving has exposed]...the political affairs of nations in this age controlled by a semi-clandestine force of Jewish influence, made powerful by enormous financial resources.54

The 2000 libel court accepted fresh evidence of Irving’s close relationships with right-wing extremists in various parts of the world, but more particularly in Germany.55 Who were these right wing groupings? What should we conclude about the importance of a German political milieu in which he moved, and which is commonly depicted as extreme?

Right-wing extremism emerged in Germany in three stages.56 The first occurred in the late 1940s and resulted in the ban of the Socialist Reich Party (SRP) in 1952. The second was in the late 1960s and centred on the German National Democratic Party (NPD) and, after its 1969

51 ibid., p. 335.
52 Jackson, op. cit., p. 4.
53 ibid., p. 4.
54 Ibid., p. 17.
55 Irving trial transcript, section 10. 4, p.121. Evidence was gathered from an examination of Irving’s diaries, video and audio material as well as reports from the German Office for the Protection of the Constitution.
election defeat, on Dr. Gerhard Frey's German People's Union (DVU). The third phase started in the late 1980s and has involved the DVU and various groups of militant neo-Nazi activists. Among the latter can be cited in particular the Nationale Offensive or National Offensive (NO), the Nationale Liste (NL) and the Althans Vertriebsbewege und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit (AVO).  

Opposing the libel court defendants' allegations of his association with major German extreme-right formations, Irving nonetheless guardedly admitted that he did, from time to time, address meetings of both the NPD and DVU. The author revealed even closer links with extreme right organisations exemplified by the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU), which, according to the right-wing newspaper Stuttgart-Zeitung, aims to:

[ensure], forty years after the Second World War, that Germany's bedrock of Nazi opinion keeps its hand in.

But he rejected charges of "guilt by association", maintaining there was no stigma attached to being involved with extreme right political groupings and persons. Both the DVU and the NDP parties were, he contended, under Germany's strict laws both legal and constitutional; they were not extremist in his view. Irving was critical of what he regarded as repressive laws in place in Germany which have the effect of "stifling freedom of expression". He advocated "nothing extreme" in

---

56 Irving trial transcript, section 10.5, p.122.  
58 Irving trial transcript, section 10.26, p. 125.  
59 The Stuttgart Zeitung, 7 March 1981.
his speeches and writings, he maintained, denying promotion of Holocaust denial or antisemitism at any of his meetings and rallies in Germany.61

But the evidence contradicted Irving's refutation of substantial collaboration with right wing extremists in Germany, particularly those promoting Holocaust denial.62 Confronted with such evidence, Irving reverted to denial patterns, denouncing individual deniers as an "ugly ragbag of neo-Nazi extremists" - they were, he argued, completely unknown to him.63

Reacting to the manner in which the libel court defence had obtained evidence against him, the author criticised them as "heartless for spending many hours trawling through my diaries and other papers". Irving protested it was "not reprehensible to associate with non-violent extremists".64 Of the Holocaust deniers identified by the defence, Irving disparaged these: "shorn of their commercial packages they do not amount to very much".65

Opposing Irving's objections about being stigmatised, the defence argued that it was precisely Irving's conviction about gas chambers as a "myth and a propaganda exercise perpetuated by those with a vested interest"66 which led him in pursuit of opportunistic adventures with right

---

60 Irving trial transcript, section 10.26, p. 125.
61 ibid., section 10.26, p. 125.
62 ibid., section 10.4, p. 121. The evidence given by the defendants indicated that Irving has regular and close relationships with right-wing extremists in various parts of the world and Germany in particular.
63 ibid., section 10.27, p. 125.
64 ibid., section 10.27, p. 125.
65 ibid., section 10.29, p. 125.
66 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 8.
wing forces in Germany. Furthermore, the defendants alleged, some of Irving's missions into Germany were inspired by his pretensions about recruiting future extreme right leaders, to "point promising young men throughout the country in the 'right direction'."

Irving's involvement with extreme right individuals and organisations

To what extent did David Irving align himself with extremist denial movements and individuals? Based upon a study of Irving's diaries, video and audio material, the defendants described Irving's association with various extremists in Germany. They substantiated, from the spectrum of Holocaust denying individuals and organisations, that some advocated violence. All shared commonality in promoting Holocaust denial, antisemitism and racism.

Summarised, the deniers were identified in terms of where they stand in the political continuum. The nature and degree of Irving's association with them has been examined.

---

67 Griffin, op. cit., p. 336. Typical of Irving's Holocaust denial is the way Irving could write in Hitler's War (1991 edition): "By late 1945 the world's newspapers were full of unsubstantiated, lurid rumours about "factories of death" complete with lethal "gas chambers".

68 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 181.

69 Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 8.
Ewald Althans:

Althans, a well-known denier, has had connections with many groups on the extreme right in Germany. In particular, he was the organiser of the Althans Vertriebs bewege und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit (AVO) from 1986 until its closure in 1992. The AVO conducted an antisemitic programme and has been associated with Holocaust deniers including Zundel of Canada. The organisation maintains global contacts with neo-Nazis. In 1995 Althans was convicted of defaming the memory of the dead and was jailed for three and a half years after a Berlin court found him guilty of neo-Nazi activity and incitement. Much influenced by Remer, a leading German National Socialist, Althans can be seen in a video made of a meeting at Munich on 21 April 1990 as well as in a video of the Leuchter Congress in Munich on 23 March 1991. According to the trial defendants, Althans organised many of Irving's speaking engagements in Germany. On a number of occasions he organised Hitler birthday anniversary dinners, some of which were attended by Irving. The relationship between Althans and Irving deteriorated in the early 1990s because Irving considered him to be an "unacceptable extremist". The author informed the 2000 libel court that he "regretted his acquaintance with Althans".

---

70 Stern, op. cit., p. 32.
71 Irving trial transcript, op. cit., section 10.7, p. 122.
72 Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 116. Ernst Zundel published the Leuchter Report which was distributed in Germany by Munich-based associate Althans.
74 Irving trial transcript, section 10.10, p. 122.
Thies Christophersen:

Thies Christophersen\textsuperscript{76} was an SS guard of Auschwitz and a neo-Nazi activist. He claimed to have been deployed at Auschwitz as an "army agricultural researcher" from January to December 1944, covering the period when the crematoria of the Birkenau extermination camp reached their maximum capacity. Christophersen consistently rejected the idea that the camp was ever used for systematic extermination by gassing of the Jewish people.\textsuperscript{77} He is the author of a notorious pamphlet entitled: \textit{The Auschwitz Lie},\textsuperscript{78} originally produced in 1973 by the Deutsche Burgerinitiative, a fascist group specialising in disseminating denial tracts, run by Manfred Roeder, who in 1981 was sentenced to thirteen years imprisonment as intellectual leader of the "Deutsche Aktiongruppen", which had been involved in bombings throughout Germany.\textsuperscript{79} Christophersen was wanted in Germany\textsuperscript{80} and has been connected to the American-based NSDAP-AO,\textsuperscript{81} itself the exiled organisation of the original Nazi Party.

Christophersen attended a denial rally with Irving in Hagenua, near Strasbourg, France. Christophersen was responsible for organising the

\textsuperscript{76} ibid., section 10.29, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{The Stern}, op. cit., p. 66.
\textsuperscript{78} ibid., p. 70.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p.9. \textit{Stern} relates how Christophersen gives the number of Jews in 1938 as 15,688,259 and in 1946 as 18,700,000, the question arises: how could there be a Holocaust if there were three million more Jews after the war than before?
\textsuperscript{80} Griffin, op. cit., p. 331.
\textsuperscript{81} Braun and Scheinberg, op.cit., p. 226. Christophersen fled prosecution in Germany for Denmark, where he maintains his operations.
meeting at Hagenu on 12 November 1989.\textsuperscript{82} Also at this meeting were Faurisson, Zundel and other Holocaust deniers.\textsuperscript{83} When asked about his contact with Irving, Christophersen claimed to "have known Irving for many years."\textsuperscript{84} Christophersen has been described as one of the leading "eyewitnesses of the Holocaust denial industry".\textsuperscript{85} Having sought the re-legalisation of the Nazi Party in Germany, he appeared as an expert witness at the 1988 trial of Ernst Zundel in Toronto. Irving described his relationship with Christophersen as "tenuous".\textsuperscript{86}

**Gunther Deckert:**

Deckert joined the German National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1966. The NDP, an ultra-right-wing party,\textsuperscript{87} is alleged to have become more radicalised under Deckert's leadership. Deckert became deputy chairman and head of the party's youth wing in the 1970s. He was convicted of incitement to racial hatred and defamation of the memory of the dead. The NPD have organised many of Irving's speeches in Germany.\textsuperscript{88}

Irving agreed that Deckert of the NDP is a friend with whom he is in regular contact.\textsuperscript{89} However, Irving explained that there has been

\textsuperscript{82} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 245.
\textsuperscript{83} Irving trial transcript, section 10.13, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{84} Kapel, op. cit., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{85} Griffin, op. cit., p. 331.
\textsuperscript{86} Irving trial transcript, section 10.29, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{87} O Maclain, op. cit., p.130. The NDP was founded in 1964 by Adolf von Thadden and other former supporters of the Hitler regime. Sixteen party member were arrested in Herne in May 1986 after violence during an NDP congress.
\textsuperscript{88} Irving trial transcript, section 10.9, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{89} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 245.
"nothing extremist or antisemitic" in the correspondence they have exchanged.\textsuperscript{90}

**Thomas Dienel:**

Dienel was the state chairman of the German National Democratic Party (NDP) in Thuringen, having founded this neo-Nazi party in 1992. He helped to organise Irving's Halle rally on 9 November 1991. In 1992 Dienel was convicted of incitement of the people and defaming the memory of the dead. He can be seen in a video of the meeting at Halle on 9 November 1991. Dienel was one of the organisers of that meeting, sharing the same platform as Irving and Holocaust denier Christian Worch.\textsuperscript{91}

**Robert Faurisson:**

Robert Faurisson is a prominent denier. He has been mentioned in another context in an earlier chapter. A former professor of literature at the University of Lyon, France, Faurisson argued in a number of articles that (1) there never was a pre-conceived German master plan to exterminate Jews, (2) no gas chambers were ever in use in the Third Reich or its territories for that purpose,\textsuperscript{92} and (3) the conventionally accepted figure of six million Jewish deaths is absurdly high.\textsuperscript{93} He

\textsuperscript{90} Irving trial transcript, section 10.26, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., section 10.21, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{92} Evans, op. cit., p. 107.
\textsuperscript{93} F. Miele, in *Skeptic*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1994, pp. 58-70.
contended that Anne Frank's diary is a forgery. For making these and other statements, Faurisson was dismissed from his academic post on grounds that the university authorities "could not protect him from his enemies." 94 At one time Faurisson was severely beaten by anti-revisionists after being found guilty of distorting history and instigating incitement to racial hatred in France. Faurisson, his publishers and some of his supporters who have distributed or promoted his materials, have been tried, convicted, fined and banned from holding any government posts in France. 95 Faurisson gave expert evidence at the first Canadian Zundel trial in 1986. He attended and spoke at a number of the Holocaust-denying Institute of Historical Review conferences in the United States and is a member of the editorial board of its journal.

Faurisson can be seen in the video of the Hagenau meeting on 12 November 1989. Irving has on several occasions spoken on the same platform as Faurisson. In 1991 Faurisson addressed a Clarendon Club meeting organised by Irving. The two men have corresponded regularly. 96

During the 2000 libel trial Irving pointed out that since he had a number of disputes with Faurisson, he could not be categorised as a denier. 97 By the early 1990s, their positions had converged; they were

94 ibid., p. 59.
95 ibid., p. 60. The convictions were under the Fabius-Gaysot law of 1990, largely written with the express intent of criminalising Faurisson's denial activities. That law makes it a criminal offence to "contest by any means the existence of one or more of the crimes against humanity as defined by Article 6 of the Statutes of the International Military Court, attached to the London Agreement of 8 August, 1945, committed either by members of an organisation declared criminal, or of a person held guilty of such a crime by a French or international jurisdiction."
96 Irving trial transcript, section 10.25, p. 126.
now agreeing on the essentials, only disputing minor points of disagreement within Holocaust denial theses. In 1991 Irving praised Faurisson, describing him as "a very distinguished intellectual in my mind, a very brave man indeed". Irving made use of an article by Faurisson in the *Journal of Historical Review* in his book on the Nuremberg trials.

**Gerhard Frey:**

Dr. Frey is the leader of the German People's Union, or Deutsche Volksunion (DVU). He is a leading right-wing extremist whose contribution to Holocaust denial was to minimise the crimes of the Nazi period. Frey, a Munich publisher, built his Deutsche Volksunion into the most significant umbrella organisation for the dissemination of extreme right and denial propaganda in Germany. It is the largest extreme right organisation in Western Germany. The DVU has antisemitic, white supremacist and neo-fascist policies. Frey sponsored Irving's speaking tours of Western Germany. He helped to organise Irving's meeting at Passau for the DVU on 16 February 1991. Frey can be seen in a video made by Irving of a meeting at Passau. Irving has

100 Evans, op. cit., p. 145.
101 Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 119. The DVU was founded in 1971.
102 Griffin, op. cit., p. 340.
103 Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 110.
104 O Maolain (comp.), op. cit., p. 125.
105 ibid., p. 125.
106 Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 224. Irving has lent his name and presence to activities sponsored by Gerhard Frey.
corresponded with Frey and spoken regularly at DVU meetings. Frey has also offered Irving advice on the contents of his speeches.\textsuperscript{107}

Francois Genoud:

One of Irving's associates who stands out in terms of his contributions to Holocaust denial and right-wing extremism is Francois Genoud, a Swiss banker and lawyer, who has been an active Nazi since the 1930s. During the Second World War he was made an honorary SS member, and awarded a "Gold Badge" by none other than Hitler. A close friend of the leaders of The Third Reich, he holds the copyrights on the writings of Hitler, Bormann and Goebbels. At the end of the war, Genoud was alleged to have been responsible for spiriting Nazi funds out of Germany and into Swiss bank accounts. He has continued contacts with ex-SS men, was prominent in the "New European Order" (an extreme right group), and paid expenses for Klaus Barbie's legal defence. In 1992 Genoud informed a leading London newspaper that "Hitler was a great leader and if he had won the war, the world would be a better place today".\textsuperscript{108} Irving described Genoud as "a very old friend and esteemed colleague"; "we share many causes".\textsuperscript{109} Genoud is said to have been the source behind Irving's Goebbels's diary "discovery."\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{107} Irving trial transcript, section 10.8, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{108} Cited in Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 74.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 174.
\textsuperscript{110} Kapel, op. cit., p. 8.
Godfried Kussel

Kussel, an Austrian neo-Nazi leader, has been a member of the German political party NSDAP/AD since 1977.\textsuperscript{111} He is a leading activist in the German and Austrian neo-Nazi scenes. He was sentenced in Austria for National Socialist activity. Kussel collaborated closely with Christian and Ursula Worch as well as Althans. He can be seen in the video prepared of the meeting at Halle on 9 November 1991, which he helped to organise.\textsuperscript{112} Irving denied any association with Kussel, although the author agreed that he had shared a platform with him on one occasion.\textsuperscript{113}

Karl Philipp:

Philipp was an active member of the Nationale Partei Deutschland (NPD) in the 1970s and 1980s. He has been fined for incitement of the people and for defamation. He has written for a number of neo-Nazi newspapers. He can be seen in the video of the meeting at Munich on 21 April 1990, which was attended by Irving. Irving first met him in 1989. According to the trial defendants, Philipp subsequently arranged speaking tours for Irving. He was involved in the production of Irving's

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Irving trial transcript, section 10.22, p. 124.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., section 10.29, p. 125.
\end{itemize}
video "Ich Komme Wieder". Irving agreed that Phillip is a personal friend and a "revisionist". Ahmed Rami:

Rami is a Swedish extreme right activist. According to the defendants, he is antisemitic in orientation, frequently proselytising about the 'Zionist Mafia'. He is alleged to be a close friend and ally of Faurisson. Rami and Irving both spoke at the Leuchter Congress in Munich in March 1991 and at the 11th Institute for the Historical Review Conference in 1992.

Otto Ernst Remer:

Remer, formerly a Commander of the Berlin Watch Regiment 'Gross Deutschland', helped to crush the revolt against Hitler on 20 July 1944. He co-founded the Sozialist Reich Party (SRP) which was banned in 1952. In the 1980s he founded the neo-Nazi German Freedom Movement. As a reward he was appointed Hitler's personal bodyguard. Reminiscing about Hitler, Remer was quoted as declaring:

---

114 ibid., section 10.11, p. 122.
115 ibid., section 10.29, p. 125.
116 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 124. Remer, a former SS general involved in foiling the Stauffenberg plot on Hitler's life, was released shortly after the war and established the neo-fascist Socialist Reich Party in 1948. In 1952, after two criminal convictions, he moved to Egypt and later to other Middle East countries, where together with Austrian war criminal Alois Brunner he became involved in the international arms trade. Remer later returned to Western Germany, serving a brief prison sentence in 1954. In 1963 he established the present organisation.
I see him before me still. He was an important man, the kind that is only born once in a hundred years.\textsuperscript{117}

Remer, a key elder statesman in the neo-Nazi movement, was active and influential. He was convicted in Germany in 1986 for denying Nazi war crimes.\textsuperscript{118} In the 1990s he was convicted for incitement to racial hatred. He is alleged to have extensive contacts with strands of rightwing extremism in Germany and abroad.\textsuperscript{119} He can be seen in the video of the meeting at Munich on 21 April 1990. In the past Irving interviewed Remer, writing favourably about him in his "Action Reports".\textsuperscript{120} Irving stated his only contact with Remer, whom he described as "an unreconstructed Nazi", was to interview him for a book.\textsuperscript{121}

\textbf{Michael Swierczek:}

Swierczek is a member of the Aktionsfront Nationale Sozialisten (ANS). In 1990 he founded the influential Nationale Offensive (NO), which was banned in December 1992. In 1995 Swierczek was convicted for attempting to revive the ANS/NA. He is one of the more important functionaries in the militant German neo-Nazi scene. He has also been involved with the GdNF. Irving spoke at a Nationale Offensive meeting in 1992 where he was introduced by Worch.

\textsuperscript{117} Kapel, op. cit., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{119} Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 245.
\textsuperscript{120} Irving trial transcript, section 10.19, p.123.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., section 10.29, p. 125.
Wilhelm Staeglich:

Staeglich was stationed at Auschwitz before 1945. In 1972 he was a member of the Nationale Partei Deutschland (German National Democratic Party). Having been disciplined for his involvement in a right-wing extremist newspaper, he retired from his job as a judge in 1975. He published *The Auschwitz Myth: Legends and Reality*? The book followed Butz in presenting Holocaust denial in a pseudo-academic form. The book argued that there had been no mass extermination of Jews in Nazi concentration camps, and that guilty verdicts in postwar trials of perpetrators were wrong. Staeglich used minor discrepancies in postwar documents and reports of the extermination to dismiss all such documents as forgeries and falsifications. In 1978 his doctorate from the University of Göttingen was withdrawn, and he was dismissed from his employment following the publication of his book. He was a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee of the Institute for Historical Review's *Journal*. Staeglich maintained close contact with Irving through the Institute for Historical Review. He has also had contacts with Althans and Christophersen. Staeglich died in the middle of the 1990s. He can be seen in the videos of the Hagensau meeting on 12 November 1989, the meeting at Munich

---

122 Evans, op. cit., p.106. Staeglich's book with the original German title: *Der Auschwitz-Mythos: Legende Oder Wirklichkeit* was first published in 1979.
123 The Stern, op. cit., p. 16. To show how Holocaust denial uses public libraries to promote their denial material, Stern cites an anecdote: in Wichita, Kansas, a lawyer asked the public library to purchase Staeglich's book *Auschwitz Myth*. By a vote of 7-4, the library board refused.
124 Ibid., p. 107.
125 Ibid., p. 140.
126 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 367.
on 21 April 1990 and the Leuchter Congress in Munich on 23 March 1991. Irving appeared alongside Staeglich at the Institute for Historical Review Conference in September 1983. Irving testified that he did not speak to Staeglich at the Hagenau dinner to commemorate Hitler's birthday, but was forced to admit under cross examination that he had breakfast with him the following morning.

Pedro Varela:

Varela is a revisionist and neo-Nazi now living in Spain. He can be seen in the video of the Leuchter Congress in Munich on 23 March 1991. In 1989 Varela organised a speaking tour of Spain for Irving and has remained in contact with the author.

Ingrid Weckert:

Weckert is a leader of the GdNF group "Action Protection of Life", which uses ecological and biological ideas to promote a form of racial purity for Aryans. Irving has been in contact with her since 1979. Weckert was convicted for inciting racial hatred. Irving drew on Weckert's work in his account of the Jewish pogrom of 9-10 November 1938 in Goebbels: the Mastermind of the Third Reich. despite his stated policy of never citing the work of other historians. Ingrid

---

127 Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 245.
128 Irving trial transcript, section 10.15, p. 123.
129 ibid., section 10.29, p. 125.
130 ibid., section 10.17, p. 123.
Weckert's work is marked by her denial of the crimes of the Third Reich.

In an article published in 1994, she declared:

The claim that Germans killed thousands of people in 'gas vans' is to be categorised as rumour.\textsuperscript{132}

In another article published in 1985, Weckert openly declared her sympathy for the Nazis. She wrote:

The youth of Adolf Hitler's Germany was the finest of all Europe and perhaps of the entire world. The same ethical standards applied to the SS and SA...It was their faithfulness and gallantry which saved Germany from chaos and Communism.\textsuperscript{133}

Weckert published her book \textit{Feuerzeichen: Die Reichskristallnacht} in 1981.\textsuperscript{134} The book contains antisemitic remarks and praise for Hitler's Third Reich. It absolves all leading Nazis of blame and suggested that it was master-minded by German "traitors" and "World Jewry". In 1989 Weckert was sentenced by the local court in Berlin-Tiergarten to a fine of over DM3,000 for her Holocaust denial articles.\textsuperscript{135} Irving's source information for his writings on the "Kristallnacht" phenomenon was thus borrowed from Weckert, a convicted antisemetic propagandist.\textsuperscript{136}

Despite evidence of meetings, attended together, as well as the

\textsuperscript{131} ibid., section 10.20, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{133} I. Weckert, 'Crystal Night' 1938: The Great Anti-German Spectacle', in \textit{Journal of Historical Review}, vol. 5, (1985), pp. 183-206. Evans, op. cit., p. 66, cites another 1997 article by Weckert. This article, according to Evans, was first published in the German extreme right-wing magazine \textit{Sleipnir}. To make it more difficult to track her down, Weckert had adopted a pseudonym in this particular instance. (The article referred to was: I. Weckert, (alias Hugo Tauschke), 'Zweimal Dachau', \textit{Sleipnir}, vol. 3, no. 2, (1997), pp. 14-27.
\textsuperscript{134} Evans, op. cit., p. 67.
\textsuperscript{135} ibid., p. 66.
\textsuperscript{136} ibid., p. 67. Evans claimed that Irving had concealed the true identity of his Weckert source from his readers and withheld full references to her work from his footnotes.
correspondence between them, Irving was reluctant to admit any association between them.\textsuperscript{137}

**Christian and Ursula Worch:**

The Worchs founded the Aktionsfront Nationale Sozialisten (ANS) in 1982.\textsuperscript{138} After the banning of their organisation, Christian Worch became a member (and later one of the leaders) of the Gesinnungsgemeinschaft der neuen Front (GdNF). He incurred a conviction for contravening the ban on the ANS.\textsuperscript{139} Christian Worch can be seen in the videos of a meeting at Hagenau on 12 November 1989,\textsuperscript{140} the meeting at Munich on 21 April 1990, the Leuchter Congress in Munich on 23 March 1991 and the meeting at Halle on 9 November 1991.\textsuperscript{141}

Irving acknowledged his friendship with both the Worches. Ursula Worch invited the author to speak at the 1991 Halle rally. Irving rebutted the claim that the video of that meeting revealed him to be associated with well-known extremists in an environment where Nazi slogans, salutes and uniforms were much in evidence.\textsuperscript{142}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{137} Irving trial transcript, section 10.29, p. 125.
  \item \textsuperscript{138} O Maolain, op. cit., p. 126.
  \item \textsuperscript{139} ibid., p. 126. The ANS organisation is a traditional Nazi party with a platform closely modelled on that of Hitler’s NSDAP. It follows policies popular among Europe’s fascist groups.
  \item \textsuperscript{140} Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 225. Citing the interconnections between Holocaust deniers, the authors write that the highlights of these contacts represent international gatherings, or Holocaust denial congresses, commemoration of Nazi heroes, and protests at Holocaust memorials. For example, the Holocaust denial congress held at Hagenau, France, featured appearances by Zundel, Faurisson, Irving and Christian Worch.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} Irving trial transcript, section 10.12, p. 122.
  \item \textsuperscript{142} ibid., section 10.18, p. 123.
\end{itemize}
Ernst Zundel:

As was outlined in chapter four, Zundel is a leading Canadian Holocaust denier who is responsible for producing large quantities of neo-Nazi material. Zundel is the author of the publication *The Hitler We Loved and Why*. He can be identified in the video of the Hagenau rally on 12 November 1989. As we have seen, Irving also appeared at Zundel’s first trial in Canada in 1988.\(^{143}\) Irving agreed that Zundel is a "revisionist holding right-wing political views" but considers him to be a "respectable man, free of any conviction". Irving remarked in evidence that he holds no brief for any of Zundel’s particular views; "wild horses would not make me read any of his books".\(^{144}\)

Mr. Justice Gray concluded that the task before was not so much to "decide whether Irving on occasion found himself sharing the same platform with any of the named extremists by chance, but rather one of deciding that it is more a question of examining Irving’s degree of association with such individuals".\(^{145}\)

The court’s findings in relation to the nature and extent of Irving’s extreme associations were unfavourable for Irving. Mr. Justice Gray summarised:

I am satisfied that Irving has associated to a significant extent with the following individuals: Frey, Deckert, Althans, Philipp, the Worches, Christophersen, Staeglich, Rami, Varela, Zundel, Remer, Weckert and Faurisson. They are all right-wing extremists. I have no doubt that most, if not all of them, are neo-

\(^{143}\) ibid., section 10.18, p. 123.  
\(^{144}\) ibid., section 10.29, p. 125.  
\(^{145}\) ibid., section 13.110, p. 151.
Nazis who deny the Holocaust and who are racist and antisemitic. I also have no doubt that Irving was aware of their political views. His association with such individuals indicates in my judgement that Irving shares many of their political views.\textsuperscript{146}

Apart from Irving's involvement with leading individual Holocaust deniers, the author's association with two of the most prominent extremist Holocaust denial organisations in the US was examined; these are the Institute for Historical Review\textsuperscript{147} and The National Alliance.

\textbf{The Institute of Historical Review}

In chapter one of this study the Institute for Historical Review was examined; the Institute's main function is to disseminate Holocaust denial in pseudo-academic form.\textsuperscript{148} In 1979, at the Institute's first convention, a resolution was passed declaring: "the facts surrounding the allegations that gas chambers existed in occupied Europe during the Second World War are demonstrably false".\textsuperscript{149} The manifesto continued:

The whole theory of the holocaust (sic) has been created by and promulgated by political Zionism for the attainment of political and economic ends, specifically the continued and perpetual support of the military aggression of Israel by the people of Germany and the US.\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{146} ibid., section 13.115, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{147} O Maolain, op. cit., p. 367.
\textsuperscript{148} Stern, op. cit., p. 53.
\textsuperscript{149} Lipstadt included an investigation of the Institute for Historical Review in Denying the Holocaust. The resolution urged the U.S. Congress to investigate, among other things, "the deceitful wartime propaganda masquerading as fact...and the truth of the alleged extermination of 6 million Jews in Europe during the Second World War".
\textsuperscript{150} Lipstadt, op. cit., p. 143.
The centrality of Holocaust denial to the Institute for Historical Review and its journal could not be doubted.

The IHR organises annual 'revisionist' conferences usually in California, at which the elite of the Holocaust denial community, including David Irving, are invited to present their "research".¹⁵¹ In 1983 Irving delivered his first address to the Institute.¹⁵² In its efforts to gain mainstream following the IHR publishes a bi-monthly Journal of Historical Review targeted to academic audiences.¹⁵³ The Institute for Historical Review styles itself as a "voice for historical truth" in their fundraising letters. It claims to be "a champion of historical knowledge," determined to "see the truth prevail".¹⁵⁴

Since the early 1980s the Institute has become the leading American outlet for David Irving's writings and speeches.¹⁵⁵ The author's works are promoted in IHR literature. The IHR arranged some of Irving's speaking tours in the US.¹⁵⁶ Irving subsequently participated in five further Institute for Historical Review conferences.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Guests are usually Journal subscribers and IHR donors.
¹⁵² O Maolan, op. cit., p. 367.
¹⁵³ ibid., p. 367. The Journal of Historical Review format changed in 1992 from a 5 by 8 inch library-sizes format to a more glossy, 8 1/2 by 12 inches format, using more photographs and less turgid editorial style. The journal is now intended to appeal to all "intelligent" readers. The journal retained its classic academic format: plain covers, no colour pictures, and lengthy articles with an elaborate apparatus of footnotes and bibliographies. The Editorial Advisory Committee of the journal included many prominent Holocaust deniers, most notably Arthur R. Butz, Robert Faurisson, and Wilhelm Staeglich.
¹⁵⁴ ibid., p. 367.
¹⁵⁵ Evans, op. cit., p. 143. Professor Evans listed the major articles about Irving in the Journal of Historical Review. Irving also printed an advance copy of his introduction to the 1991 edition of Hitler's War in the journal, alongside a reassessment of Rommel and an attack on Sir Winston Churchill ("almost a pervert-a man who liked to expose himself to people"). The first issue of volume 13 included one article by Irving and two others about him. The next issue had another article by Irving and he also printed two more articles in the first issue of volume 15.
¹⁵⁶ Irving trial transcript, section 10.24, p. 124.
In his written submission to the trial court Irving claimed that the Institute was a respectable and nonextremist institution whose board members held "established academic qualifications"; they were not, he argued, antisemites, racists or of ultra-right-wing orientation.\textsuperscript{158}

Perhaps surprisingly, Irving conceded during the libel trial that the IHR includes "cracked antisemites",\textsuperscript{159} but in other ways he defended the organisation's officials by emphasising that "nearly all held academic qualifications".\textsuperscript{160}

Irving's relations with the IHR have not always run smoothly. In 1993 the British anti-fascist magazine \textit{Searchlight} reported tensions of style:

Relations between Irving and the denial Institute of Historical Review are at an all time low. Since the Institute received a bequest of around 8 million pounds in 1992, it has been trying to clean up its act. Irving's run-ins with the courts internationally and his association on the streets with openly Nazi organisations in Germany, Britain and Canada are not the image the Institute most wants. Part of its newly gained wealth will be used to encourage more middle of the road writers and historians to participate in the Institute's vile activities.\textsuperscript{161}

This suggested that the Institute of Historical Review and its journal conducted political rather than academic policies.\textsuperscript{162} Whatever its fortunes, the Institute's conferences, its journal, and its book-publishing operation suffered decline from its heyday in the 1980s. The organisation failed to regain the academic respectability it had earlier advocated.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{158} Evans, op. cit., p. 141. Evans noted that their qualifications were not in history but in other fields. Butz was an engineer, Staeglich qualified as a lawyer, Faurisson a specialist in French literature.

\textsuperscript{159} Irving trial transcript, section 10.31, p. 125.

\textsuperscript{160} ibid., p. 141.

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Searchlight}, January 1993, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{162} Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 64.

\textsuperscript{163} Evans, op. cit., p. 143.
Irving denied affiliation with the Institute in any formal capacity. This was true.\textsuperscript{164} The author was never a member of the Institute's board nor of the editorial advisory board of its journal, although his connections with the Institute and the journal were close and maintained over a long period of time.\textsuperscript{165} The editor of the \textit{Journal of Historical Review} described the author as "a good friend of the Institute".\textsuperscript{166}

Irving claimed he tried to introduce "mainline historians" to the IHR,\textsuperscript{167} admitting to speaking at their meetings on several occasions, but claimed that he confined his addresses to "historical events".\textsuperscript{168} The author maintained there had been nothing extremist in his utterances and it was not his decision to include reports of those speeches in the IHR "Newsletter". Irving claimed his association to be "minimal".\textsuperscript{169}

Mr. Justice Gray, in summing up Irving's relationship with the Institute for Historical Review, stated:

> The evidence supports the claim that Irving has associated with several right-wing organisations in the US. He has a close and longstanding relationship with the Institute of Historical Review, which is an avowedly revisionist organisation whose membership includes many from the extreme right wing.\textsuperscript{170}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[164] ibid., p. 144.
\item[165] Stern, op. cit., p. 48.
\item[166] Evans, op. cit., p. 143.
\item[167] Irving trial transcript, section 10.31, p. 125.
\item[168] In his reply to the libel trial defence, Irving maintained that lecturing at the conferences of the Institute for Historical Review did not associate him with Holocaust denial.
\item[169] Irving trial transcript, section 10.31, p. 126.
\item[170] ibid., section 13.114, p. 152.
\end{footnotes}
The National Alliance

Irving maintained a significant association with The National Alliance, a large neo-Nazi group in the US led by William Pierce.\(^\text{171}\) The organisation's policies are right wing, racist and antisemitic.\(^\text{172}\) In written pre-trial answers, however, Irving distanced himself from the National Alliance. He wrote:

I have no association with the body known to the defendants as the National Alliance whatsoever. I cannot rule out that members [of that organisation]...have attended functions at which I spoke. I do not agree that I have spoken at any National Alliance meetings. It might be that on occasions a gentleman who was a member of the National Alliance offered to organise a lecture for me. In other words, he undertook to find a suitable room. But I then circulated my entire local mailing list to provide an audience. No doubt he brought his friends as well.\(^\text{173}\)

The evidence contradicted the author's statements. Irving addressed three National Alliance meetings, it was contended, one of which was recorded on video showing Irving speaking with an National Alliance banner visible on a wall to one side of him.\(^\text{174}\) There were Irving's correspondence and diary entries indicating the author received an invitation on letter-headed National Alliance notepaper to speak at one

\footnote{\(^{171}\) O Maolain, op. cit., p. 378. William Pierce was one of the senior figures of the American ultra-right, and has written (under the pseudonym Andrew McDonald) a novel \textit{The Turner Diaries}, which has been described as the \textit{Mein Kampf} of the 1980s.

\(^{172}\) Ibid., pp. 377-78. The National Alliance was founded in 1970 in Springfield, Massachusetts, as the National Youth Alliance, and originally controlled by Willis Carto's Liberty Lobby. The Alliance promotes belief in a Jewish conspiracy to destroy the white "race" through socialism, black power, and the banking system. The organisation's international affiliations are particularly extensive: its journal \textit{The National Vanguard} circulates among most Nazi and neo-Nazi groups. In 1979 John Tyndall, then leader of the British National Front, visited the Alliance leader. It was also in contact with other British groups including the National Party (since disbanded) and the League of St. George.

\(^{173}\) Irving trial transcript, section 9.29, p. 125.

\(^{174}\) Guttenplan, op. cit., p. 205.}
of their meetings.\textsuperscript{175} One diary entry records that the meeting, which he
addressed that particular evening, had been "organised by the National
Alliance". The defendants produced a National Alliance news bulletin
reporting on one of Irving's talks at a meeting of a branch of that
organisation. They also produced a recording of a 1996 talk given by
Irving in Tampa, Florida, in which he is welcomed by the chairman "on
behalf of the National Alliance". National Alliance literature, usually on
sale at meetings revealed membership limited to "non-Jewish Whites
who support the goals of the National Alliance, including building a new
White world, the advancement of the Aryan race and the restoration of
White living space".\textsuperscript{176}

However, Irving denied knowledge of the neo-Nazi nature of the
National Alliance.\textsuperscript{177} He had not seen or read, the author averred, any
literature disseminated by that organisation, claiming to have "no
interest in it".\textsuperscript{178}

Despite Irving's refutations, Mr. Gray determined:

The evidence indicates that Irving is associated with the National
Alliance...In my view Irving cannot fail to have become aware
that the National Alliance is a neo-Nazi and antisemitic
organisation. The regularity of Irving's contacts with the National
Alliance and its officers confirms Irving's sympathetic attitude
towards an organisation whose tenets would be abhorrent to
most people.\textsuperscript{179}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., pp. 249-250.  
\textsuperscript{176} Irving trial transcript, section 10.29, p. 125.  
\textsuperscript{177} O Maelain, op. cit., p. 378. It is highly unlikely that Irving should not know about the
National Alliance neo-Nazi orientation. The organisation promotes belief in a Jewish
conspiracy to destroy the white "race" through the banking system.  
\textsuperscript{178} Irving trial transcript, section 10.32, p. 125.  
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., section 13.114, p. 152.}
How may we examine the significance of Irving's extremist activities in the United States? Mr. Justice Gray characterised Irving's association with US right-wing extremists as "ideologically inspired".  

He wrote:

I have found... Irving associates regularly with extremist and neo-Nazi organisations and individuals. The conclusion which I draw from the evidence is that Irving is sympathetic towards and on occasion promotes the views held by those individuals and organisations.

The evidence revealed that Irving was not averse to extending his contacts with supremacist and antisemitic groups when it suited his propaganda purposes. In 1996 during a lecture tour in the United States, David Irving shared a platform with Dr. William Pierce, founder of the National Alliance, who at one time presaged a "white" terrorist campaign against the United States government.

Finally, Irving's 1996 visit to the US included speaking engagements with a variety of extreme-right, racist groups, including the Klu Klux Klan. David Holland, National Director of the Southern White Knights of the Klu Klux Klan, was a guest at an Irving lecture in Georgia in October 1992. A month later, Canadian Klu Klux Klan members were in Irving's audience at an invitation-only meeting. In November 1994 Irving shared a platform with former Klu Klux Klan

---

180 ibid., section 13.163, p. 159.
181 ibid., section 13.161, p. 158.
183 O Maolan, op. cit., p. 378.
184 Kapel, op. cit., p. 7. Kapel also reported that Dr William Pierce is the author of the Turner Diaries, a novel which has been described by some journalists as a model for the Oklahoma City bombing and is regarded as a key text by many of the American armed militia.
186 O Maolan, op. cit., p. 398. This group shares with other KKK groups a belief in white supremacy and authoritarian government.
leader and neo-Nazi David Duke at a conference sponsored by Liberty Lobby, a leading antisemitic organisation in America.

Irving's early extreme right associations in Germany:

When we assess Irving's involvement with the German extreme right, it is difficult to measure the scope and effect of two decades of proselytising. His first German appearance occurred in May 1978, when he addressed the Annual General Meeting of the influential Gesellschaft fur freie Publizistik (GFP), the Society for the Freedom of Publication Founded in 1960, the Society has a membership of several hundred intellectuals who identify with the far right. Lectures, debates and congresses organised by the Society are regularly featured in neo-Nazi newspapers, among them the Deutsche Nationale Zeitung, the Deutsche Woche-Zeitung and Eckartbote. The Society's honorary chairman, Werner Hansler, began his political career as a Nazi propagandist when still at school in 1931. Hansler later attended the SS training college at Bad Tolz. After the Second World War he was banned from practicing as a journalist until 1952. In May 1982 Irving

---

188 Searchlight, August 1992.  
189 Hill and Bell, op. cit., p. 227.  
190 Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 224.  
191 Searchlight, February 1992, p. 8. This article in Searchlight reviews Irving's already known high profiles in German neo-Nazi circles.  
192 Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 242.  
193 ibid., p. 36. The former chairman of the Gesellschaft fur freie Publicistik, Werner Hansler was banned from practising his journalistic duties for the Deutsche Wochen-Zeitung until 1952.  
194 Searchlight, March 1982, p. 2. According to this anti-fascist journal, the Gesellschaft fur Publicistik was founded in September 1960 by former SS members of the "Mutual Support Association of the Waffen-SS". The initial aim of this
addressed one of the Society's functions in Rothernburg, sharing the platform with members from other extreme right political parties including the Deutsche Liga and the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland (NDP)\textsuperscript{195}

The Gesellschaft fur freie Publizistik (GFP), ostensibly dedicated to the "freedom of the press", was in fact founded by former SS members.\textsuperscript{196} The organisation publishes anti-Holocaust books. Most of Irving's speeches in Germany were delivered at meetings organised by the GFP. Between 1979 and 1980 the author particularly used this organisation to forge connections with the extreme right in Germany.\textsuperscript{197}

In October 1978 Irving addressed a meeting of the Gesellschaft fur freie Publizistik at Frankfurt on the topic of 'Adolf Hitler: a Sore Point in German Historiography'.\textsuperscript{198} In May 1979 he spoke at meetings of the Society in Munich and Coberg as well as many more throughout Western Germany.\textsuperscript{199} It emerges from other sources\textsuperscript{200} that the Gesellschaft fur freie Publizistik was partly set up to revise the history of Germany's role in the war.\textsuperscript{201} The flavour of the Society's propaganda can be discerned from the fact that in May 1978 the Gesellschaft held a conference in Kassel, attended by Irving, with the subject of 'Treason and Opposition in the Third Reich'. One speaker complained:

---

organisation was to mount a propaganda offensive against the Centre for the Pursuance of Nazi Party members "and the German "New Right".\textsuperscript{195}
\textsuperscript{196} Jackson, op. cit., p. 161.
\textsuperscript{197} Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 224.
\textsuperscript{198} \textit{Searchlight}, March 1982, p.8.
\textsuperscript{199} ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{200} ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{201} Griffin, op. cit., pp. 323-24.
A masochistic cult has been whipped up around the guilt ascribed solely to Hitler's Germany. The anti-Hitler Germans who pour scorn on the German people's widespread enthusiasm of that time and stabbed Hitler in the back, thereby unscrupulously compounding high treason with betrayal of their country.\textsuperscript{202}

Irving's contribution was entitled 'A Legend Refuted: the Case of Rommel versus Speidel'.\textsuperscript{203} Deliberately encouraging the growth of a new "Stab in the Back" legend, the author argued that the invasion of Europe would never have succeeded but for "the treason among the German generals".\textsuperscript{204}

During the 1970s and 1980s Irving frequently travelled to Germany to lecture to receptive right-wing audiences.\textsuperscript{205} In March 1982 he visited no fewer than ten German cities, the rallies having been organised by the German Peoples Union,\textsuperscript{206} headed by, as we have seen, Dr. Gerhard Frey, then editor of the neo-Nazi weekly Deutsche Nationale Zeitung (DNZ).\textsuperscript{207} On this occasion Irving's addressed the subject 'The Nuremberg Trials: Righteous or Victor's Justice?' On 5 March 1982, the day after the rally, the Deutsche Nationale Zeitung hailed Irving as "the first author to have vindicated Nazi Germany". The article continued:

[Irving] revealed the methods by which the victors perverted justice and laid the foundations of re-education for the vanquished.\textsuperscript{208}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[202] Searchlight, op. cit., p 8.
\item[203] Patterns of Prejudice, vol. 16, no. 2, 1982, p. 35.
\item[204] Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 242.
\item[205] Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 224.
\item[206] ibid., p. 224. Irving shared a platform with Dr. Frey at two other specific meetings organised jointly by the Deutsche Volks Union and its sub-group AKON in Hamburg and Dusseldorf in January 1982. On this occasion he is reported as having said: "People I know in the Deutsche Volks Union appear respectable citizens to me. I see no reason not to speak on its platforms".
\item[207] Jackson, op. cit., p. 161.
\item[208] ibid., p. 36.
\end{footnotes}
In July 1978 Irving took part in a symposium at Aschaffenburg where a number of prominent German historians including Eberhard Jaeckel, Eberhard Kolb and J.P. Stern gathered to discuss the topic 'Hitler Today: Aspects of Research into the Hitler problem'. Opposing contributions made by a number of main speakers, Irving promoted his concept of 'Hitler's innocence of the Holocaust',\(^{209}\) for which he was criticised by the conservative \textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine} newspaper.\(^{210}\)

His [Irving's] abstruse theory that Hitler neither desired nor knew of the Final Solution. This nonsense was characterised as the 'idee fixe' of a best-selling author who believes he is dependent on sensationalism and who satisfied his vanity in playing the part of a troublemaker.\(^{211}\)

In October 1978, to make up for his qualified success, Irving accepted yet another invitation from the \textit{Gesellschaft fur freie Publizistik}, which used the venue of the \textit{Frankfurt Book Fair} to present Irving as the "British star". Proudly, the author retold his theme under the title: 'Adolf Hitler: a Sore Point of German Historiography'.\(^{212}\) Reported in the \textit{Deutsche Wochen-Zeitung} on 27 October 1978, Irving's contribution was disparaged:

[ Irving's... unrefuted research finding that Hitler not only gave no orders to exterminate the Jews, but he had probably not even known of the crime and had in fact 'forbidden mass liquidations'.\(^{213}\)]

On 3 November 1978 Irving's speech was again featured on the front page of the \textit{Deutsche Wochen-Zeitung}, this time under the banner

\(^{209}\) Reported in \textit{The Frankfurter Allgemeine}, 8 July 1978. On this occasion a triumphant Irving offered a $100,000 reward to anyone who could prove Hitler's responsibility for the Holocaust.


\(^{212}\) \textit{The Deutsche Wochen-Zeitung}, 27 October 1987.

headline: 'Hitler did not want any Jew murders'. On the same date the German magazine *Welt* published an interview in which Irving accused historians of disinclination to conduct original research. He stated:

[Historians are]... cribbing from each other instead of conducting research such as I have done to discover that many diaries used by them [historians] had either been entirely forged or at least subsequently manipulated. I am also pleased to learn that I am being described as a 'revisionist' historian.²¹⁴

In November 1979, after a Stuttgart talk given to German ex-servicemen, Irving sufficiently impressed the Waffen-SS veterans' *Der Freiwillige* for the journal to enquire: 'When will our own historians begin to search for the truth?'²¹⁵

Yet it was not all unstinted praise for Irving. Some German right wing newspapers were disrespectful of Irving's efforts; on 4 March 1988 the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* referred to *Hitler's War* as "Apologetik", describing the author as the "rechtsradikale britische Historiker".²¹⁶ Uwe Westphal, a London-based German correspondent and head of the German writers abroad, disparaged him as "der Neo Nazi David Irving", reflecting bemusement about the attraction Irving held for the British press.

On 22 December 1978 Irving was again featured by the Gesellschaft fur freie Publizistik (GFP), giving lectures at Stuttgart and Munich.²¹⁷ On both occasions he repeated his allegations about "the stab in the back"

---

²¹⁴ ibid., p. 4.
²¹⁶ Translates as "the radical-right British historian".
for Germany, accusing generals Rommel and Speidel of treason.\textsuperscript{218}

On 19 April 1979, respectively at Neustadt and Coburg, Germany's betrayal remained Irving's theme after his return to Germany under the auspices of the Gesellschaft fur Freie Publizistik.\textsuperscript{219}

In October 1981 Irving's own journal \textit{Focal Point} reported that he had been a "guest" at a dinner of the 10\textsuperscript{th} Panzer Division in Sigmaringen, Germany\textsuperscript{220} where Irving lectured on selected Second World War events; among other subjects the author prided himself in taking up a "challenge to West German military historians."\textsuperscript{221}

\textbf{Irving's extremist German associations in later years}

In more recent years Irving appeared to intensify his activities as an extreme right iconoclast in Germany. In March 1991 he was guest speaker at a rally mentioned previously, of the Deutsche Volks Union (DVU) in the city of Passau.\textsuperscript{222} The eight hundred Nazis in the audience listened as Irving proclaimed that "Germany would be the victorious power of the twentieth century". After listening to Irving and other speakers, hundreds of rioters assaulted pedestrians, smashed windows and injured passers-by.\textsuperscript{223} Another twenty persons were arrested after attacking a youth centre, smashing doors and windows. Yet afterwards

\textsuperscript{218} Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 242. The Gesellschaft fur Freie Publizistik which arranged a series of lectures featuring Irving in 1979, reviewed Arthur Butz's book: \textit{The Hoax of the Twentieth Century} and concluded that any reader "will find it difficult to believe in mass murders in Auschwitz".

\textsuperscript{219} The \textit{Deutsche National Zeitung}, 20 April 1978.

\textsuperscript{220} Hill and Bell, op. cit., p. 242.

\textsuperscript{221} Searchlight, March 1982, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., p. 8.

\textsuperscript{223} Searchlight, August 1992, p. 17.
Irving told the British newspaper *The Independent* that he was "enthused" by the meeting:

I'm a mob orator. The German language is a lovely language for making mob oratory in.\(^{224}\)

Days later, *The Independent* carried a further interview with Irving in which he described how he was still excited after the riots in Passau:

There was a crowd of ten thousand! The audience was chanting my name!\(^{225}\)

During the interview Irving boasted that Germany would "achieve with the Deutschmark everything that Hitler failed to do".\(^{226}\) Calling for "normalisation" of Hitler and Nazism to remove the stigma of the Final Solution from Germany, the author evoked a different vision for Germany:

...This myth of mass murders of Jews in the death factories of Auschwitz, etc., etc., which in fact never took place...This horrific ghost from which the German people have suffered for the last forty five years, will be laid...\(^{227}\)

It is perhaps surprising that Irving seemed to be unaware of the consequences of his violent actions throughout Europe. Interviewed by the London magazine *Time Out* he set out his plans for promoting further agitation:

Central Germany as I would call it, you would call it East Germany, is going to be a breeding ground of political extremism and the present tilt is towards the right. I do go along and moderate for other people. I intend to drive from town to town making speeches from the back of a truck and just see what happens.\(^{228}\)

\(^{225}\) Ibid., 12 March 1991, p. 8.  
\(^{226}\) Ibid., p. 8.  
\(^{228}\) Reported by *Time Out*, 18 September 1990.
On 21 April 1990, implementing a self-fulfilling prophecy, Irving delighted a crowd of five hundred in a Munich beer hall about the "truth of non-existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz". The author informed his listeners of what they wished to hear:

The gas chambers one can find as a tourist to Auschwitz were built by the Poles after the Second World War. The buildings have been chemically analysed and we have published the documents. This has stirred up so much dust that our enemies cannot breathe.\(^{229}\)

The rowdy audience, clapping and hooting, prepared for action in the streets after the meeting. His entourage included "heavyweights" around him on the platform; former Nazi officers, young neo-Nazi leaders, older ideologues and financial backers for the propaganda networks.\(^{230}\) The filmed recording of the meeting revealed an elderly general Otto Remer, best known as the man who tracked down the individuals who conspired to assassinate Hitler in July 1944.\(^{231}\) Other guests included convicted Nazi terrorist Manfred Roeder,\(^{232}\) who organised the bombing of refugee hostels throughout Germany in 1980. Also present was a man who identified himself to the press as Michael Carter, but whose real name was Anthony Hancock, one-time leader of

\(^{229}\) Kapel, op. cit., p. 10.
\(^{230}\) ibid., p. 10.
\(^{231}\) O Maolain, op. cit., p. 124. Remer, a former SS general involved in foiling the Stauffenberg plot on Hitler's life, was released shortly after the war and established the neo-fascist Socialist Reich Party in 1948.
\(^{232}\) ibid., p. 124. In 1971 Roeder, a neo-Nazi, formed the Deutsche Bürgerinitiative (German Citizens Initiative). Roeder was a former officer in the Nazi air force and practised as a lawyer until he was disbarred in the late 1970s. Roeder has often been arrested or imprisoned for his activities. In June 1981 Roeder was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment as the intellectual leader of the 'Deutsche Aktionsgruppe' (German Action Groups), which had bombed refugee hostels in 1980, killing two residents. Roeder promotes fascist and pan-German nationalist ideas.
the British National Party and a well-known terrorist. Hancock functioned as Irving’s erstwhile printer.233

Less public in the decades of 1980s and 1990s were Irving’s meetings with "some of Germany’s most violent Nazis".234 Some of the surviving photographic evidence of a memorial for German Nazi Hans-Ulrich Rudel235 includes a photograph taken by a journalist from the British anti-fascist publication Searchlight in 1983.236 The photograph possessed unusual features; Dr. Gerhard Frey, long-time friend of Rudel and chairman of the neo-Nazi Deutsche Volks Union (DVU), appeared at the far-left of the picture. The platform of speakers hosted one of the most complete collections of old Nazis and modern-day torch bearers, including, from left to right Rudel’s biographer Gunther Just, neo-Nazi National Zeitung editor Harold Neubauer, Colonel Walther Dahl, David Irving, Bruno Wetzel, vice-chairman of the Deutsche Volks Union Dr. Bernhard Steidle and Deutsche Volks Union officials Dr. Karl Weinrebe, Richard Etzel and Dr. Hans Mugler.237

Some of Irving’s meetings were part of a series, organised by the Deutsche Volks Union,238 in which Hans-Ulrick Rudel, whose biography was published in Britain by Oswald Mosley, again featured.239

233 Searchlight, 4 August 1992, p.3.
235 Jackson, op. cit., p. 146. Rudel, a Luftwaffe air ace and the most decorated officer in the Wehrmacht, remained an unrepentant National Socialist. After the Second World War he fled to Argentina and with Otto Skorzeny established the Organisation der Ehemaligen SS- Angehörigen, better known as ODESSA. Rudel used the network to provide cover to get Joseph Mengele, the Auschwitz “Angel of Death” out of Germany.
236 Searchlight, February 1983.
238 Ibid., p. 330. Irving has been closely associated with the neo-Nazi Deutsche Volks Union over many years.
239 Kapel, op. cit., p.5.
In May 1992 members of the Deutsche Liga (also known as Die Nationalen) invited Irving to be the main speaker at a rally in Berlin. Immediately following the author’s speech a wave of orchestrated Nazi violence broke out across Germany.\textsuperscript{240} In Magdeburg, a group of sixty neo-Nazis from Irving’s audience raided a birthday party in a nearby restaurant, destroying the interior and leaving five persons with fractured skulls.\textsuperscript{241} One of the victims later died.

In short, such was the ambience of Irving’s two decades of agitation in Germany. A British journal article summed up the author’s interactions with the German far right:

[Irving is] spreading the fruits of his untiring researches in Germany. There he finds the appreciative audiences which he is denied at home. He is in truth the prophet, who is not without honour except among his own.\textsuperscript{242}

Elsewhere Irving was also attracting attention. In the 1990s Irving appeared to become increasingly defiant. In 1992 Canada and deported him on the grounds that he was an “undesirable individual”.\textsuperscript{243} Australia excluded the author on two occasions.\textsuperscript{244} The South African government revoked Irving’s visa exemption held by most British citizens.\textsuperscript{245} Italian border police refused him entry at Rome airport,

\textsuperscript{240} Searchlight, August 1992, p. 17. The Deutsche Liga is a split-off from the Republicans and the Deutsche Volks Union. It was contesting the Berlin elections at of May 1992 under the cover name Die Nationalen. The latter was the organisation that conducted the rally on 9 May 1992 with David Irving as the main speaker.

\textsuperscript{241} Kapel, op. cit., p. 9.

\textsuperscript{242} See article ‘David Irving in Germany’, Patterns of Prejudice, vol. 16, no.2, 1982, p.35.

\textsuperscript{243} Kapel, op. cit., p.12.

\textsuperscript{244} Ibid., p. 12.

\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., p. 10.
marching him back through the boarding gate as a "persona non grata". The list grew long.

**Irving's activities elsewhere in Europe**

The first country to move against Irving's extreme right activities was Austria. In June 1984 authorities detained Irving in Vienna and expelled him before he could address the first of a series of "Free Rudolf Hess" rallies organised by the "Society for Truthful Contemporary History", an offshoot of the extreme right-wing National Democratic Party. The Austrian Interior Minister, contending with an upsurge of neo-Nazi activity in that country, charged Irving with being an "undesirable alien," banning him from re-entering Austria because the author had "repeatedly taken part in neo-Nazi rallies and meetings". Irving was formally expelled from Austria in June of 1984 on suspicion of threatening public order by spreading Nazi ideology.

The author subsequently again broke the law; in November 1989 the criminal Court of Vienna issued a warrant for his arrest. Irving's detention was triggered after he was invited by the extreme right Austrian Truth in History Committee to give a lecture tour of Austrian

---

246 ibid., p. 10.
247 O Maolan, op. cit., p. 330. During his Austrian lecture tour, Irving contended that Hitler's imprisoned deputy, Rudolf Hess, ought to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
248 ibid., p. 21. The NDP was founded in 1966, and has authoritarian, ultra-nationalist policies. It also seeks to vindicate the wartime Nazi leadership and supports the reintegration of the South Tyrol into Austria.
250 O Maolan, op. cit., p. 19.
251 ibid., p. 9.
cities.\textsuperscript{252} In the leadup to Irving's proposed public appearances, Norbert Burger, the self-proclaimed "Führer of Austria",\textsuperscript{253} boasted of success in securing Irving's participation. He wrote:

...[t] was a splendid achievement that my party has been able to enlist the services of the world-famous historian, Irving, the scourge of the cover-up historians.\textsuperscript{254}

In 1992 the Italian neo-fascist (now banned) Gruppe Movimento Politico (Western Political Movement) hired a luxury hotel in Rome for a prestigious Holocaust denial seminar.\textsuperscript{255} Irving and Faurisson, as leading Holocaust deniers, were invited to address the conference, consisting largely of Italian "skinheads" bussed into Rome from Milan and Verona.\textsuperscript{256} When mock Nazi salutes were made to Jewish demonstrators outside the hotel, scuffles broke out. In danger of being attacked, the "skinheads" requested and received police protection by being escorted to their buses. Unfortunately for him, Irving never made it from Rome airport. As he descended the steps of the aircraft he was greeted with carloads of armed Italian anti-terrorist police; the author was questioned, refused entry and escorted back on the plane.\textsuperscript{257}

\textsuperscript{252} ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{253} ibid., p. 19. Dr. Burger was the president of the Committee for Truth in History, which was established by Burger as a replacement as leader of the neo-Nazi NDP. Burger, a veteran right winger, has been convicted in his absence in Italy for bombings carried out in the 1960s as part of a campaign for the return to Austria of the German-speaking South Tyrol, cited in the aftermath of the First World War.
\textsuperscript{254} Kapel, op. cit., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{255} O Maclan, op. cit., p. 170.
\textsuperscript{256} Searchlight, November 1992.
Irving's extreme right activities in Britain:

Irving's involvement with the British extreme right was in the context of politics. In 1982 Irving declared to the British press that he was preparing to go into politics. The author had formed his own right wing political party predicated on his confident prediction that he would one day be a future leader of Britain. Britain, he asserted, had fought on the "wrong side" in the Second World War; there was more than a hint of the future when Irving elaborated on the need for strong leadership in Britain:

We need a leader in Europe, a leader who can rise above the pettiness of party politics; a leader who has the courage to do what he thinks will serve the future of Europe and the nation best.

Irving left no doubt that he would qualify in all respects for such leadership. In the early 1980s he began to position himself in British politics by the formation of his Focus Policy Group, an organisation created with the prime aim of "preserving the country's national heritage". The Focus Policy Group journal Focal Point was to be the flagship of the new party, declaring itself to be "a new beginning for the New Right". The publication began to appear more or less regularly, reaching a print run of two thousand copies in 1981. At its peak the journal was published twice per month. Irving was convinced that he was on target to make his mark in British politics.

257 Kapel, op. cit., p. 10.
259 ibid., p. 9.
261 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 239.
Ray Hill, then a leading figure in the extreme right British National Party, tells of an invitation he extended to Irving in the summer of 1983 to address a meeting of the party activists at Leicester. Ready as ever to embrace an opportunity, Irving accepted. His chosen topic, perhaps not surprising, was about the need for "new directions for the British right and new leadership in Britain". In his ideological dilemma about positioning himself, Irving vacillated in choosing whether to secure a foothold in the Conservative Party, or alternatively seek support from extremist groupings in Britain. In these circumstances, Irving was unable to decide about how to pitch his appeal to the audience at the Leicester Central Hotel.

Before the imminent meeting, Hill recollected a conversation with Irving about how to explain the deaths of six million Jews in the Holocaust. Irving readily responded to Hill's questioning about his estimate of the numbers of European Jews killed during the Second World War. Referring to the generally accepted six million Jews killed, Irving said bluntly: "The figure is ridiculous". Hill recounted that he pressed further by suggesting that if Irving could substantiate the lower numbers, why not "publish the numbers as he [Irving] saw them?" Hill claimed he then reminded Irving that the "myth" of six million European

---

262 Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 24. It struck Hill that for someone as clear about his "destiny" as Irving he was still remarkably uncertain about which direction his intended political career should take. Hill concluded that it was Irving's inability to make up his mind about exactly what he was trying to do in the short term in the establishment of some kind of basis for his new movement and leadership, a vacillation which ultimately led to its demise in 1983. Hill believes that the collapse coincided with Irving's financial problems at the time.

263 Searchlight, March 1982, op. cit., p. 3. In its reportage of Irving's ambitions, Searchlight left no doubt that Irving saw himself as the future political leader of Britain.

264 Searchlight, April 1992, p. 4.

265 ibid., p.4.
Jews murdered by the Nazi State machinery constituted the single main obstacle to the progress of Nationalist Socialist ideas since the Second World War. Advocating a refutation from someone like Irving with his "scholarly" reputation, Hill suggested to Irving that to do so could have a tremendous impact in boosting his political opportunities in Britain as well as the Holocaust denial cause. Irving, Hill said, "listened with amused tolerance" before replying: "the time isn't right".\footnote{ibid., p.4.} Inviting Irving again to estimate actual numbers of Jews he thought were killed, Irving responded: "There may have been a million at the most".\footnote{ibid., p.4.} Surprised, Hill argued that if that were the case, then surely a million deaths would be enough to cause public revulsion. He questioned Irving about why Jews would risk inflating the figures if Irving's estimate were to have the desired effect. Hill posed: "why tell a lie when the truth would do just as well"?\footnote{ibid., p.4.} Sitting back in his chair and smiling, Irving questioned Hill whether he knew anything about the attempted 1915 suicide of the Armenian people by the Turks. Replying in the negative, Hill said he had never heard of the atrocity. "Exactly", Irving replied a little triumphantly, explaining that the Armenian genocide was forgotten because the total number of people killed had only been about a million. "History", he declared, "is littered with such incidents".\footnote{ibid., p.4.} Irving argued that if it were to be admitted that "only about one million Jews had died in the Holocaust", then "the whole affair would fade from collective memory just as the massacre of the Armenians had done". Irving
countered that the Holocaust "had to be kept alive by the Jews" because it was still the "main source of income for the State of Israel and provided political carte blanche for Israel to behave however it pleased." 

In 1982 Irving's political direction became clearer, albeit that success depended on forging links with the British right. This suggested a broad-based extreme right movement in Britain, based on Irving's Focus Policy Group and its (now defunct) associated journal Focal Point. Irving determined the priority of his new Focal Policy Group's propaganda to be "rewriting the history of the Second World War." 

The feasibility of forming a new political party in Britain was canvassed. Irving threw himself energetically into promoting his "destiny." To test the viability of his political ideas, Irving's Focus Policy Group was to pursue a number of objectives. First, it was to set out to publicly attract students to its banner. To this end, Irving undertook to recruit supporters by addressing various university groups throughout Britain. His efforts were exemplified by what occurred on 25 April 1981, when the author was smuggled into Birmingham University "dressed in a student's union sweatshirt". Second, Irving held a

---

270 Ibid., p. 4.
271 The Jewish Telegraph (Scottish edition), 28 May 1993, p. 1, reported Irving claiming in an interview on national British Network 7 television that his campaign would bring about the "destruction of the State of Israel." He predicted that Israel would be destroyed within ten years because that is how long it would take him and his colleagues to overturn the belief in the Holocaust.
272 Hill & Bell., op. cit., p. 245.
274 Ibid., p. 330. Perhaps Irving was best known at this time for claiming that Hitler was ignorant as to the nature of the Final Solution of the European Jews.
275 Kapel, op. cit., p. 12.
276 Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 239.
number of private meetings with the objective, as he told The Guardian newspaper, of attracting as many esoteric speakers as possible:

[We had]... a number of distinguished if anonymous speakers, including a prominent newspaper magnate, a leader of the French New Right, and a Fleet Street leader writer.  

Third, Irving's journal Focal Point was distributed widely to his numerous political contacts. Claiming it to be "rather like a right-wing private eye", Focal Point contained articles on topics like "calling for the benevolent repatriation of Britain's blacks". Fourth, Irving actively set about concentrating on establishing associations with extreme right organisations in Britain.

In its first year of operation, Focal Point forged links with the racist Tory Right group Tory Action; Joan Mason's equally racist W.I.S.E. grouping, (formerly the National Front); the reactionary Constitutional Movement and the antisemitic Association of British Ex-Servicemen.

The Focus Policy Group was also represented in a number of meetings organised by the extreme right Clarendon Club. Attended by members of the neo-Nazi League of St. George, these meetings were addressed by Irving, who sought to use the Clarendon Club as a political forum to bridge the short distance between ultra-right conservatives and neo-fascists.

---

278 ibid.,
279 Searchlight, March 1981.
280 ibid.,
281 Searchlight, September 1984, p. 12.
282 ibid., p. 6.
283 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 324.
On 30 March 1979 Irving was the main speaker at a dinner given by the Clarendon Club at the Portman Hotel, London.\footnote{ibid., p. 324. The Clarendon Club was a social and political forum. David Irving attended meetings frequently in the years 1979-81.} Irving promoted his thesis that history was deliberately being distorted by historians who placed the Allies in the Second World War in "a more favourable light than they deserved". Ostensibly the Club was no more than a dining organisation for Oxbridge graduates; however, scrutiny of the attendance list might suggest otherwise, for among those present were prominent members of the British extreme right of politics.\footnote{ibid., p. 310. The National Front, a neo-fascist party, was founded in 1967 by leading members of several far right groups, including the League of Empire Loyalists (LEL), the Racial Preservation Society (RPS) and the British National Party (BNP).} They included Tim Beardson, former National Front candidate for Westminster; Tony Webber, former National Front Directorate Member and a parliamentarian; Nick Griffin, a former supporter of Sir Oswald Mosley and leader of the neo-Nazi League of St. George; Jim Ormowe, who attended a rally of the Nazi Northern League in Brighton in 1970 (later expelled from the conservative Monday Club\footnote{ibid., p. 309. The Monday Club is a right-wing conservative pressure group operating within, but organisationally independent of, the Conservative Party. The main policy concerns of the Club are immigration and law and order.} for his extremist views); and Ian Souter-Clarence, a veteran fascist closely involved with Column 88, a Nazi paramilitary group.\footnote{Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 238. In the book, Hill describes significant extreme right wing personalities and analyses their agendas in Britain. The author adduces evidence of Irving's overt association with extremist and violent persons.} The high point of the meeting was Irving's announcement that he was considering the possibility of launching a new political party.\footnote{ibid., p. 311.}

On 1 February 1980, Irving again addressed the Clarendon Club, with a guest list substantially the same but with the addition of Robin
Rushton, a former Mosley supporter, and Lucy Roberts, a former Mosleyite whose home had been the venue for a number of Hitler Birthday commemorations. On this occasion, Irving did not restrict himself to history, announcing definite formation of a new political party in Britain. Irving looked to those present for support. Irving made it clear to his select audience that his Focal Policy Group, just launched, was to precede establishment of a fully-fledged party of the "new right" to be led by himself.

During the period 1979-1981 The Clarendon Club staged many more meetings, all attended by Irving as well as representatives from the League of St. George, the neo-Nazi British Movement, Column 88, and the National Front, all leading groups of the British extreme right.

The conglomerate employed sophisticated computer-mailing techniques to recruit new members and to publicise their cause in the British press. Irving announced plans to purchase mailing lists from other extreme right organisations in Britain and the United States, principally the racist right group W.I.S.E. and the aforementioned anti-

---

286 Evans, op. cit., p. 66.
287 Searchlight; March 1982, p. 8.
288 ibid., p.8.
289 O Maclain, op. cit., p. 297. The British Movement (BM) had a Nazi orientation in Britain, advancing white supremacist and National Socialist policies in the 1980s.
290 ibid., p. 324. Column 88 is an extreme right wing organisation in Britain. It is a Nazi paramilitary terrorist group, which is generally thought to have taken its name from the fact that the letter H is eighth in the alphabet (HH stands for Heil Hitler). It was formed in 1970 by ex-members of the National Socialist Movement and operated clandestinely until the early 1980s. A number of letter-bomb attacks were attributed to the group, which held several training camps for its members. It is interesting to note that during the very recent minority targeted bombing attacks in London (1999), the group was again mentioned as being responsible.
291 ibid., p. 324.
Holocaust Institute of Historical Review. Following his dalliance with British right wing political groupings, Irving intensified efforts to launch himself as a political candidate of the extreme right.

Throughout the 1990s Irving's collaboration with British extreme right organisations proceeded apace. Much interest was raised by Irving's research, including forays into "historical questions". In Focal Point he proclaimed his "simultaneous crusade for historical revisionism". For instance, the author revealed for the first time in Focal Point that Mosley's British Union of Fascists "had been directly funded by Mussolini". Irving guardedly admitted occasional contacts with British "revisionist publishers", among them the pro-Nazi Anthony Hancock's Historical Review Press. Many of Irving's supporters might well have been shocked to learn that Focal Point was actually being printed by the Holocaust denying Historical Review Press, a fact which was never disclosed in the magazine. Apart from such commercial relationships, the arrangements suggested that Irving was well aware that Focal Point had become a kind of bulletin board for the British extreme right; the publication carried advertisements for a wide range of racist and Nazi-

\[\text{\footnotesize {\textsuperscript{294} ibid., p. 320. Best known by its acronym WISE, this is a white supremacist organisation, established in 1974 as an anti-immigration pressure group for right-wing Conservatives.\textsuperscript{295} ibid., pp. 305-306.\textsuperscript{296} Evans, op. cit., p. 23.\textsuperscript{297} ibid., p. 241.\textsuperscript{298} O Maolain, op. cit., p. 305. This company is responsible for publishing a large quantity of racist and fascist material. In 1980 it sent antisemitic books to Members of Parliament. The grouping has been used by the Holocaust denying Institute for Historical Review and the National Front.\textsuperscript{299} ibid., p. 330.\textsuperscript{300} Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 240.}}\]
controlled groups such as *Excalibur*, published by the National Front.

*Focal Point* revealed more of its connections at the time. On 30 October 1981 the publication announced it was distributing copies of a pamphlet entitled: 'Neither Up Nor Down', produced by the neo-fascist group Tory Action, whose leader George Kennedy Young, was listed among the contributors.

Losing some of his customary caution, Irving began to associate openly with the British National Party, Britain's largest fascist group. He addressed many of their meetings. The BNP has a long history of terrorism. Many of the party's members have been convicted for violent attacks throughout Britain, including bombings, bashings and stabbing attacks on blacks, Asians, Jews and other political opponents.


The British National Party initially associated with Irving through his Clarendon Club meetings in the early 1980s. Irving's Clarendon Club

---

301 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 325. The *Excalibur* was the journal of the National Front Constitutional Movement (NFCM), which was founded by Andrew Fountaine in 1979, partly as the consequence of a dispute over control of a National Front office building.
302 ibid., p. 241.
303 ibid., p. 319. This group was an Ultra-conservative organisation working as a pressure group within the Conservative Party, promoting the repatriation of immigrants and other right-wing policies.
306 ibid., p. 225.
308 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 298.
309 ibid., p. 297.
meetings and "revisionist" seminars were by invitation only and the British National Party often made up a large number of the invitees as well as providing security for Irving. From 1990 to 1992, Irving addressed meetings of the party. In July 1992 an Irving revisionist seminar was attended by British National Party leader John Tyndall, who has a long criminal record. Subsequent seminar audiences were predominantly composed of British National Party members. The British National Party annual rally for November 1993 in turn significantly featured Irving as its keynote speaker.

In June 1993 Irving held a Holocaust denial meeting in Brighton. In attendance were British National Party "skinheads" and members of Combat 18, who provided security for him.

As we have seen, Irving’s Focal Point publication was covertly printed by the notorious British Nazi Anthony Hancock. Hancock also promoted the National Front, the neo-Nazi League of St. George, the British National Party as well as a number of European neo-Nazi groups. Hancock helped to organise Irving’s September 1992 and

---

312 Hill & Bell, op. cit., pp. 80-84.
313 Searchlight, July 1992, p. 4. The Clarendon Club is a far-right social group in London.
314 ibid., p. 5.
313 Searchlight, October 1993, p. 4.
314 Searchlight, July 1992, p. 4. Searchlight’s article focuses on the leadership dynamics at one of Irving’s seminars. The question became: who was really in charge? Was it John Tyndall and the British National Party, was it the Nazi printer Anthony Hancock, or was it David Irving?
316 Rubinstein, Quadrant, op. cit.,
317 Searchlight, September 1993, p. 15.
318 Searchlight, no. 218, August 1993, p. 12.
319 Combat 18 is a secret paramilitary unit operating in England. The suffix "18" refers to the first and the eighth letter of the alphabet, thus denoting "A.H.", or Adolf Hitler.
320 Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 205.
June 1993 "revisionist" seminars. At this time he was also awaiting trial for cheque fraud and forgery worth several million pounds.

In short, Irving has been linked to a number of extreme right wing British organisations and individuals. It appears from the evidence that his involvement with many British neo-fascist and extreme right organisations and individuals has been substantial.

Canada:

Despite his subsequent legal ostracism from this country, Canada remained a favoured location for Irving to promote Holocaust denial. Well-known for its liberal, tolerant society, Canada was considered by Irving to be an easy target, proving fertile for Irving's activism, as had been Germany. In 1990, 1991 and 1992 the author toured Canada as part of an international junket that also took him to the United States, Argentina and Brazil. The Canadian circuit tours were sponsored by the Canadian league of Rights, the Aryan Resistance Movement, the Canadian Association for Free Expression, The National Party and other extreme right wing organisations.

---

323 Hill & Bell, op. cit., p. 236.
324 Searchlight, January 1993.
325 Kapel, op. cit., p. 10.
326 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 44. The League is an ultra-right, antisemitic organisation founded in 1963. It is linked with similar bodies in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the United States.
327 ibid., p. 409.
Wolfgang Droge, leader of the overtly Canadian neo-Nazi and white supremacist Heritage Front, appeared in Irving's entourage at most of his speech venues. Irving's 1990 tour was an unqualified success; remembering warm receptions by Canadian extremists and public alike, Irving hoped to replicate these rallies in successive years.

Disappointingly for him, attendance at the 6 October 1991 Ottawa address was less than twenty five percent on what it had been the previous year. A reaction appeared to have set in following his earlier public appearances, with the author experiencing public humiliation; Irving was refused service at his intended venue, the Tudor Inn. His extremist sponsors threatened to sue the Tudor Inn management for breaking a contract; however they finally desisted. Irving had to settle for a corner of a small room in a Chinese restaurant where he was observed to let his defences down by "railing against the Jewish arsonists in Britain." 

Despite efforts made by extreme right organisers to rally the public, Irving's 1992 Canada tour was considered to be relatively unsuccessful even by their own standards. Attendance at his lectures was well down and numbered fewer than half of those during Irving's 1990 tour;

---

328 Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., pp. 44-46. Wolfgang Droge was once a KKK Klansman. He has been convicted and served time for weapons charges, cocaine possession, assault, and conspiracy to violate the US neutrality act. The latter offence grew out of his participation in a bizarre attempt staged by white racists, to take over the Caribbean island of Dominica. He served two years of imprisonment for his role in that enterprise and four and a half years for the other violations. Droge, a Bavarian-born racist has been around many of the major North American hate groups—the Klan, Western Guard, and the Nationalist Party.

331 Kapel, op. cit., p. 7.
332 ibid., p. 5.
333 ibid., p. 5.
as well, sales of books and video tapes markedly diminished. In the Canadian capital Ottawa, Irving was evicted from his tour venue, the Chateau Laurier Hotel, after registering under a false name.

Yet Irving was not to be daunted. Flushed by success following a number of prestigious appearances at the Institute for Historical Research's annual International Revisionist Conferences in the United States, the author routinely continued his travels around Canada, where his speeches were noted in the press. In 1991 at Regina, he impressed his audience by referring to the Holocaust as "a major fake and a fraud", expanding on his well-known theme of denying the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Although permanently barred from Canada because of his May 1992 conviction in Germany for denying the Holocaust, Irving surreptitiously entered the country later that year and spoke to an audience in Vancouver in September 1992. His address was organised by the Canadian white supremacist Aryan Resistance Movement, which provided security personnel to guard Irving from unwelcome intruders. Other talks, which were to take him across Canada, were organised by the Canadian League of Rights, the sister group of the Australian League of Rights.

---

334 Ibid., p. 5.
335 Ibid., p. 5. The David Irving Holocaust denial lecture tour in Ottawa's Chateau Laurier was protected by neo-Nazi "skinheads".
336 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 367.
337 The Stern, op. cit., p. 61.
338 Kapel, op. cit., p. 7.
339 The Stern, op. cit., p. 33.
340 Jackson, op. cit., p. 7.
341 The Stern, op. cit., p. 48.
Scheduled to address the neo-Nazi Heritage Front in Toronto on 1 November 1991, Irving was arrested on immigration charges,\footnote{Jackson, op. cit., p. 7.} having entered Canada after being informed by authorities that he was persona non grata. Irving lied about the reasons for coming to Canada, then failed to leave within the forty eight-hour time limit imposed on him.

On 27 October 1992, Irving again attempted to illegally enter Canada, this time at Niagara Falls, misrepresenting the purpose of his visit. He was arrested and served with an Immigration Department notice to depart the country forthwith.\footnote{Braun and Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 36.} Irving failed to honour the departure notice and Canadian Immigration authorities issued a Canada-wide arrest warrant for him. Eventually located by immigration officials in a Chinese restaurant in downtown Victoria addressing a group of neo-Nazis, Irving was arrested, handcuffed and placed under detention.\footnote{Kapel, op. cit., p. 10.}

Irving appeared before an Immigration tribunal hearing on 28 October 1992. When asked to give evidence, Irving provided a spurious explanation for his behaviour, claiming he had complied with Canadian immigration requirements. Sensing a detrimental outcome, the author entered into negotiations with immigration officials resulting in his being charged with admitting an offence under the Canadian Immigration Act, the essence of which was that he agreed to having exceeded his time in Canada.\footnote{The particular section was 27 (2) (g).} Having originally undertaken to spend two weeks in Ontario, Irving failed to declare his intention to visit other provinces for a longer
period of time. Immigration Adjudicator Mr. Kenneth Thompson castigated the author about his deception:

I do not believe Mr Irving. In your evidence as a whole, you have been unable to convince me that you did leave Canada on 30 October 1992. I have great difficulty in accepting your evidence. It did not have the ring of truth to it. I found you a difficult witness who was often confrontational with the case presenting officer when he asked you straightforward questions. When viewed as a whole this evidence can lead to only one conclusion: the event was a total fabrication and never took place.³⁴⁶

The saga did not end there. Despite undertakings to honour a departure notice requiring him to leave Canada by midnight 1 November 1992, Irving demurred. On 2 November the author was once again arrested by Canadian immigration officials and charged with failing to leave Canada at the agreed time, this time to be summarily deported from Canada.

By 1992, Canadian authorities grew tired of Irving’ persistent illegal activities. The Canadian Secretary of State wrote critically of Irving's unscrupulous behaviour:

Mr. Irving's sympathies and intentions have no place in our society. They were abhorrent to Canadian values and ideals and are an incitement to racism if not a direct promotion of racist attitudes.³⁴⁷

In October 1992, Irving was notified by the Canadian Department of Employment and Immigration that he was never to return to Canada, being duly served with a letter declaring him an undesirable person.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Searchlight, November 1992, p. 5.
³⁴⁷ ibid., p. 10.
³⁴⁸ Kapel, op. cit., p. 10.
South Africa:

Although he had previously visited South Africa several times, Irving's right-wing connections in South Africa served him no purpose in 1992 when he sought permission to enter that country to address audiences. The British Home Affairs Office withdrew a visa exemption normally held automatically by British citizens in South Africa.

Irving deployed unsavoury means to enter South Africa, having enlisted right-wing politician Clive Darby-Lewis as a referee in his South African visa request. Darby, a former South African MP, had a chequered history as an extreme right agitator. Some years ago, Darby was arrested, convicted and sentenced to death for complicity in and masterminding of the assassination of African activist Chris Hani. It emerged that Darby allegedly provided Hani's accused murderer Janusz Walus with the gun used to shoot Hani. Derby-Lewis was also president of the Western Goals Institute, one of the sponsors of Irving's London seminars. In 1989 Irving told a South African newspaper that he had become "great friends with Mr Derby-Lewis". In December 1993 the South African Government formally refused Irving permission to enter.

349 The Stern, op. cit., p. 44.
351 O Maolain, op. cit., p. 320. This pressure group was set up in 1985 by right-wing members of the Conservative Party.
352 Bishop, op. cit., p. 10.
Conclusion:

Irving's rallies, particularly those in Germany, may not have been intrinsically violent; nonetheless, the evidence suggests that violence and public disquiet frequently followed the author's appearances. We may conclude that his ubiquitous association with the extreme right certainly encouraged Holocaust-denying activities. Violent acts and public incitement are often perceived to be condoned by others who commit violence. Nonetheless, extreme right organisations, particularly those in Germany, are unlikely to overtly embrace violence; to do so would jeopardise public acceptance.

Perhaps one of the of the most unifying characteristics of the extreme right is the centrality of their hatred towards minorities, particularly the Jews. Billig argued that the antisemitic conspiracy tradition "represents a common theme linking extreme right-wing groups." Conspiracy theories emerged centuries ago and became inextricably linked to Zionism, inspired and strengthened by the forgery *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. Arguably, conspiracy theories have inspired Holocaust refutation. Conspiracy theory sustains a significant function for the extreme right; that of serving as a indoctrinating device and a convenient weapon for Holocaust denial polemicists.

---

354 Billig, op. cit., pp. 146-166.
355 Moore, op. cit., p. 89.
In general terms, it can be argued that different Holocaust-denying groups and individuals have benefited from global transfer of neo-Nazi, antisemitic propaganda. The German Office for the Protection of the Constitution monitors such extremist groups; they maintain that a preponderance of underground Holocaust-denial material circulating in Germany originates in the U.K. and U.S.A. One significant promoter is Irving, who has been described as "the largest distributor of neo-Nazi propaganda in Germany". There is little doubt that worldwide distribution of propaganda has contributed to easier access to Holocaust-denying material.

Beyond information sharing, members of extreme-right organisations maintain personal links, which form the basis of an international cooperative network. Operating on different levels, supporters of the extreme-right maintain regular communication, informing each other about current events and exchanging organisational news. The Holocaust-denial network also operates at the higher level of leadership. For instance, Irving and other Holocaust deniers frequently attend mutual gatherings of the international fraternity movement. For many years the author has lent prestige and his presence to diverse extremist activities sponsored by extreme right

---

359 Braun & Scheinberg, op. cit., p. 66.
360 ibid., pp. 224-25.
German organisations and individuals. He has found very receptive audiences in Germany. 361

In short, David Irving has been closely and actively involved with groups on the extreme right of the political spectrum.362 He has promoted Holocaust denial and racial hatred in Europe and elsewhere. The author has been directly and incontrovertibly linked with German neo-Nazi elements who have been responsible for the upsurge in extremist violence.363

We have seen that Irving frequently addressing neo-Nazi rallies throughout Germany. His reckless pursuit of adventurism over many years has involved him in collaboration with diverse extreme right organisations and individuals throughout the world.364

Irving’s writings and speeches cannot be divorced from his role as an activist and agitator.365 By espousing Holocaust denial so publicly, Irving has compromised his career as a writer of historical books.

The author made little contribution to the history of the Holocaust.366 It is argued that since the author is a part of a global Holocaust denial campaign as a leading polemicist, we may place him in the category of extreme right demagogue.367

361 ibid., p. 224.
363 Rubinstein, op.cit., p. 3.
364 Evans, op. cit., p. 251. Professor Evans views Irving as essentially an ideologue who uses history for his own political purposes.
365 Rosenbaum, op. cit., p. 231.
366 J. Hellbrunn, reported in The Globe and Mail, 19 October 1996, p. 5, Internet article, (webmaster@nizkor.org)
David Irving, a writer of books and a dilettante of history, also functioned as an extreme and violent ideologue for many years. In the words of one journalist: "less public was the fact that on his lecture tours through Germany, David Irving's meetings were for some of Germany's most violent Nazis".\textsuperscript{368}

\textsuperscript{368} Cited in the anti-fascist journal \textit{Searchlight}, April 1992, p. 10.
CONCLUSION

Since the end of the Second World War many historians have made important contributions to a balanced understanding of the Holocaust. Yet, little material was published informing about growing efforts by deniers to rewrite the history of the Holocaust. We have seen how individual deniers began to impose their offerings onto an unsuspecting public soon after the war ended. This study also analysed the works of later, more organised denial organisations intent upon repudiating of the established history of the Holocaust.

How might we evaluate the significance and impact of Holocaust denial within a broader Holocaust debate? Two decades ago, syndicated deniers became increasingly proficient at "marketing" hatred, antisemitism and extremism. Intent upon acquiring respectability, these deniers have learnt to present themselves effectively by a process of "gentrification of hatred,"¹ a more efficaceous means of winning converts. It involves casting aside the deniers' traditional expressions of crude extremism by presenting their works in pseudo-academic terms, including the holding of academic conferences, publishing "respectable" journals and underscoring their writings with spurious footnotes, citations and bibliographies.² In this disguise, the deniers hope to mask their extremism; the content remained but the "packaging" was different.

The new tactics made Holocaust denial a matter of broader concern compared to earlier rudimentary attacks on the established history of the Holocaust. By promoting more intrusive propaganda, Holocaust denial has become topical once again. In 1994, the oft-mentioned American historian Deborah Lipstadt in her book Denying the Holocaust predicted a "clear and present danger" implicit in the current global ascendancy of Holocaust denial.

General literature on Holocaust denial rarely mentions Holocaust-denying individuals and organisations discussed in this study, or do so only fragmentarily. Thanks in large measure to the writings of a number of seemingly aberrant individuals, Holocaust denial until recent times was generally ascribed to the lunatic fringe. The phenomenon, once conceived, featured a number of claims, chief of which embraced the notion that there was no systematic mass murder of Jews by the Nazis and that, in particular, there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Holocaust denial has been examined in detail in this study, for today a significant Holocaust-denying "industry" is entrenched globally. The contemporary extreme right has shared a broad tradition of like-minded, disgruntled individuals intent upon promoting denial propaganda. Where the deniers' core assumptions have been articulated, it is perhaps surprising to note a lack of cohesion in their common beliefs, suggesting poor conceptualisation of their articles of faith.

---

3 M. Shannon, The Australia/Israel Review, 21 October 1998, p. 8. Shannon cites a plethora of antisemitic websites on the Internet. The exponential growth of access to the Internet saw the number of Holocaust denial websites more than double since the 1990s.
This is true also for David Irving, the focus of this study. The author has failed to provide scholarly alternatives in the debate about interpretation of the Holocaust. From a reading of his works and speeches, the preponderance of what Irving has articulated amounts to abstruse criticism of aspects of the established history of the Holocaust; he has very little to contribute in terms of coherent historic interpretation of the events of the Holocaust.

At one level Irving has openly defended fascism in its many manifestations. This was evident in his writings and speeches portraying aspects of the Third Reich, the main theme of which deflects charges of inhumanity from Hitler. Some historians have noted that the author is driven by a need to "rehabilitate National Socialism", asserting that his "search for truth in history" is guided by ideological imperatives.\textsuperscript{4}

For Irving the systematic destruction of European Jewry remains scientifically impossible and a "hoax of major proportions". He flayed establishment historians for "being hell-bent on fabricating a Holocaust legend".\textsuperscript{5} The author argued that the number of Jews deliberately killed by the Nazis was far less than 6 million; it amounted only to a few hundred thousand, and was thus similar to, or less than, the number of German civilians killed in the Allied bombing raids, which he portrayed as crimes of a similar or greater order. He contended that gas chambers were not used to kill large numbers of Jews at any time. If Jews did die in large numbers, it was a result of epidemics for which the Allied bombing raids were in large measure responsible.

\textsuperscript{4}Evans, op. cit., p. 135.
Holocaust denial literature appears to narrow intellectual debate. It is arguable whether the reductionist nature of their publications exhibits the general effect of trivialisation. An analysis of his works shows that Irving certainly fails to enhance intellectual discussion about the Holocaust. Where he challenges conventional history of the Holocaust, the author only succeeds by negating opportunities to provide his own rationale. Arguing, as he does, that the "received" history of the Holocaust is a "hoax", it might be expected that it would be incumbent upon the author to explain rationally the demise of the Jewish people in the Second World War. Irving fails to do this. Professor Yehuda Bauer argued that Irving finds contradictions in small details of history, denying the validity of a wholistic concept of converging Holocaust testimonies and documentation. Irving merely tries to impress his readers and listeners with a pseudo-scientific apparatus of footnotes and the use of esoteric language.

Irving's clamour about Holocaust denial is telling. His works do not generally reveal the extent to which the author has gone down the path of denying the Holocaust. If an historical writer can be evaluated by the company he keeps, Irving's association with the extreme right, as we have seen in chapter five, makes disturbing reading. The author portrays himself as an historian, albeit a revisionist one. Little investigation has ever gone into his networks of associates and the organisations within which he works. In obscuring this network Irving is able to present himself as a martyr of free speech. Irving wishes his

---

audiences to perceive him as a writer of unconventional history. Yet there is an overwhelming body of evidence to indicate that he is in fact an active and key player in an international network of extremists and neo-Nazi groups.

As was outlined in chapter five of this study, Irving has addressed many meetings, in many countries of the world, expounding his unconventional view of history. Most of these associations have been examined. In Canada, for instance, the white supremacist Aryan Resistance Movement guarded the author's talks in Vancouver in 1991. The talks were organised by the Canadian League of Rights.

On the other side of the world, the British National Party (BNP), Britain's largest fascist group, has a long working association with Irving. Many of its members have criminal records for violent acts against throughout Britain, including bombings, bashings, and stabbing attacks upon blacks, Asians, Jews and political opponents. As we have seen in chapter five of this study, the BNP first became involved with Irving through the Clarendon Club (a far-right social group in London) in the early 1980s. Irving's Clarendon Club meetings and his later "revisionist seminars" were by invitation only and the BNP often made up a large contingent of the invitees as well as providing security for Irving. Irving addressed meetings of the party from 1990 to 1992. The BNP annual rally for November 1993 also advertised Irving as its keynote speaker. Members of Column 88, a neo-Nazi paramilitary group responsible for numerous violent attacks in Britain, frequently

---

7 Y. Bauer, op. cit.
attended Clarendon Club meetings of Irving in the 1971-80 period. Irving's self-owned and run Focal Point, previously the title of a short-lived magazine published by the author, served as a bulletin board for the extreme right and carried advertisements for a wide range of racist and Nazi-controlled groups.

In the US, Irving has been very actively associated with both leading Holocaust-denying organisations, the Institute of Historical Review and the National Alliance.

In Germany it appears that Irving is not only one of the most popular drawcards within the neo-Nazi community but is also one of it's more influential figures. As we have seen, the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) is regarded as Germany's largest extreme right-wing group. The movement relentlessly targets Jews through its newspapers and advocates the expulsion of all foreigners from Germany. Irving received top billing at its annual meeting in March 1992 in Passau, sharing the platform with party leader Gerhard Frey. The DVU sponsored Irving's tours of Western Germany in the mid-1980s. Irving addressed the DVU regularly and in 1982 was awarded the European Freedom Prize by the Deutsche Nationale Zeitung, published by Frey. The author shared a platform with Frey at two meetings organised jointly by the DVU in Hamburg and Dusseldorf in January 1982.

The Gesellschaft Für Freie Publizistik (GFP), ostensibly dedicated to freedom of the press, was in fact founded by former SS members. The organisation publishes anti-Holocaust books and has served as a bridge between the Third Reich and the German New Right. It also
sponsored many of Irving's tours of Germany in the early 1980s. Irving spoke to this organisation in Rothenburg in May 1991, sharing the platform with extremists from the Deutsche Liga and Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands whose chairman, Gunter Decker, was sentenced to two years in prison for incitement in 1995. National Liste, the neo-Nazi organisation led by Christian Worch also sponsored an address by Irving in March 1990 in Hamburg.

Nationale Offensive is a violent neo-Nazi group responsible for firebombing attacks on immigrant hostels. The group sponsored two talks by Irving in Augsburg and Engen in March 1992. Nationale Offensive was banned by the German Government in 1993.

Irving's association with individual Holocaust deniers has been discussed in chapter five. The author was far from being a lone figure; he had close contacts with virtually all the major Holocaust deniers, including Faurisson and Butz as well as with dignitaries at the Institute for Historical Review, a major Holocaust denial organisation.

Irving appears to have accomplished most Holocaust denial objectives as defined in chapter four. He has turned on its head the established history of the Holocaust. The author proved himself to be up to new challenges. First, that throughout his career, from his first book onwards, he knowingly distorted the historical record of the Holocaust; second, his denial that Auschwitz was an extermination camp, was false. Irving was either deliberately lying or intellectually blind in denying the fact that millions of Jews were killed in the gas chambers. Third, that he is an antisemite and an ardent associate of neo-Nazis.

9 German National Newspaper.
Many historians have encountered difficulties in refuting assertions made by Holocaust deniers including Irving. It is difficult to comprehend how utterances by a relatively small number of deniers may have threatened to subsume the debate about the historicity of the Holocaust. Why have promoters of denial been so influential? Part of the answer is that their intrusive propaganda has been so effective.

Irving is a case in point. By taking advantage of his success as a popular author, he established a reputation as a charismatic interpreter of aspects of the Second World War. His later status as a "convert" to Holocaust denial launched him both as an articulator for the causes of the extreme right as well as a leading authority within the international Holocaust denial movement itself. Having closely examined Irving's speeches and writings since the late 1980s, one cannot escape the conclusion that Irving became an ardent Holocaust denier in 1988.

Although claiming objectivity in his interpretation of history, Irving displayed an intemperate attitude towards other historians. Fiercely denouncing scholars for "filling their books with sludge," Irving paradoxically claimed for himself "authorial licence," even when caught out manipulating the evidence. With that licence Irving was prepared to expatriate on the exactitude of his notes and references on the painstaking research he had conducted in archives which he had been the first person to penetrate. All of this suggests that Irving is less than the world's self-appointed and self-trained expert on his chosen interpretation of history he claims to be.

It is not surprising that Irving's self-importance was to be challenged in a court of law. Lipstadt asserted that Irving was a Holocaust denier and
an associate of neo-Nazis. Irving was accused of deliberately obfuscating the historical record. The truth or otherwise of these allegations was what the 2000 London libel court defence had to substantially prove.

Opposing perceived "aggravated damages to his reputation," Irving argued that Lipstadt's accusations had been made at the urging of powerful Jewish individuals and institutions which were seeking to destroy his reputation as a historian, denying him access to reputable publishing houses and universities, preventing him from earning his living and generally abrogating his right to free speech.

Irving defended his right to speak freely, as he claimed his conscience and his historical researches dictated. But how was he to achieve this end? The author resolved to use the peculiarities of English libel law to punish Lipstadt for writing and Penguin books for publishing what she thought of his work.

How, when challenged, did Irving try to refute the charges that he was a Holocaust denier, an admirer of Adolf Hitler and an active associate of neo-Nazis? The author insisted throughout that the historical evidence, when critically examined, showed some of the central events of the Holocaust - above all, the use by the Nazis of gas chambers to annihilate countless Jewish people - to be nothing but a myth, a fabrication, even a "blood libel" on the German people. It transpired after the 2000 libel trial that Irving had actually prepared his case poorly; Mr. Justice Gray more than once advised the author that his references to the forces which he claimed to be behind Lipstadt and her
book did not have bearing on the alleged libels; despite this admonition, Irving went back to irrelevancies time and time again.

Principally, Irving claimed that the record cleared Hitler of the charge of having had a hand in whatever crimes against the Jews of Europe were committed by the German forces and their allies during the Second World War. To lodge a successful plea of justification, therefore, the trial defence had no choice but to deploy a team of historians to traverse Irving’s books in search of instances of suppression and invention of evidence, which would prove that the author had prostituted his gifts as an historian in the service of his ideological fixations.¹⁰

The 2000 libel trial defence committed itself to arguing over the raw material of the historical record. They were obliged to give an account of Irving’s public appearances in recent years which would illustrate the kinds of meetings he attended, the audiences he chose to address and the language he used on such occasions.

Parts of the historical record went back as far as the 1920s; other parts referred to the unified Germany of today. Almost anything could be brought to bear by either side: speeches at mass meetings and exchange of secret memoranda; the presence, absence and provenance of documents; claims of command within the Nazi party and the Nazi war machine; dates of mass shootings behind the lines; architectural plans for the installation of gas chambers and the crematoria at Auschwitz; the action of Zyklon-B gas on concrete, on lice and on people; the meanings of particular words in German and how
they could be best translated into English; the splintering and coalescence of neo-Nazi movements in post-war Germany.

Irving conceded that no sooner had the German armies invaded Russia in 1941 than special units of the SS, the "Einzatzgruppen", set about slaughtering by rifle and machine-gun fire entire Jewish communities in the Baltic countries, Poland, White Russia and the Ukraine. Given the ample, explicit documentary evidence of these killings from German sources, it would have been formidable for Irving to deny that more than a million Jews of all ages and both sexes were murdered within the first year of the German invasion.

That concession made, the author seemed to find it difficult to hear mention of any particular "Aktion" undertaken by the "Einzatsgruppen," to not exactly deny whatever episode had just been mentioned, but to diminish it, to gloss over it, or to find extenuating circumstances for it.

Not surprisingly, Irving appeared to wish to gain lost ground by arguing that either the particular killings did not take place in the manner stated, or took place on a smaller scale than the Nazis themselves claimed, were "reprisals" of some kind, or yet were contradicted by or conflated with reports of other killings nearby.

In short, the author's admission that a hundred thousand Jews were killed in largely uncoordinated acts of war on the Eastern front did not constitute an admission of the reality of the Holocaust in any meaningful or generally accepted sense of the term.

Irving's attempts to undermine and trivialize the significance of particular episodes during the murderous campaign of the

---

10 Evans, op. cit., p. 266.
"Einzatsgruppen" had a "strategic" as well as a compulsive aspect. Consciously or unconsciously, the author's aim was to distract attention from what the actions of the "Einzatsgruppen" revealed about the overall direction of the Nazi policy towards the Jews. Within weeks of the opening of the war on the Eastern Front, the Nazis had made plain how they regarded the Jews and what they intended doing with them. The intention never changed; only the methods used in pursuing it became more "sophisticated", as the war dragged on and the dragnet widened to take in the Jews from central and western Europe as well as those in the east.

According to Irving, Hitler was the best friend the Jews ever had in the Third Reich. In terms of its effects on the lives of survivors, it could be argued that it is not necessary to be a historian of the period, as Irving claimed to be, to feel that a person who can say that can say anything. Paradoxically, only under pressure and earlier in the libel trial, had Irving admitted that Hitler was a violent antisemite from the very beginning of his political career. The spectacle of this reluctant admission from Irving was accompanied by his protests that beneath it all, in some unspecifiable way, Hitler's intentions towards the Jews had remained benign. Indeed, the author persisted in arguing that from the time of the "Kristallnacht" onwards one of his concerns had been to protect the Jews from the excesses of his subordinates.

Irving proved meticulous about details. Of the evidence relating to the death camps, Irving appeared ready to speak endlessly about the machinery and layout of the Auschwitz crematoria; of the thickness of
the roofs of the gas chambers, or the size of the apertures in those roofs for Zyklon-B to be introduced to the chamber below, or the absence, according to him, of such apertures. The author tirelessly argued the minutiae of the designs of their doors, of delousing prisoners' corpses, of buildings serving as air-raid shelters, and the amounts of coke required to incinerate the dead.

Yet, eyewitness accounts received the author's scorn. Irving refused to countenance the experiences of those who were there. He disparaged any contradictions, exaggerations and misrememberings inherent in eyewitness reports - by victims and killers alike - of what took place in Auschwitz, determined to demonstrate how such flaws render all their reports worthless to a scrupulous historian like himself.

Perhaps the most telling point is that Irving made no attempt to offer any explanation of what Auschwitz and and its dire installations were for, if not to continue the systematic killings that the "Einzatsgruppen" had begun. The author also failed to explain why the Nazis, according to him, should suddenly have desisted from the programme they had set about with such ferocity. Irving's public references to Auschwitz, as "a brutal slave-labour camp where many people died" were axiomatic; everything else said of it, according to Irving, is patent nonsense.\textsuperscript{12} Irving was unwilling to clarify why, if Auschwitz was but a "labour camp," the Germans took the trouble to deport to it hundreds of thousands of the old, the ill, the children, the mothers with infants. What was supposed to happen to such categories of "labourers" who managed to

\textsuperscript{11} Evans, op. cit., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{12} Evans, op. cit., p. 125.
survive the journeys to this destination? What purpose was served by the contemporaneous establishment of such camps as Sobibor, Belzec, Majdanek and Treblinka which were equipped with gassing facilities parallel to those in Auschwitz and which had no great industrial plants and slave-labour camps attached to them? On those issues Irving remains silent.

Irving was determined to avoid a narrative interpretation of such questions. In deflected from providing a rationale for the extermination centres, it was not surprising that he resisted when the actions of the "Einzatzgruppen" were under discussion. The same denial of consequence, of events having necessary connections, of cause and effect, showed itself in Irving's attempts to exonerate Hitler of guilt for the crimes committed by his army and his SS battalions.

Since no one has ever produced a document signed by Hitler in which he ordered the extermination of the Jews, Irving has argued for many years that the absence of such a document must be acknowledged as irrefutable proof that the Führer never wished for the Holocaust to happen. Indeed, Irving insisted, if an attempt was made at any time and by any person to annihilate the Jewish people, then it was against the Führer's wishes, and he remained ignorant until it was too late to do anything about it.

That is the logic of Irving's professed "real history" which he offers to the world at large. The fact that Hitler set up within his Chancellery, well before the war broke out, a unit which used poison gas to kill in excess of 70,000 of physically and mentally disabled Germans of all
ages; that the personnel of this unit were transferred to Poland just before the gas chambers went into operation in that country; that Hitler recorded utterances during the same period abounding in references to the "Vernichtigung" and "Ausrottung" and "Eliminierung" of the Jews; that lengthy meetings between himself and Himmler, who was in command of the entire operation, took place with especial frequency before and after Himmler's visits to the relevant areas of Poland at precisely the same time when the killing process was getting under way - none of that, nor all the evidence that can be added to it, appeared to have any meaning to Irving, "our scholarly historian". For Irving, all these matters carry no weight compared to the weight of that missing "smoking gun" document.

This still leaves the issue of why all these denials? Irving believes in the restitution of National Socialism. If it was Himmler or Goebbels who were responsible for the demise of the Nazi state, and who caused Hitler's name to be execrated by succeeding generations, the Germans not least among them, the Führer can be partially or wholly exonerated of responsibility for the extermination camps. Perhaps then, Irving reasons, one day we can all hope to make ourselves something like the Nazis once again.

Historically, the Jews have been an easy target for those who wish to denigrate them as minorities. Implicit in Irving's desire to rehabilitate National Socialism is his innate antisemitism. The author's antisemitic

---

13 Evans, op. cit., p. 119.
15 Evans, op. cit., p. 137.
language, "our traditional enemies"; expresses the classic ideology of antisemitism. In this context, Irving's denial might be viewed as the logical endpoint of his antisemitism, providing him with a vehicle for negating historical facts. Irving has always denied that he is antisemitic. However, none compelled him to become an apologist for Hitler, the most murderous antisemite of the twentieth century; the author chose to do so.

That Holocaust denial is antisemitic in its deepest impulses should also not to be doubted; it is yet another, latter-day invention of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a brand-new tale about how "the Jews" are conspiring once again to denigrate all other nations, on this occasion to wrest money from them by way of reparations, and to exercise power over them by way of moral blackmail.

Where Irving promotes these views, individual Jews naturally feel threatened and Jews in official positions, as representatives of others, do their best to combat the spread of Irving's concepts by warning the public and institutions against him. For Irving the perceived injustice of threats by organised Jewry becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; the author internalises his reactions. Not only are the Jews plotting against the world at large by means of their "lies about the Holocaust"; according to Irving, they are also now conspiring against him, as an individual and a historian. A circular argument thus ensues: much of

---

16 Ibid., p. 136.
19 Evans, op. cit., p. 147.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography is divided into two sections:

1. Holocaust denial
2. David Irving

Holocaust denial

1.1 Archival sources

New Times, (editorial), 3 July, 1936
New Times, 3 July 1936
New Times, 15 March 1940
New Times, 15 November 1940
New Times, 27 November 1942
New Times, 25 February 1944
New Times, 14 November 1944
New Times, 31 August 1945
New Times, 2 November 1945
1.2 Collections of documents:


1.3 Newspapers

The Daily Mail, 1 May, 1959

The Herald (Melbourne), 31 October 1978.


The Herald (Melbourne), 31 October 1979.

News Weekly, 8 November 1978.

News Weekly, 8 November 1979

The Sun (Melbourne), 24 November 1978.

The Sun (Melbourne), 24 November 1979

The Age (Melbourne), 15 February 1979.

The Age (Melbourne), 19 March 1979.


The Age (Melbourne), 16 April, 1996.

The Age (Melbourne), 16 April 1996.

The Australian, 2 October 1996.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 April, 1999.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 1999.
1.4 Journals


1.5 Articles:

Bateman, M. 'Why It Was Worth Taking On David Irving', The Times, 18 April 2000.


Bennett, J. 'No Holocaust Theory Starts Major Storms', The National Times, 10 February 1979.

Birkenmayer, W. 'Wahrheit vor Gericht', Stuttgarter Zeitung, 12 April 2000.


Gibbons, P. 'Author with No Publisher and Few Funds', *The Guardian*, (Early Edition), 12 April 2000, p. 5.


Shermer, M. 'Proving the Holocaust: the Refutation of Revisionism and the Restoration of History', *Skeptic*, vol. 2, no. 4, Altadena, California, June 1994, pp. 54-56.


### 1.6 Biographies and Memoirs


### 1.7 Primary Sources


J. Bennett, letter to *The National Times*, 17 March 1979.

A *personal interview* with Mr Jeremy Jones, Director of International and Jewish Community Affairs, at his Sydney Office, 28 April 1998.
Archives article by C.C. Aronsfeld, "Holocaust Deniers Are Busy in Britain", *Midstream*, January 1993, p. 29.

Searchlight, August 1977, p. 3.


Searchlight, September 1984.

Searchlight, November 1988, p. 15.


Searchlight, 9 February, 1990, p. 3.

Searchlight, November 1991, p. 3.


Searchlight, April 1992, p. 4.


Searchlight, January 1993.


Without Prejudice, No. 8, April 1995, p. 23.


1.8 Australian League of Rights publications:


Intelligence Survey, October 1990.


Robertson, R. 'The Dispossessed Majority', quoted in On Target, 21 September 1990.

On Target, 11 May 1990.

On Target, 9 February 1990.

On Target, 11 February 1990.

On Target, 23 February 1990.

On Target, 2 March 1990.

On Target, 23 March 1990.
On Target, 8 June 1990.

On Target, 5 October 1990.

On Target, 16 November 1990.

1.9 Secondary Sources

(1) Books:


(ii) Articles:


Dawidowicz, L. 'Lies About the Holocaust', Commentary, December 1980.


Manne, R. 'Why We Should Ban Irving', The Australian, 2 October 1996.


(iii) Reports:

Littman, S. (ed), 'Holocaust denial: Bigotry in the Guise of Scholarship', 


Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Report on Antisemitism in 
Australia, October 1997.

1.10 Radio interviews

Bennett, J. interview with Gordon Elliott, Radio 2UW, 25 September 
1979 (transcript).

Bennett, J. radio interview on 3CR (Melbourne), 1989.

Casey, R. Radio 2GB, 8 November 1996.

Leuchter, F. interview with Howard Settler, Radio 6PR (Perth), 2 
February 1990.

1.11 Magazines


Spotlight, 3 March 1980.

1.12 University publications

Honi Soit, Sydney University, 30 June 1964.

1.13 Dictionaries:

Collins English Dictionary (Australian edition), Harper Collins, Sydney, 
1.14 Internet articles:


Heilbronn, J. article reported in The Globe and Mail, 19 October 1996, p. 5, (webmaster@nizkor.org)

Wilson, J.K. University of Chicago Press, CO DOH, mail@aol.com, November 1996.

ii David Irving:

(i) Printed Documentary Sources and Journals:


(ii) Primary Sources:


(iii) Newspapers:


*Deutsche Allgemeine*, 5 July 1990.


*Deutsche Woche-Zeitung*, 1 June 1979.


*The Herald Sun (Melbourne)*, 20 May 1993

*The Herald Sun (Melbourne)*, 21 May 1993


*The Herald Sun (Melbourne)*, 18 September 1993.


Kolner Stadt-Anzeiger, 10 August 1993.

The Melbourne Herald Sun (editorial), 18 September 1993.


Stuttgart Zeitung, 7 March 1981.

Stuttgart Zeitung, 12 December 1981.


The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 June 1996.


The Sunday Age (Melbourne), 25 May 1997, p.2.


The Sunday Times, 22 June 1977

The Sunday Times Weekly Review, 12 June, 1977


The Economist, 1 February, 1992.


The Times (UK), 12 August 1989, p. 6.

(iv) Magazines:


Searchlight, May 1976, p. 5.


Searchlight, March 1982.

Searchlight, No. 81, March 1986, p. 6.

Searchlight, August 1989.

Searchlight, February 1990, p. 4.


Searchlight, April, 1992, p. 10.


Searchlight, November 1992, p. 52.

Searchlight, June 1993, No. 216.

Searchlight, August 1993, No. 218.


(v) Secondary Works on David Irving:


**(vi) Newspaper articles:**


'Academic Buccaneer vs Bookish Schoolmaster', *The Times*, 12 January 2000, p. 3.


'History on Trial', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 February 2000, p. 11.


'Sleeping With the Enemy', *The Spectator*, 27 April 1996

'The two Sides of the Same Coin', *The Age* (Melb.), 1 October 1996, p. 11.

'Too Poor to Graduate', (author u.k), *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 November 1996, p. 18.

**(vii) Primary sources:**


'Hitler’s Objective Englishman', *Quadrant*, January 1978, pp. 64-66.

**(viii) Book reviews:**


'Just retribution', *Nuremberg: The Last Battle* by David Irving, reviewed by R. Bessel, in *TLS*, 8 August 1997, p. 31.

'Revisiting a Revisionist', *The Time*, 22 April, 1996, p. 70.


**(ix) Internet:**


Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH)- a Holocaust denial website: [CODOHmail@aol.com](mailto:CODOHmail@aol.com)

Correspondence on Irving's website [http://www.fpp.co.uk](http://www.fpp.co.uk).

'A Radical's Diary', 11-17 April 2000, [http://www.fpp.co.uk](http://www.fpp.co.uk).

Irving, D. 'On Contemporary History and Historiography', remarks delivered at the 1983 Internationalist Revisionist Conference, published in the *Journal of Historical Review*, vol. 5, nos. 2,3,4, Winter 1984, (auspices of Institute For Historical Review), Internet article CODOHmail@aol.com, (accessed 19 June 1997).


Jonell, B. d@bertil@dtek.chalmers.se, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden, 12 October 1991.

The Nizkor Project: webmaster@nizkor, transcript of article, Media Monitors Broadcasters.


(x) Special Reports:


(xi) Magazine articles


Horsnell, M. 'False Witness', The Times, 12 April 2000, p. 3.


(xii) Videos:

D. Irving, Videotape: Canadian Association for Free Expression, Carlton Inn, Toronto, (undated) 1986.


D. Irving, Video: 'speech at the Bayerische Hof', Milton, Ontario, 5 October 1991, at 1 hr. 20 minutes.


Bibliographical Appendix.

The literature of the Holocaust is vast; for the purpose of citing relevant and specific secondary Holocaust sources for my thesis, the following references have been most useful:

(a) Books:

(b) Journals:


(c) Articles: