

# Noted Holocaust Revisionist Joins Irvine Conclave

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David Irving, the controversial World War II historian whose questions about the Holocaust led to a stinging defeat in a London courtroom, launched a three-month U.S. tour over the weekend, accusing his opponents of spending \$6 million to defeat him and vowing to appeal the ruling that branded him a racist and an anti-Semite.

"There's been something akin to a grave injustice done," said Irving. "It's sad to say that in the battle between David and Goliath, David doesn't always win. But I think I can say in this particular battle, David is going to win, and the victory is going to be sweet when it comes."

Irving's appearance was the highlight of a conference of some of the world's best-known Holocaust revisionists, who met at a secret location in Irvine to promote their demands for new investiga-

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## IRVING

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tions to prove there was no mass extermination of European Jews during World War II.

Joining their ranks was former Republican Rep. Pete McCloskey, who is bringing a class-action lawsuit against the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith that seeks damages for the Jewish organization's alleged illegal spying on U.S. citizens critical of Israel and of the former apartheid regime in South Africa.

"I came because I respect the thesis of this organization," McCloskey said at the gathering, "that thesis being that there should be a reexamination of whatever governments say or politicians say or political entities say."

Southern California Jewish leaders were critical of Irving's appearance, saying he had already been discredited in the British courts.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, who attended some of the London courtroom proceedings, said it was clear the judge had given Irving broad leeway in order to leave no grounds for appeal.

"At the end of the day, justice and history prevailed over hate. And it was not the Simon Wiesenthal Center or [defendants Deborah] Lipstadt or . . . Penguin Books, it was the elder judicial system of the Anglo-Saxon world labeling him for what he is," Cooper said.

Orange County Jewish organizations were caught off-guard by Irving's appearance, which was not publicized in advance.

"My reaction is that he's so discredited that he's sort of like a freak at a sideshow. I mean, there he is standing out by himself," said Jerry Werksman, former Jewish Federation president in Orange County. "The 1st Amendment absolutely allows this kind of stuff, but they're preaching to their own choir."

Cooper was also critical of McCloskey's appearance at the gathering, sponsored by the Costa Mesa-based Institute for Historical Review, which for more than two decades has promoted revisionist examination of the Holocaust.

"To show up at the address of the institution here in California, which by its very existence is a source of such unending pain to the victims of the Holocaust and the survivors who live in our community, and secondly, on top of it to make an appearance under the same tent as someone who's just been crowned the leading intellectual Jew hater in the world, I guess, speaks volumes," Cooper said.

"I'm sure there's a lot McCloskey achieved in Congress, but somewhere along the line he must've gotten his wires crossed. Because standing under that tent, it basically confirms we're dealing with someone who's an anti-Semite," Cooper said.

+ Though Holocaust revisionism is considered an extremist fringe

movement whose roots are anti-Semitic and nationalistic, the weekend gathering attracted 140 supporters from a broad range of political streams and nearly 2,500 viewers around the world who watched the proceedings broadcast live on the Internet, conference organizers said.

It was a rare gathering of some of the best-known revisionists, including Northwestern University engineering professor Arthur Butz, author of "The Hoax of the 20th Century"; Robert Faurisson, the well-known Frenchman who has argued there could not have been gas chambers at Auschwitz; German Rudolf, the former Max Planck Institute chemist who lost his job and faced imprisonment in Germany after conducting forensic examinations at Auschwitz; and Ernst Zundel, who as a publisher and Web site operator has battled Canadian authorities for years.

"Of the 16 or 17 speakers here this weekend, six have been punished as 'thought criminals'—with imprisonment, court-ordered fines or travel bans for publicly expressing dissident views on history," said Mark Weber, head of the Institute for Historical Review.

"We are often asked why we seem obsessed with the Holocaust. The answer is very simple. As any child can easily observe, it is not revisionists or the IHR who are obsessed with the fate, 55 or 60 years ago, of a small minority of the population of a foreign continent. It is, rather, our own political, social and intellectual leaders who have made the fate of Europe's Jews during World War II a central icon of our age," Weber said.

"No comparable attention is given to the tens of millions of other World War II victims, including the many millions of Chinese who perished in the war," Weber said.

"Largely forgotten in the Holocaust cult have been the tens of millions of victims of America's great wartime ally, Stalinist Russia . . . much less the 12 [million] to 14 million Germans, victims of the flight and expulsion of 1944 to 1949, of whom some 2 million lost their lives. We are expected to look at U.S. and world history from what, in truth, is a Jewish perspective," Weber said.

## Successful Appeal Appears Unlikely

Irving, 62, who has kept a low profile since a British court found in favor of Emory University professor Lipstadt in his libel suit against her, gave a rollicking account of the 4½-month trial that portrayed him as a beleaguered historian fighting a fortress of highly paid historical experts.

Though he filed a notice of appeal in his case last week, any appeal under British law is likely to be extremely difficult to win, and would depend on overcoming Judge Charles Gray's finding that there are no grounds for appeal. Irving accused Gray of ruling, in

part, because of the massive resources focused on the case by international Jewish groups and individuals, which he said contributed \$6 million to help Lipstadt defend herself.

"The judge . . . knew if he ruled in my favor he would face the same thing," Irving said.

Irving is one of the best-known historians of the Third Reich, and his work on Adolf Hitler's war years and Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels have attracted praise for their exhaustive use of original sources and insights into the thinking of previously inaccessible Third Reich figures. But his questions about whether the gas chambers at Auschwitz existed and doubts that as many as 6 million Jews died during the war have prompted mainstream publishers to refuse to publish his writings and opened an international re-examination of his work.

The main reprisals were brought on after Lipstadt, in her book "Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory," accused Irving of being an anti-Semite who manipulated historical evidence to suit his beliefs. St. Martin's Press backed out of a plan to publish the Goebbels biography.

Irving, representing himself, relied on an anonymous team of historians and engineers around the world as advisors. He would pose technical questions by e-mail before retiring for the night and had full answers in hand before going to court the next morning, he said.

Lipstadt amassed a war chest funded heavily, Irving said, by film director Steven Spielberg, Seagram chief executive Edgar Bronfman Jr. and the American Jewish Committee. (Lipstadt, at a recent appearance in Los Angeles, denied that she received any money from the Jewish community, according to Joel Rembaum, senior rabbi of Temple Beth Am of Los Angeles.)

Lipstadt commissioned reports from some of the world's foremost Holocaust historians, who testified that the evidence of gas chambers at Auschwitz is overwhelming and irrefutable.

The judge sided with Lipstadt, ruling that it is "incontrovertible that Irving qualifies as a Holocaust denier." He said the historian is clearly an expert on World War II military history but had misinterpreted and mistranslated documents or omitted parts of documents, presenting Hitler in "an unwarrantedly favorable light."

Irving admitted that the ruling could not have been worse.

Later, greeted with a standing ovation, he reminded listeners that U.S. donors are exempt from attempts by Lipstadt's lawyers to pursue Irving's supporters to help pay court costs. The judge has given the historian until next month to pay the first \$22,388 of a total of nearly \$1.5 million in court costs.

Despite the judge's unfavorable ruling, Irving said there were several grounds on which the appeals court might overrule the high court and hear an appeal, but he declined to discuss them publicly.