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Deniers Denied: The Rise and Fall of David Irving and its Effects on Holocaust Memory

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Every action in the world has an equal and opposite reaction. Perhaps the horror of the discovery of the Holocaust thus prompted early denials of its existence. However, nothing justifies such a reaction, for this trend has become a modern form of antisemitism. Holocaust denial (as I will refer to it henceforth) has been a damaging movement that has the potential to eventually change the face of the memory of the Holocaust, and perhaps even dramatically lessen its significance to the point where people no longer take it seriously. Through manipulation of reality, the distortion of facts, and the ignorance of concrete evidence and remains, Holocaust deniers have perpetuated a destructive lie for about half a century now. Appealing to our sense of objectivity, deniers twist reality, masking non-fact as fact to create a seemingly legitimate scholarly position out of a view that has no basis in fact.

Holocaust denial thus should not hold any position as a legitimate scholarly field because to do so automatically demeans and essentially denies the Holocaust; there cannot be a debate between Holocaust deniers and Holocaust historians because there is no common ground from which to argue. The David Irving trial served to reveal to the public the flaws in the Holocaust denial movement and showed that it is not a field worthy of scholarly debate. Whereas factual Holocaust trials, such as the Eichmann trial of 1961 or the Auschwitz/Frankfurt trial of 1964, focused public attention on the Holocaust as a historical event, trials such as that of David Irving and other Holocaust deniers have and will continue to serve the purpose of protecting and revitalizing the memory of the Holocaust and its implications in the future as these trials deconstruct the

arguments of deniers and prove that such arguments are flawed and have no logical ground on which to stand.

II. Background: History of the Holocaust

In January of 1933, President of Germany Paul von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi party, chancellor of Germany's Weimar Republic in order to end months of gridlock in the Reichstag (German parliament). He was handed power by people who erroneously believed that they could control him, and this handover of power set Germany on the road toward Hitler's "Final Solution." After only six months, Hitler had manipulated the German Reichstag into dissolving itself in the name of national security, giving Hitler the power to dictate law without going through the Reichstag for approval. Hitler began by persecuting mainly Communists, who he had accused for starting the Reichstag fire (which had provided him with the opportunity to achieve the dissolution of the Reichstag), but he also persecuted socialists and Jews, arresting tens of thousands overall. The Nazis opened the first concentration camp, Dachau, in March of 1933.

Organized persecution of the Jews as a group began on April 1, 1933 with the Nazi-planned national boycott of Jewish businesses. Germans were encouraged not to shop at Jewish-owned businesses that day, and Jews were harassed and beaten in the streets. However, the boycott was not very successful as many Germans felt that it was a disruption to their daily lives. The boycott also received much international criticism, and people around the world protested against it. Shortly following the failed boycott, the Nazis began implementing a slew of antisemitic legislation aimed at isolating German Jewry. These laws included the April 7 Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil

Service, which demanded the removal of all Jews from government employment. The Nazis limited Jewish children in attending German schools and universities and banned Jews from practicing in the fields of journalism, art, literature, music, broadcasting, theater, and farming. In June, the government declared the Nazi Party the only legal party, making political opposition punishable by law.

In August of 1934, President von Hindenburg died, allowing Hitler to declare himself fuehrer of Germany and commander-in-chief of the German army, whom he forced to pledge loyalty to him. Hitler began increasing the severity of persecution and in September of 1935 began enacting the Nuremberg Laws, which dictated, among other things, that Jews could not be German citizens, nor could they marry non-Jews. These laws also defined a Jew to be one with three or more Jewish grandparents or one who has two Jewish grandparents and is a member of the Jewish religious community; and defined mischlinge, or "mixed blood", as those who have less than two Jewish grandparents, or have two Jewish grandparents but are not members of the Jewish religious community. Mischlinge had fewer restrictions than Jews, but were restricted nonetheless.

The Nazis began the imposition of a twenty-five percent tax on all Jewish assets in Germany in September of 1936. They later forced Jews to give up their businesses in the spring of 1937. In March of 1938 the Nazis made these and all other antisemitic legislation applicable in Austria after the German army invaded and annexed it in what is known as the Anschluss. The government also stopped recognizing Jewish community organizations during this time. In April of 1938 the government issued a decree for the seizure of Jewish assets. All Jews had to register assets exceeding five thousand marks

with the government so it could be expropriated to gentiles during the Aryanization process, which was the process to cleanse society of "un-Aryan" or un-German elements. Both Jewish doctors and lawyers lost their right to practice their respective trades in 1938; doctors in June, lawyers in September. In October of that year, the German army occupied the Czech Sudetenland, while the government recalled Jewish passports in German territories and marked them each with a large J in order to prevent Jews from smuggling themselves into Switzerland.

On the night of November 9, the Nazis began what came to be known as Kristallnacht, or "Night of Broken Glass." During this time, the Nazis looted and destroyed Jewish homes and businesses, desecrated synagogues and burned many of them to the ground, and arrested tens of thousands of Jewish men, sending many to concentration camps. On November 12, the government announced that the Jewish community would be held responsible for the cost of repairs of the property damaged during Kristallnacht, and that the community would be fined as well. The government also decided on a decree at this time removing Jews from all aspects of German society. In December the government announced that all Jewish industries, shops, and businesses would be forcibly "Aryanized."

As the Nazis prepared for their invasion of Poland, rations went into effect, and ration cards for Jews restricted cardholders to adjet of 300 to 400 calories per day. In September and October of 1939, after the invasion of Poland had begun, the SS Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads) murdered Polish Jews, burned down synagogues, and set up ghettos in German-occupied Poland. The extremely poor living conditions in the ghettos combined with eventual overpopulation would lead to the starvation and death of many Jews. The Nazis then began "resettling" Jews from Greater Germany (Germanoccupied areas from western Poland west toward Germany), to areas in Eastern Europe as part of their policy of "lebensraum," which was meant to create more "living space" for Aryans. In November, the Nazi government began forcing Jews to wear identifying badges marked with the Star of David.

In 1940, the Nazis set up Euthanasia centers for the murder of Jews, the mentally and/or physically ill, the elderly, and the handicapped. In May, Nazi officials opened the concentration camp of Auschwitz in Poland. The Nazis would eventually turn it into an extermination camp; the Nazis established all six of the extermination camps they would later set up in Poland. In November, the Nazis officially declared the existence of the Warsaw Ghetto and sealed it off from the rest of the city. As unbelievable as it may seem, the situation worsened for Jews and other targets of the Nazi regime in 1941, which signaled the beginning of the implementation of the "Final Solution" to the "Jewish Question." Auschwitz was chosen to be the camp that would carry out the greater part of the extermination of the Jews. The Einsatzgruppen began killing Jews on the spot all across the Soviet Union after the Germans invaded it. The killing methods of the Einsatzgruppen included mass shootings and murder by mobile gassing vans. The Nazis then began rounding up and murdering Jews in other areas of Eastern Europe. In August the transportation of Jews to transit camps began; their ultimate destination would later be an extermination camp, most often Auschwitz-Birkenau. In September, Christian-German protests forced Hitler to suspend his program of euthanasia, but he exported the program to the concentration and extermination camps. The deportation of German Jews to ghettos and concentration camps began at this time as well. In

December, the first extermination camp, in Chelmno, began operating, exterminating Jews using gas-vans.

In January of 1942, Reinhardt Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Main Office, orchestrated the Wannsee Conference, during which time he and other high-ranking Nazi officials, including Adolf Eichmann, established the plans for the "Final Solution." Topics of discussion included the number of European Jews yet to be exterminated, the future increased use of slave labor, and the extermination process. This month also marked the beginning of operations of the extermination camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, using Zyklon B in gas chambers to murder its victims, as well as at the extermination camp at Belzec, which used an armored-car diesel engine to supply its gas chambers with gas. On January 30, Hitler announced in a public speech his goal of completely annihilating the Jews.

Mass gassings at Auschwitz-Birkenau began in February of 1942. The Nazis began deporting those in the ghettos who had not already starved to death to extermination camps in early 1942, necessitating the construction of new extermination camps. Thus, in March of 1942 construction of a new camp at Sebibor began, and full-scale extermination began at the extermination camp at Belzec. The Nazis first began deporting the Jews of Western Europe to extermination camps during this time. In May, the extermination camp at Sobibor began operating; it was immediately put to use as a site of full-scale extermination by gassing. At Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazis began forcing those healthy enough to work into slave labor at both the camp itself and at the Buna factory in nearby Monowitz, while others at the camp, many women, became subjects of medical experiments. In July, the new extermination camps at Treblinka and

Majdanek began full-scale operation. By the end of the year, the Nazis had deported more than two million Jews to extermination camps and hundreds of thousands more had been murdered by the Einsatzgruppen.

As the Nazis continued to deport Jews to their deaths in 1943, they met with considerably more resistance. Throughout the ghettos, concentration camps, and extermination camps, resistance groups formed and organized several resistance movements, notably in the Warsaw Ghetto and at Treblinka, Auschwitz, Sobibor, and Majdanek. At the same time, the Allies were slowly gaining ground and Nazi officials feared that they would discover the horror of what they had done, thus causing Heinrich Himmler and other high-ranking officials, under orders of Hitler, to initiate the process of cremating formerly buried corpses. This need to cover up what the Nazi regime had been doing combined with the growing number of revolts in the extermination camps led Himmler to order the closing and destruction of Sobibor, Treblinka, and Belzec toward the end of the year. In early 1944, the Nazis began liquidating the ghettos and concentration camps in Eastern Europe, moving inmates west, many to Auschwitz, as the Soviets approached from the east. At this time, Hitler ordered the destruction of all camp documents and corpses. In March, the Nazis evacuated Majdanek as Soviet troops approached, transporting ill prisoners to Auschwitz and gassing them. As the Soviets continued to gain ground, the Nazis began moving inmates from concentration camps in Eastern Poland to concentration camps farther west, such as Dachau and Bergen-Belsen in Germany. In March, the Nazis initiated the first death marches of prisoners from Auschwitz to concentration camps in Germany and burned documents related to prisoners and their fates.

In November of 1944, the Nazis began dismantling and destroying the gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz. In early 1945, after a number of revolts and the destruction of the camp's crematoria, SS officers abandoned Chelmno, killing many of the surviving inmates of the camp before fleeing west from the advancing Soviets. The SS, acting on orders from Berlin, began a massive death march of the remaining able inmates at Auschwitz during this time as well; many of the thousands of inmates on these marches would die before reaching their destinations in the west. On January 27, Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz, finding only 7,000 living inmates. By the end of May, the Allies had liberated the remaining ghettos, concentration camps, and death camps and Germany had signed an unconditional surrender. Upon liberating the camps, the Allies found few survivors compared with the number of people who had been imprisoned by the Nazi regime. An estimated five- to six-million Jews lost their lives during the reign of the Nazis; the Nazis and their policies claimed the lives of about eleven million people overall (see Figures 1 - 4).

III. Background: History of the Holocaust Denial Movement and What Makes it Possible

David Irving is certainly not the first person to deny the Holocaust; he is one in a growing line of individuals who warp and manipulate the truth to forward their desired rendition of "history." The movement can be traced back to an individual named Harry Elmer Barnes, who gained prominence through the revision of World War I history, arguing that the Germans were not solely responsible for the war and that they in fact had not truly wanted to go to war in the first place. The arguments of the World War I revisionist movement, however, were "quite sound," as pointed out by Deborah Lipstadt in her work *Denying the Holocaust*; the arguments addressed real concerns about and the

lack of information on certain parts of the history of World War I without negating the events of it. Barnes was the only of the World War I revisionists who made the jump to Holocaust denial, or Holocaust "revisionism" as deniers prefer to call it, when addressing World War II (Lipstadt¹ 33-34). Barnes continued in the tradition of the World War I revisionist movement by arguing that Allied atrocities far outweighed that of German atrocities, thus attempting to relieve Germany from some, if not all, of the blame placed upon her by the Allies.

However, Holocaust denial did not stop at this claim. The movement continued with "the first influential Holocaust 'revisionist,'...the French socialist Paul Rassinier," who himself was a victim of Nazi concentration camps, but who discounted survivor accounts, saying that they were in fact lying (Shermer 41). Rassinier further argued that since survivor accounts could not be trusted, that therefore estimates of the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust could not be trusted as well. Rassinier was joined in his claims by another Frenchman, Robert Faurisson, who, among others, was labeled by Pierre Vidal-Naguet as an "assassin of memory" in his 1987 essavof the same name (Vidal-Naquet 111). Faurisson continued in the path of the cenial movement by arguing that there were in fact no gas chambers.

Two influential American counterparts, both professors at American universities, joined Faurisson and Rassinier in their promotion of the Holocaust denial movement. Austin J. App furthered the movement by arguing that the Nazis did not want to systematically exterminate the Jews, but rather simply wanted to resettle Jews as a means of removing them from German society, using the initial premise of Nazi policy as proof

while intentionally overlooking the events of 1941 onward. He furthermore "blamed American intervention in the war on 'Zionists and Talmudists,' who had unjustly railed against Hitler, and denounced accounts of German atrocities as a Jewish fabrication" (Perry 183). Arthur Butz departed from the methods of App and other deniers by rejecting the antisemitic claims against Jews so prevalent in other deniers' arguments, thus making him arguably more influential than the deniers preceding him. However, these differences were only superficial; Butz was making the very same arguments only worded slightly differently. Butz was characterized by Lipstadt as the denier who began the movement to mainstream the Holocaust (Lipstadt¹ 125). He began the movement to transform Holocaust denial into a "scholarly" field, which eventually led to the creation of the Institute for Historical Review, which masks holocaust denial as a scholarly review of history. In reality, the Institute for Historical Review produces very little more than antisemitic propaganda and hate speech.

These five Holocaust deniers, along with help from numerous other minor denier figures, set the stage for the arguments of the Holocaust denial movement. Through their "works," four basic, common beliefs were formulated as the basis for all deniers:

"a) The number of Jews killed by the Nazis was far less than six 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. b) Gas chambers were not used to kill large numbers of Jews at any time. c) Neither Hitler nor the Nazi leadership in general had a program of exterminating Europe's Jews; all they wished to do was deport them to Eastern Europe. d) 'The Holocaust' was a myth invented by Allied propaganda during the war and sustained since then by Jews who wished to use it to gain political and financial

support for the state of Israel or for themselves. The supposed evidence for the Nazis' wartime mass murder of millions of Jews by gassing and other means was fabricated after the war" (Evans 110).

These beliefs appear in the arguments of every Holocaust denier. The deniers defend these basic points, as well as many others, by playing on our susceptibility to objectivity. As James Najarian has noted, "the Holocaust deniers are simply antisemites who have learned the value of rhetorical modernism, and use the strategies of academic prose in order to deny the Holocaust" (Najarian 2). In today's society, scholarly works tend to follow a model that calls for the acknowledgment of "all sides of the story." Holocaust deniers know this and use it to their advantage. There is of course one problem with deniers' use of this societal reality – the Holocaust as an event does not have two sides as deniers claim; if one accepts that Holocaust deniers can justifiably claim to hold legitimate views, one is in essence directly denying the Holocaust. The Holocaust is not in question, but many events within it have not yet been examined satisfactorily. Deniers take the multiple sides of the Holocaust thereby created as fact and recast them into either/or form, when it is not a question of either one event or the other, but of how the events fit together. Because deniers guard their arguments under the guise that they are just trying to shed light on the "other side," and we solely attempting to find out what truly happened, we are inclined to give credit to their arguments due to our inclination to be objective.

Starting from this unjustly credited base, Holocaust deniers proceed to misquote and manipulate documents to "prove" their positions, create facts when they cannot find ones which will promote their arguments, completely ignore documents which directly go

against their arguments, and take the euphemistic language of Nazi documents at its face in order to prove their belief that the Holocaust never happened. Behind arguably all deniers' claims is antisemitism and hatred, thus categorizing their work in many individuals' minds as hate speech promoting discrimination, prejudice, and potentially violence. Beyond promoting such things, these arguments "have the potential to alter dramatically the way established truth is transmitted from generation to generation," and "pose a threat to all who believe that knowledge and memory are among the keystones of our civilization" (Lipstadt 19-20). The implications of such arguments on future memory of the Holocaust are potentially disastrous and are capable of eliminating all lessons that can and should be learned from it.

IV. Background: David Irving Pre-Holocaust Denial

So where does David Irving stand in this equation? It is first necessary to understand how and when David Irving became a Holocaust denier, and the events that led to his becoming one. David Irving, prior to his libel suit against historian and Professor of Jewish Studies Deborah Lipstadt, was an acknowledged scholar in German history and the history of the Third Reich. He had published numerous works that, while not completely uncontroversial, were seen as worthy cholarly endeavors. However, he was never educated as a historian. He "never head a post in a university history department or any other academic institution...he had started a science degree at London University but never finished it" (Evans 5). While this obviously does not automatically discredit his work, it has seemed to have an effect on his methods of interpreting historical documents and his usage of them.

Indeed, reviews of Irving's works suggest respect for an accomplished researcher. *Apocalypse 1945: The Destruction of Dresden* was Irving's first, and arguably most successful, "historical" work. At the time of its publication in 1963, the British public was already beginning to question the actions of the British and allied militaries in bombings such as that of Dresden; thus, the work was quite successful among the British public and soon became an international bestseller. While scholars criticized Irving's estimates for casualties of the fire-bombing of the city, *The Destruction of Dresden* was considered an overall legitimate scholarly work and seen as a huge contribution to historical scholarship on World War II; it was "hailed worldwide for its in-depth research and analysis" (Burns 1).

In 1965, Irving published another work, *The Mare's Nest*, which focused on the German secret weapons program during World War II with specific emphasis on rocketry. In a 1967 book review in the journal *Technology and Culture*, Clarence G. Lasby noted that Irving "has contributed a mass of new material from official British documents, the Peenemuende archives, and the private papers and extensive comments of many participants" (Lasby 429) and that his "prodigious research, his meticulous attention to accuracy, his remarkable clarity in explaining technical developments, and his judicious evaluations are combined in what was a truly exceptional book" (Lasby 431). Very little criticism followed the publication of the work, and it was accepted with little question as legitimate.

In 1967, *The Virus House*, about the Nazi nuclear program, was published, causing one reviewer, John V. Flynn, in a 1968 book review in *Technology and Culture*

to state that "while the research is impressive and the style interesting, this book has two serious faults: the absence of footnote citations will make following up Irving's work much more difficult, and the descriptions of scientific principles and technical processes are sometimes unclear" (Flynn 245). Flynn's criticism foreshadows Irving's later failures to adequately cite the sources with which he worked as well as his penchant for manipulating and misusing sources, however, Flynn ends by crediting the work as "a more detailed insight into the German nuclear project than has hitherto been available, and this outweighs the faults" (Flynn 245). The work itself was thus seen as a beneficial addition to historical scholarship despite inconsistencies and flaws in his argumentation. In a review in the journal *Isis*, Francis Duncan called the work "an exciting reading which leaves an impression of lost opportunities, bungling, and indecisiveness" (Duncan 462). While Duncan points out that parts of the work are questionable, for example saying that "the troubling aspect is that Irving has not proved his assumption that Germany possessed the manpower and skills needed to build an atomic bomb during the war," he overall concludes that the work "contains matter not otherwise accessible". [but] when he turns to personalities and motives, he is less convincing" (Duncar 463). Scholars felt that the dearth of scholarship his research produced outweighth his failure to prove his theses; thus the work was viewed as respectable.

David Irving first found himself in trouble this same year with the publication of *The Destruction of Convoy PQ17*, about the 1942 doomed voyage of Arctic convoy PQ17 that was traveling to the Soviet Union, which blamed the commander of the convoy and his conduct for the destruction of the ship. The commander of the convoy sued Irving for

libel, eventually winning the case. This work seems to be the first of Irving's to incite questioning of its legitimacy; many of Irving's works following *Convoy PQ17* found their legitimacy called into question, leading scholars to return to Irving's works pre
Convoy PQ17 to check the sources he had used to prove his claims.

The controversy over *The Destruction of Convoy PQ17* seems to have caused Irving to take a short break from publishing any new works (save a book he co-wrote with a professor called *Breach of Security*); whether or not this short break was by choice is not apparent. When he returned to the literary scene, he began to focus on biographical works. *Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe* was published in 1973, and met with positive response. In a 1975 review in *The Historical Journal*, R.J. Overy remarked that while "the revelations are not startling...[and] they simply provide a large amount of new evidence,...Irving's biography of Erhard Milch must rank as a major contribution not only because it makes use of hitherto unused archival material but because it helps to give a solidly documented background to some major aspects of the military and political history of Nazi Germany" (Overy 903). The work was very subdued, though sometimes short on references, and Irving seems to have been attempting to prevent the kind of controversy he faced with *Destruction of Convoy PQL*.

However, the legitimacy of Irving's work was soon called into question once more with the publication of *Hitler's War* in 1977. That year in *The American Historical Review*, Dennis E. Showalter commented that "Irving's work can be criticized on two levels…he overlooks, instead of refuting…[and] the general thrust of [his] work contradicts his interpretation of the Final Solution;" and that the work "is too clever by

half, and certainly too clever to be sound history" (Showalter 1281). It was in this work that Irving began more blatantly misusing and abusing critical sources; he claims in this work that Hitler had no knowledge of the "Final Solution" while it was being carried out, and this thesis was, according to at least one reviewer, as "the most controversial aspect of the book" (Bramsted 317). Scholars rejected a number of his claims, but Irving still received praise once again for providing the scholarly world with previously unavailable documents and interviews. Some joined Irving in his claims, arguing that while the Holocaust had in fact happened, evidence suggested that Hitler never ordered any of the horrors of the Holocaust, and that therefore it was perpetrated unbeknownst to him by other high-ranking Nazi officials such as Heinrich Himmler, but perpetrated nonetheless.

Irving's misuse and distortion of sources was once again flagged after the publication of *The Trial of the Fox*, a biography of Erwin Rommel, in 1977. While scholars once again commended Irving on his discovery of a wealth of sources, which reviewer Harold C. Deutsch identified in 1977 as giving the work "a certain definitive character" (Deutsch 758), they criticized him on his manipulation and misuse of sources and evidence, on contradictions within the work, and even complete fabrication of "facts." In his 1979 commentary of the work, Fredrick Ruge, who was a member of Rommel's staff from November 1943 to August 1944, remarked that "Irving can write and he is good at details, but he adjusts the facts to his preconceived ideas" (Ruge 158). Ruge also identified fabrications and contradictions within the work.

Irving's 1978 work *The War Path* was overwhelmingly perceived as an extension of his objectives in writing *Hitler's War*, and thus faced similar criticisms. While Irving

was once again applauded for uncovering a plethora of new evidence, the majority of scholars criticized him for his misuse and disregard of important sources. Robert G.L. Waite stated in a 1979 review that while "[Irving] must be given credit for ferreting out these sources...less credit is due for the way he uses his own documents and dismisses evidence of proven validity that refutes his contentions," and that from this work "little is added to our knowledge – and nothing to our understanding – of Hitler's foreign policy" (Waite 1083). Other scholars give credit to the quality of writing from a technical point of view, but once again return to Irving's skewed factual evidence, such as John P. Fox, who remarked in *International Affairs* in 1979 that while *The War Path* is "a well-written book...[and] although Irving is to be congratulated for putting into English much documentary material hitherto only available in German publications and archives,...the glaring omissions of other 'published literature' and comparison with the wealth of scholarly debate and material...show that Irving is simply not in the mainstream of the current Hitler Forschung [research]" (Fox 260) and that some statements in the work "make one wonder whether Irving has any deep understanding of his subject at all" (Fox 261). Thus, it seems that as Irving added to his scholarship repertoire, the blatancy of his manipulation and misuse of sources increased, accompanied by a somewhat directly proportional increase in the questioning of the legitimacy of Irving's works. However, while Irving remained a controversial and disputed historian, many nonetheless continued to consider him a legitimate scholar.

Irving took his first steps into bona fide Holocaust denial with his 1977 work

Hitler's War, claiming that Heinrich Himmler carried out the Holocaust unbeknownst to

Hitler. Historians who were learned in the subject criticized the work, pointing out the errors and "facts" which were simply false. So began a long line of works in which Irving manipulated, misquoted, and falsified history to suit his needs, as well as the movement within the scholarly world to reassess Irving's previous works and the validity of the claims made within them. However, because of his previously gained reputation as a reputable scholar, individuals who were not learned in the subjects on which Irving wrote were inclined to believe his claims as another "perspective" on history.

V. Head-First into Holocaust Denial: Irving, the Trial of Ernst Zundel, and Accusations from the Academic World

It seems that Irving became a full-fledged Holocaust denier in the late 1980's after his role in the trial of Canadian-German Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel. Zundel was charged with publishing statements considered hate-speech that he knew to be false, which is a crime in Canada. Irving was permitted to testify during this trial as an expert on the history of World War II. While on the stand, he denied that Hitler had planned, executed, or even knew of the Final Solution, and denied that about six million Jews lost their lives in the Holocaust, arguing that "it must have been of the order of 100,000 or more, but to [his] mind it was certainly less than" six million (Kulaszka 758). He also argued that there was never an order for the extermination of Jews (and that therefore Jews were not exterminated by the Nazis), but that there were failed plans to deport them to other places in the world. It is true that no one has ever found an official order from Hitler for the extermination of the Jews, and the Nazis had also formulated several unexecuted plans for the deportation of the Jews to other places in the world. However,

we have found enough additional proof (which Irving ignores) to suggest that Hitler did order the extermination of Jews and that the Nazis followed through with that order; one cannot claim that lack of an order and the unexecuted deportation plans prove that no extermination order existed, as that would ignore the wealth of evidence gathered from the events of 1941 onward. Irving furthermore judged the Leuchter Report, the report by Fred Leuchter which investigated the death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau and found that Zyklon B gas could not have been used to gas people there according to evidence, to be a sound report worthy of attention from scholars and historians. During the Zundel trial, the court found the report inadmissible, ruling that Leuchter did not possess the qualifications of an expert in the relevant technical and scientific fields.

During the trial, Irving was quoted as saying "My mind has now changed because I understand that the whole of the Holocaust mythology is, after all, open to doubt" (Evans 114). He began to deny the existence of the gas chambers, to deny that the number of Jews killed reached anywhere near six million, and to deny that there was a systematic plan to exterminate the Jews, much as did the Holocaust deniers who preceded him. However, as several scholars who have approached the issue of Holocaust denial have pointed out, Irving is a far greater threat to the premory of the Holocaust and to history itself because he had previously been a respected historian who had received good reviews from renowned scholars on several of his works prior to his descent into Holocaust denial.

However, Irving was able to land in the spotlight through the controversy caused by his increasing denial of the Holocaust. His works and accusations landed him into a

number of legal battles with military officials, journalists, and other individuals, and "as a result of these provocative books and legal entanglements, Irving gained, within a decade, a certain notoriety" (Lipstadt² 19). He attempted to use these moments in the media spotlight as a public stage to promote his negationist arguments. Some believe that his attempts show that in publicizing trials against Holocaust denial, one is providing deniers a platform from which to espouse their views and gain a greater base for their movement.

It seems indisputable that Irving is in fact a denier of the Holocaust. However, when Deborah Lipstadt made such accusations against him in her work *Denying the Holocaust*, Irving responded by suing her for libel, arguing that her identification of him as "one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial," (Lipstadt¹ 181) among other things, was completely false and extremely damaging to his reputation as a creditable historian. By claiming his reputation was compromised, Irving actually sought a chance to further his denial theses. His works and commentary suggest the veracity of Lipstadt's accusations.

Irving clearly adheres to the four arguments that create the basis for all denial claims. Irving has repeatedly claimed that that nowhere near six million Jews perished in the Holocaust, one of the main arguments of Holocaust deniers. His statements in the Ernst Zundel trial support this conclusion, as he said, "I am not familiar with any documentary evidence of any such figure as six million...it must have been of the order of 100,000 or more, but to my mind it was certainly less than the figure which is quoted nowadays of six million" (Evans 115). Irving always criticized the number of six

million, which scholars have agreed is slightly high and now stands as more of a symbolic number than an actual figure; we now estimate the number of Jews who perished in the Holocaust to be in the mid-five millions. The six-million figure was derived from the initial findings of the liberation efforts, and thus were slightly higher than the actual figure due to the initial shock of liberating the camps and a lack of documentary evidence, which had been destroyed by the Nazis' in their attempt to hide what they had done from the Allies. During the Zundel trial, Irving went farther than he had before and began arguing that far fewer people lost their lives to the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Irving has also argued that gas chambers were not used to exterminate large numbers of Jews. In a speech he made in 1991, Irving stated that "more women died in the backseat of Edward Kennedy's car at Chappaquiddick than ever died in a gas chamber in Auschwitz" (Lipstadt² 84), and furthermore said in another speech in 1991 that "Until 1988 [he] believed that there had been something like the Holocaust. [He] believed that millions of people had been killed in factories of death. [He] believed in the gas chamber. [He] believed in all the paraphernalia of the modern Holocaust, but in 1988, when [he] gave evidence in the trial of Ernst Zundel, [he] met people who knew differently and could prove to [him] that the story was just a legend" (Lipstadt² 99-100). Irving blatantly denied the existence of the gas chambers and the use of Auschwitz as an industrial killing center on multiple occasions.

Irving also claims not only that there was no order signed by Hitler calling for the extermination of the Jews (proving in his mind that Hitler had not authorized such

extermination), but also denies that the Nazis had formulated a program of the systematic murder of Jews. His constant offer to reward one thousand dollars to the person who can produce a document proving that Hitler in fact planned and/or authorized such a program, and other statements in which he "argued that Jews were not systematically slaughtered in accordance with the policy and directives of the Third Reich but were unfortunate victims of diseases that ravaged the concentration camps or were killed by SS units acting on their own accord and not carrying out orders from Berlin" (Perry 185) suggest he believes the aforementioned claims. Once again, while no order signed by Hitler ordering the extermination of the Jews has been found, we have found enough additional evidence to suggest that Hitler did order the extermination of Jews and that the Nazis followed through with that order; to argue otherwise would require one to ignore the wealth of evidence gathered from the events of 1941 onward.

Lastly, Irving has denied the validity of survivor accounts, arguing that the survivors fabricated the accounts in order to receive monetary gain, that "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 on 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 'undesireables,'" and that "the Jews had used the Holocaust story to win reparations from the Germans" (Evans 134-5). He has made many such statements claiming that the Jews and Allies had fabricated the Holocaust; however, he has not been able to provide much evidence for those claims.

For example, with regard to the existence of the British Psychological Warfare Executive, the only work written on the British Psychological Warfare Executive was published in 2002 by David Garnett, who supposedly based his work on secret material that had been recently declassified by the British government. However, Garnett died in 1981, over twenty years before he supposedly published the work in question, and the work was published by the University of California Press, an antisemitic and prejudiced publisher under the guise of a respectable university press never before used by Garnett. The evidence thus suggests that the work is not legitimate and that the "British Black Propaganda" claim touted here by Irving has little credence.

It would be these and similar arguments that Lipstadt and the prosecution would have to prove in the courts of England in order to fend off Irving's charge of libel – in the English court system, the defense must prove that the statements in question are in fact true, as opposed to in the United States, where the plaintiff would have to prove that the statements were false. Thus, Irving's suit against Lipstadt became a case to defend the history of the Holocaust and prove the falsity of the claims of Irving and his fellow VI. The Irving Trial: A Background deniers.

On Tuesday, January 11, 2000, the case of David Iving v. Penguin Books Ltd began. David Irving was suing Deborah Lipstadt, through her publisher Penguin Books, for libel, claiming that her work Denying the Holocaust, in which she accused David Irving of being a Holocaust denier, was false and thus libelous. The case identified the publishing company as the defendant because libel is the defamation of character through the printed word, thus making the publishing company the necessary target for Irving's

suit. Representing himself, Irving began with his opening statement, saying among other things that "the Defendants must show, in my humble submission, first that a particular thing happened or existed; second that I was aware of that particular thing as it happened or existed, at the time that I wrote about it from the records then before me; third, that I then wilfully manipulated the text or mistranslated or distorted it for the purposes that they imply. I will submit that in no instance can they prove this to be the case. They have certainly not done so in the documents so far pleaded." (*Irving v. Penguin*, 33). After Irving's lengthy statement, which filled over eighty pages, Richard Rampton, representing Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt, followed with his comparatively short ten-page opening statement, in which he argued that

"the essence of the case is Mr Irving's honesty and integrity of as a chronicler -- I shy away from the word "historian" -- of these matters, for if it be right that Mr Irving, driven by his extremist views and sympathies, has devoted his energies to the deliberate falsification of this tragic episode in history, then by exposing that dangerous fraud in this court the Defendants may properly be applauded for having performed a significant public service not just in this country, but in all those places in the world where anti-Semitism is waiting to be fed" (*Irving v. Penguin*, 100).

The parties decided to split the trial into two basic parts such that the issue of Auschwitz was dealt with separately from the other aspects of what one could call Irving's denial or, as he would put it, "revisionism." The court first dealt with the latter, as Robert Jan Van Pelt, an expert witness on Auschwitz, would not arrive in England for about two weeks. Irving took the stand as witness, during which time the cross-examination revealed Irving's change of characterization of the death camps in his original and subsequent versions of *Hitler's War*. Mr. Rampton pointed out that "in [Irving's] 1977 edition, Auschwitz was characterised, I am not quoting, I am

paraphrasing, as one of the extermination camps," but that "In the 1991 edition, it had become, am I not right, merely a slave labour camp?" Irving responded in the affirmative, sans the term 'merely' (*Irving v. Penguin*, 221). This cross-examination further probed into Irving's descent into Holocaust denial, including the Leuchter Report and its importance in Irving's denial of the existence of gas chambers, as well as Irving's views on whether Hitler had ordered and/or planned the extermination of the Jews. During this time, Rampton made sure to point out the inconsistencies in Irving's works on these issues as a means of beginning to prove that Irving did in fact manipulate and misuse sources in defense of his arguments and positions.

Others to take the stand as witnesses included Deborah Lipstadt, as well as expert witnesses and historians Professor Christopher Browning, Professor Richard J. Evans, Dr. Peter Longerich, and Professor Robert Jan Van Pelt. The case quickly became a defense of history; in order to prove that Irving had misused and manipulated facts it was first necessary to show that the evidence to the contrary of his findings was in fact available, easily acquired, and substantial, thus inferring that his lack of having evidence to the contrary of his position was most likely due to his conscious disregard of available evidence in an attempt to more convincingly prove his arguments. This goal was met particularly through the use of the expert witnesses listed above, coupled with the evidence that Irving had consistently revised his views on various issues within his works as newer editions were revised and published.

The British Court found in favor of Lipstadt, who mounted a defense which successfully provided expert testimony to the existence of the gas chambers, the existence of a program of systematic extermination of the Jews, and the involvement of

Hitler in the formation and application of that program; it also provided expert documentation on Irving's neofascist, antisemitic, and racist views and association with groups which espoused such views and proved Lipstadt's contention that Irving had falsified history in his works. British Justice Gray "ruled that Irving was 'an active Holocaust denier, antisemitic and racist' who had 'distorted historical data to suit his own ideological agenda" (Pierce 1).

VII. Irving after the Trial

The outcome of the trial spelled disaster not only for Irving's career as a historian, but also for his entire life in general. As the losing party of the trial, Irving assumed the court costs and Lipstadt's attorney fees, along with his own, totaling about £two million or about \$four million. Irving attempted to pay off these debts, with the help of the Institute for Historical Review, by touring the United States, one of the few countries which still allow his entrance for the purpose of public speech-making. Unable to make the full payments, Irving had to declare bankruptcy, losing his London home and other possessions. He has been forbidden entry into Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the majority of European nations, including Germany, in which he was fined \$6,000 for denying the existence of the gas chambers at Auschwitz, and Austria, in which he was arrested in 1984 for hate speech. He has once again been placed under arrest in Austria for two speeches made in 1989. The United States is one of the only nations left in which Irving can freely deny the Holocaust, which is somewhat surprising given that he and many other antisemites both currently and throughout history have accused the United States of being controlled by the Jews (Hughley 5). In 2001, Irving was denied his bid for appeal against the ruling in his case against Lipstadt.

Irving followed his loss against Lipstadt by reaffirming his dedication to bringing a libel action against writer Gitta Sereny and the Observer. Sereny is a respected journalist and biographer of such figures as Franz Stangl, SS Commandant of Sobibor and Treblinka, and Albert Speer, a leading Nazi official and Adolf Hitler's architect. Irving claims that the statements Sereny made in the Observer in her 1996 article titled "Spin Time for Hitler" constitute libel. Sereny and the Observer have applied to have Irving's action struck down as many of the same issues were addressed and resolved in Irving's case against Lipstadt. Hostility between Sereny and Irving began after Irving's release of Hitler's War, a work which Sereny criticized. Sereny has been quoted as saying that Irving's continued pursuit of the case would "of course be a monumental waste of everyone's, particularly the court's, time and money," but according to a 2002 article in the Observer she is "aware that this has not stopped him in the past, and that his animosity towards her runs deep" (Adams 6). Thus it seems that Irving's suit against Sereny and the Observer will continue until either the Court strikes down the action or once again finds against Irving and denounces him once again as a manipulator of facts and a distorter of history.

In 2005, Irving found himself once again at the center of controversy when C-Span decided to show its coverage of a lecture by Lipstadt with coverage of a speech by Irving in which he stated that Hitler was not responsible for the mass murder of the Jews during the Holocaust during a BookTV program on Lipstadt's new work "History on Trial: My Day in Court with David Irving." As she has done in the past, Lipstadt refused to go on C-Span if Irving was at all involved, and historians petitioned C-Span to cancel the program. Lipstadt chooses not to appear to discuss the Holocaust on programs on

which Irving will appear because she feels it gives Irving's views undeserved legitimacy by treating them as valid viewpoints. When the episode of BookTV aired, coverage of both Irving and Lipstadt was not shown.

Soon after the C-Span controversy, Irving found himself in a prison in Austria. He was arrested on November 11, 2005 for speeches he made in Austria in 1989 in which he claimed that the gas chambers at Auschwitz never existed and that "seventy-four thousand died of natural causes in the work camps and the rest were hidden in reception camps after the war and later taken to Palestine, where they live today under new identities" (Boyes 3). At the time of the speeches, the Austrian public prosecutor issued an arrest warrant for Irving and the federal chancellor of Austria at the time, Franz Vranitzky, publicly warned Irving that were he ever to return to Austria, he would be immediately jailed. However, Irving failed to heed the warning and appeared in Vienna to address a radical right-wing Austrian fraternity in November of 2005. After being refused bail and spending Christmas in an Austrian jail, Irving pled guilty at the opening of his 20 February 2006 trial date. He argued that in the early 1990s he had come across recently declassified Soviet documents that suggested the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz and the mass killing of Jews at other death camps.

It seems unlikely that Irving's repentance is genuine. He claims that he found these "enlightening" documents in the early 1990's, meaning that if these documents did in fact change his view on the Holocaust, it would have been long before his libel suit against Deborah Lipstadt. Yet, during the libel trial, Irving repeatedly and vehemently argued that he had no evidence that convinced him of the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz. He continued to deny the existence of the death camps after the trial as well,

and continued to promote his views of denial throughout the 1990's and into the new millennium, being "a leading force behind organizing Holocaust 'revisionist' (my quotations) conferences in recent years" (Bloom 1). Even Holocaust deniers are skeptical of Irving's change of heart. It is more likely that Irving was trying to finagle a lesser punishment with his sudden epiphany on the existence of the death camps.

The Austrian court at which Irving was tried convicted him of denying the Holocaust and sentenced him to three years in prison. The prosecution, feeling that the sentence is too lenient given Irving's importance among right-wing extremists in Europe, has appealed the sentence. The defense has appealed the sentence as well, feeling that the sentence was too extreme. The case at this point is ongoing.

VIII. Affirming Holocaust Scholarship: The Evidence at Auschwitz-Birkenau

During his libel suit, Irving claimed most vehemently that the systematic killing of Jews in the gas chambers of Auschwitz had never occurred. However, there have been two major research projects undertaken investigating the forensic evidence at Auschwitz-Birkenau and a wealth of research has been completed by historians which, when taken together, more than adequately prove Auschwitz-Birkenau's status as a death camp.

Three major investigative research projects were executed by Jean-Claude Pressac (a former Holocaust denier), the team of Daniel Keren, Jamie McCarthy, and Harry W.

Mazal; and the historian Robert Jan van Peli. Keren's team's investigation is the "first attempt to employ computer vision techniques to analyze the crematorium photographs" and Paul Zucchi of Yolles Engineering in Toronto: "reviewed [Keren's and associates'] work on the holes, concluding that 'the authors present a strong and sustainable case that the openings [were installed] during the course of construction" (Keren 68 - 100). The

findings of these investigations leave little room for negationist arguments and thus should serve to disprove David Irving and his associates and further alienate them from the scholarly community. Their findings and arguments invalidate Irving's major claims against the existence of Auschwitz as a death camp: that the camp did not have enough coke necessary to incinerate the number of bodies that would be produced by the death camp, that there was not enough residue on the surface of the gas chamber walls from Zyklon B to indicate the levels necessary to kill humans, and that there is no evidence of holes in the gas chambers through which the Zyklon B was dropped.

First of all, there is ample evidence against the claim that the camp did not have enough coke necessary to incinerate the number of bodies that would be produced by the death camp. Irving contended that the amount of coke necessary to run a crematorium was too great for the camp to store. However, Irving used the amount of coke necessary under normal circumstances; according to evidence, "in twelve hours, Crematoria 2 and 3 were to use 4,200 kg coke each under normal circumstances, but when in constant use, this was to drop to 2,800 kg coke each" (van Pelt 122). Thus, far less coke would have been necessary and would therefore have been easily stored in the camp.

Irving's overestimation of the amount of coke necessary caused Irving also to overestimate the amount of coke necessary to incinerate one corpse. Far less coke is needed to incinerate a body than estimated by Irving and "according to Jahrling (civilian engineer at Auschwitz), on average one needs 3.5 kg coke to incinerate one corpse" (van Pelt 122). This estimation of average coke per corpse would be completely reasonable once the factor of reduced fuel consumption is taken into consideration. Documentation

further indicates that "coke delivery in 1943 was around 844 tons" and this would have allowed for the incineration of 241,000 bodies if one uses Jahrling's estimate for the amount of coke necessary to incinerate one body (van Pelt 122). This figure proves that the camp had sufficient coke to operate as an extermination facility because "according to...calculations based on transport lists, around 250,000 people died in Auschwitz in 1943" (van Pelt 122). The evidence thus shows that the camps were capable of exterminating the amount of people estimated to have died in the camps. Had Irving taken into consideration the reduced amount of coke necessary due to the nature of the instruments of death, he would have inevitably come to the same conclusions.

Irving also claims that, as proven by Fred Leuchter in his forensic investigation of the gas chambers, there was not enough residue on the bricks of the gas chamber walls to indicate that Zyklon B had been used to exterminate humans. However, Zyklon B residue was in fact found in the walls in early investigations and led forensic experts from the Cracow Institute for Forensic Research to believe that the gas chambers had been used to exterminate people (Keren 97). The experts had found numerous items in the chambers covered in residue. The experts then performed tests on these items and "toxicological analyses were carried out in 1945 on 4 complete plates and 2 damaged ventilation orifices found in the ruins of Krematorium II (see Figure 5). After scraping the white substance that covered these objects back to the metal, 7.2 grams of scrapings were collected and subjected to two qualitative analyses, which established the presence of cyanide compounds (Zyklon B)" (Pressac 233). From these findings, the Institute came to its conclusions about the homicidal usage of the gas chambers; significantly less

Zyklon B is necessary to kill a human than the amount necessary to fumigate and exterminate pests (Zyklon's common usage) and the residue present indicates that enough Zyklon was used in the chambers to exterminate humans.

Leuchter, however, contended that his forensic investigation proved otherwise. In his report, he "claimed that the low residue of cyanide in the brickwork of the gas chambers proved that they had not been used to kill people" (van Pelt 390). However, Leuchter had not followed protocol typical of trained forensic specialists, as he is not a true forensic specialist. His methods of recovering materials for testing were careless and unmethodical. As recounted by one of the scientists of the laboratory employed by Leuchter, "Leuchter presented [Alpha Laboratories] with rock samples anywhere from the size of your thumb up to half the size of your fist" and he had "hacked into the walls and took samples that included at least 1,000 layers of material that could not have reacted with the cyanide (Zyklon B)... [we don't] think that the Leuchter results had any meaning" (van Pelt 390). In order to take an accurate measurement that would have been applicable in determining the level of Zyklon used, Leuchter would have had to have been much more methodical in gathering samples. Had he limited the layers of material he collected so that only layers that could have reacted with the Zyklon were present, then his results would have been far more accurate and would have shown that the levels of Zyklon in the exposed walls was high enough to indicate that the chambers were used for extermination purposes.

The central argument presented by Irving and his fellow negationists is that there is no evidence of holes in the gas chambers through which the Zyklon B was dropped.

Those who promote this opinion argue that the holes cannot be found in the roofs of the gas chambers in its present state, and there is no documentation in the blueprints to suggest the holes existed, and that therefore there cannot possibly be holes. However, these people are overlooking and/or discrediting a wealth of evidence, much stronger than that for their own arguments, which suggests otherwise. The first set of evidence comes from the testimony of survivors, most notably former Sonderkommandos David Olere and Henryk Tauber and inmate Michael Kula. David Olere was a Sonderkommando of Crematorium III. Some of his drawings show Crematorium III both from the outside and inside (see Figures 6-9), and are consistent with photographs of the building taken during the operation of the camp, therefore lending credence to the accuracy of the drawings. His drawings show the chimneys, the actual burning of corpses, events taking place in an undressing room, and the gassing of inmates with Zyklon B. He also drew the floorplan of Crematorium II; the drawing is consistent with the conclusions reached from the investigation of the remains of the crematoria (see Figures 13 - 14).

Sonderkommando Henryk Tauber further added to the evidence with his testimony on the delivery of the Zyklon into the gas chambers. He described the wire mesh columns that were connected to the holes in the ceiling and allowed for the lowering of the Zyklon B, in mesh containers, into the chamber (van Pelt 191- 197). As they have done to numerous other witnesses, the negatists attempted to discredit Tauber. However, they could not do so as Tauber's testimony can be corroborated and there is virtually no evidence to suggest that Tauber is lying (van Pelt 204). Michael Kula, an

inmate at the camp, also described these wire mesh containers (van Pelt 207).

Negationists argue that the wire mesh containers and columns cannot be found, and that therefore they never existed and the survivors are thus lying.

However, documentation proves that these wire mesh containers and columns did exist, as "wire mesh introduction devices ("drahtnetzeinschiebvorrichtung[en]") are listed in the crematorium's inventory" (Keren 69). "Drahtnetzeinschiebvorrichtung[en]" refers to "the heavy mesh columns into which the Zyklon B was poured in the form of pellets, the top of which, outside the roof, were closed by wooden covers. This proves formally that Leichenkeller 1 of Krematorium II was filled out as a gas chamber using Zyklon B" (Pressac 231). Both Pressac and the team of Keren found in their investigation that the wire mesh introduction devices could not have had any other purpose than introducing Zyklon B into the gas chambers, and therefore upon finding evidence of their existence concluded that these devices were used in such a way.

Furthermore, evidence shows that the holes were planned for and constructed during the actual construction of the roofs of the crematoria, and not after the roofs had already been completed. Van Pelt examined the blueprints of the crematoria and found that "in the case of Crematorium 4, the 'holes' measuring 30 by 40 centimeters were clearly marked in the blueprints" (van Pelt 459). More evidence is found in the construction of the roofs. The roof are "reinforced with crisscrossed steel rods known as rebar in the construction trade...[pictures of the roof show that] the ends of the rebar are hooked around perpendicular rebar to form a square aperture," indicating that the holes were created "when the concrete roof was originally poured in 1943" (Keren 74).

Therefore, the holes were both planned for and constructed during the original construction of the roofs. Further examination of the roofs leads to more conclusive evidence of the holes as a part of the original construction. The holes have "clear drip marks where tar was brushed over the edge. This demonstrates that the hole in the concrete was already there during the waterproofing step, while the roof[s] were still being constructed" (Keren 75).

Analysis of aerial and other photographs of the crematoria by Keren's team led to further proof of the holes' existences. The team employed Mr. Lucas, a leading expert with more than fifty years in aerial and satellite photo analysis, who "analyzed the two August 25 photos [taken by an American plane in 1944 (see Figures 10-11)] showing the roof of Crematorium II...[using stereo imaging]...[and] after careful study Mr. Lucas identified four small objects within the smudges, all slightly elevated above the level of the roof. These correspond to the four 'chimneys' above the holes in the roof, as clearly visible in the Train Photograph (see Figure 12)" (Keren 95). Mr. Lucas concluded that "the evidence provided by the analysis [of the Train Photograph] leads credence to the fact that the [holes] existed and were used in a way consistent with the statements from multiple witnesses" (Keren 95).

Keren and team also used the aerial photographs of the crematoria, along with other evidence, to disprove a particular claim of Holocaust deniers, saying:

"We mention that certain Holocaust-deniers argued that dynamite explosions created the holes when the roof tore apart from the concrete support pillars. This is however impossible, [because] the concrete support beams were not attached directly to the roof, the concrete support pillars are in the center of the roof [but] the holes are not, not all the holes are found at the same longitudinal (i.e. north-south) locations as the support pillars, the location of the holes is consistent with 25 August 1944 aerial

photographs, the location of the holes matches precisely with the Train Photograph (a photograph taken by a team under an SS officer during the construction of Crematorium II), and the alternating arrangement of the holes is consistent with the testimony of [Sonderkommando survivor Henryk]

Tauber and with maintaining structural integrity" (Keren 74)

The sum of the evidence from the 1944 pictures of the roofs, the present day pictures of the ruins of the roofs, and the testimony of the survivors leaves little room for opposition. Had the holes been created by the support pillars ripping from the ceiling during the explosions, the holes would have been along a straight line; however, the holes are staggered, and this staggered arrangement of the holes matches all evidence of the holes as the points of insertion of Zyklon B (see Figures 13 - 14).

IX. Holocaust Trials in General and their Effect on Holocaust Memory

Before investigating the implications of the Irving Trial in Holocaust memory, it is necessary to investigate the implications of Holocaust trials in general in Holocaust memory. I shall focus on four particular trials/sets of trials – The Nuremberg trials in Germany, the Belsen trial in Poland, the Eichmann trial in Israel, and the Zundel and Keegstra trials in Canada. All four trials give credence to the argument that to put both Holocaust perpetrators and Holocaust deniers on the stand in public both promotes awareness of the Holocaust and helps to deconstruct the lies and myths about the Holocaust which distort the memory of the Holocaust and thus its implications for the future.

The Belsen trial brought to life the reality of Auschwitz; it "brought Auschwitz into the public domain" (van Pelt 245). It made known the existence of gas chambers, of all of the horrific happenings that were too unbelievable for most to comprehend. It

validated the unthinkable, and gave the public the tools necessary to comprehend the extreme and vile evil that beforehand was unfathomable. The Nuremberg trials further proved the horrific reality of the Holocaust, with Nazi high officials such as Rudolph Hoess admitting to the murder of millions of Jews and describing it in detail, thus making it all the more difficult for anyone to deny the horror that went on behind the walls of Auschwitz. Prior to Hoess' testimony, information about Auschwitz and other death camps had been based on survivor accounts and lower ranking Nazi officials, but Hoess' testimony marked the first time a high-ranking Nazi official gave in depth details of the heinous activities behind the walls of Auschwitz and other death camps (van Pelt 253). The fact that a perpetrator of such high rank admitted to the horrific accusations made against him and went into such great detail about the process gave further credibility to the reality of Auschwitz.

However, these trials did not bring the Holocaust to the realm of acceptable public conversation. In fact, very little was talked of about the Holocaust particularly in America, but around the world as well, until the Eichmann trial in the 1970's. The trial was televised all over the world, and sparked great controversy. At first, there was much dismay at the trial, and many believed that the way in which Eichmann was caught and extradited to Israel was unacceptable. However as the trial progressed, many people across the globe saw for the first time with their own eyes testimony proving what had happened behind the doors of the death camps. While some argue that the fact that Eichmann appeared so ordinary made him and his actions seem less evil – what Hannah Arendt deems as the "banality of evil" – I am inclined to believe that his ordinariness

rather made the entire reality of the Holocaust all the more frightening. If someone who was so seemingly ordinary could do such horrific things, what is to say that it will not happen again somewhere or, worse yet, in one's backyard? Thus grew the desire and need to confront and understand the Holocaust publicly. The Eichmann trial "undoubtedly contributed to the dissemination of knowledge and prompted new research into the destruction of European Jewry" (Marrus 226).

Another subcategory of trials within the category of Holocaust trials emerged as the Holocaust denial movement gained momentum. This subcategory is that of Holocaust denial and hate trials, in which the David Irving trial belongs. Two such trials which have been analyzed by various scholars were that of James Keegstra and Ernst Zundel. Zundel, who was brought to court for his dissemination of antisemitic pamphlets which promoted Holocaust denial and myths of a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world, was sentenced to fifteen months in jail and three years probation, and was ordered to stop publishing hate propaganda. Keegstra, accused of promoting hatred of the Jews through his teaching in a secondary school, was convicted and fined five thousand dollars. Evidence from research studies show that of those who reported an impact due to the witnessing of such cases, a greater number of individuals became more sympathetic toward Jews than less sympathetic (Kallen 5). Furthermore, after witnessing the trial, over seventy percent of respondents felt that both Zundel and Keegstra were dishonest, undeserving of respect, and had acted in bad faith. Ninety percent felt that both men's actions were harmful to Jews, the uninformed public, Canadians, and (in Keegstra's case) students.

In analyzing trials about the Holocaust, regardless of whether the trial is against perpetrators of the Holocaust or over hate speech and Holocaust denial, it seems obvious that these cases have served to strengthen awareness of the Holocaust and have thus served to weaken claims of Holocaust deniers. As argued by Irwin Cotler, a law professor at McGill University, "Every time we bring a suspected Nazi war criminal to justice, we repudiate by the legal process the Holocaust denial movement" (Marrus 216).

X. The Effect of the David Irving Trial on Memory of the Holocaust

Much was at stake in David Irving's libel suit against Deborah Lipstadt. As D.D. Guttenplan advances, the trial posed questions about where our knowledge of the past comes from, how it is transmitted, the proper response to hate speech, the importance of the Holocaust to Jewish identity, the importance of the Holocaust to non-Jews, and questions about historiography and what the standards of a historian should be (Guttenplan 14-5). However, its most critical implication was that its result would either prove the falsity of the arguments of Holocaust deniers, or it would allow for deniers to claim an unwarranted victory which would give their "arguments" undeserved credibility. As Lipstadt has commented, "Remembering the Holocaust [55] crucial in the perpetuation of Jewish tradition, but [it is also crucial] in teaching lessons about the need to fight prejudice and persecution of many kinds in the world today," and had Irving, and consequently the denial movement as a whole, won the suit, the memory of the Holocaust would have been significantly damaged, decreasing, if not destroying, the ability of that memory to perpetuate its lessons (Evans 3). As Richard Evans points out, "the trial had a direct bearing on how the Holocaust would be regarded and how it was debated and

discussed in public;" various journalists commented that "should Irving win this case, then the damages would be the least evil. Much worse would be the fact that his credibility as a historian would be salvaged by such a judgment; his version of the Holocaust and his interpretation of Hitler would suddenly count as plausible," and that "if he wins, the door will have been opened for revisionists to rewrite any event in history without a requirement to consider evidence that does not suit them and without fear that they will be publicly denounced for their distortion" (Evans 38). The case, in essence, had the ability to salvage the memory of the Holocaust or destroy it, and thus had the ability to salvage or destroy the lessons we can extract from the Holocaust for future use.

However, Irving lost his libel suit against Lipstadt, and this not only revitalized the memory of the Holocaust, but also served to demolish the ground upon which Holocaust deniers built their case. As Clive Davis purports, "By demolishing Mr. Irving's claims, [Lipstadt's] team of lawyers stripped Holocaust denial of the few lingering shreds of credibility it had ever possessed" (Davis 1). The lead editorial of the British Daily Telegraph asserted that "[the Irving trial] has done for the new century what the Nuremberg tribunals or the Eichmann trial did for earlier generations" (Lipstadt² 282). The result of the trial revealed the Holocaust denial movement for what it truly is – a complete disregard for historical truth, the manipulation of history for political purposes, and downright blatant antisemitism and hate propaganda. There is no truth to deniers' claims, and this trial helped to reveal that to a great many people who, without having witnessed the trial, might still believe that deniers have some credibility as valid historians. As noted by Wendie Ellen Schneider, "by attacking Irving's use of

evidence...the defense struck at the very heart of Holocaust denial" (Schneider 2). By proving that Irving's claims (and thus all deniers' claims) about the Holocaust are lies, distortions, and manipulations unworthy of scholarly attention, the case effectively destroyed the backbone of the movement.

In an interview with Publishers Weekly, Lipstadt summed it up quite well when she said "if you watched the press coverage over the course of time, you saw the shift, from reporters who sat in the courtroom day in, day out, how they began to see the measure of the man in terms of David Irving, that he lied, that he distorted, that he invented, that he misquoted, all the things that the judge said that he did, and that was very gratifying to watch" (Gold 2). I would have liked to see it myself. Proving that Irving's arguments are based on falsehoods implies that his arguments as a whole are falsehoods, and the implications of such a result can only mean the discrediting of the movement as a whole.

XI. Conclusion

The public trials of propagators of hate speech in other countries such as Canada, and the libel trials of deniers such as Irving seem to have gone a long way in discrediting a so-called form of history that does not deserve any respect in the scholarly community. Antisemitic, unscholarly deniers across the world need to be stopped from disseminating their lies and distortions among groups of people which may not have the understanding of the Holocaust necessary to determine the falsity of their negationist claims. It is unfortunate that our legal system defines free speech such that Holocaust denial and other forms of hate speech are included. Thus, it seems that in the United States it will prove difficult to prosecute Holocaust deniers for the destructive propaganda they spread.

However, perhaps by encouraging scholars and the academic world to publish works criticizing Holocaust deniers and their claims, we can succeed in indirectly bringing Holocaust denial to the American courtroom through libel suits sought by the deniers. These opportunities can allow for historians and scholars to refute deniers' claims and further prove the invalidity of the denial movement.

Deborah Lipstadt's victory against David Irving, and thus history's victory over the harmful misinformation posed by a group of backward individuals as "truth," has assisted in proving to those who may not be educated in the area of the Holocaust that such fabrications should not be given the light of day. Lipstadt's defense effectively tore apart the foundation of every argument of the Holocaust denial movement. More historians should follow in Lipstadt's footsteps and continue to discredit the works of these despicable deniers. Let the deniers sue for libel; let them, as did Irving, deny their denial. In the end, the cases will only serve to further prove that the Holocaust denial movement is nothing but a fraud, and in doing so they will renew the memory of the Holocaust and make it easier to use the lessons learned from it to fight against racism and prejudice across the globe.

X. Appendix

Figure 1

TOTAL DEATHS FROM NAZI GENOCIDAL POLICIES

Group	Deaths
European Jews	5,600,000 to 6,250,000
Soviet prisoners of war	3,000,000
Polish Catholics	3,000,000
Serbians	700,000 (Croat <i>Ustasa</i> persecution)
Roma, Sinti, and Lalleri	222,000 to 250,000
Germans (political, religious, and Resistance)	80,000
Germans (handicapped)	70,000
Homosexuals	12,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	2500

DEATH CAMPS (POLAND)

Death Camps	Jewish Deaths	Commandant
Auschwitz-	1.1 to 1.6	Lothar Hatjenstein,
Birkenau	million	Rudolf Höss, Josef
		Kramer, Arthur
		Liebehenschel, Richard Baer,
		Heinrich Schwarz
Belzec	601,500	Christian Wirth, Gottlieb
		Hering
Chelmno	255,000	Hans Bothmann
Majdanek	360,000	Arthur Liebehenschel
Sobibór	250,000	Franz Reichleitner, Franz
		Stangl, Richard Thomalla
Treblinka	750,000 to 870,000	Kurt Franz, Franz Stangl

(Hogan 699)

INTERNMENT AND TRANSIT CAMPS IN WESTERN EUROPE UNDER NAZI OCCUPATION

Belgium

- Breendonck (internment): Belgian and "stateless" Jews deported to Mechelen.
- Mechelen (transit): 26,000 Jews sent to concentration camps.

France

- Beaune-la-Rolnade (internment)
- Compiègne (transit): 12,000 Jews deported to Buchenwald and Dachau.
- Drancy (transit): 74,000 indigenous and non-French Jews, and 5000 Belgian Jews, deported to Auschwitz, Majdanek, and Sobibór.
- Gurs (collection camp): 6000 non-French Jews, mostly German, deported to Drancy.
- Les Milles (transfer camp): 2000 inmates deported to Drancy and then on to Auschwitz.
- Pithiviers (internment and transit): 3700 Jewish men deported to Auschwitz.
- Rivesaltes (internment): German Jews, Roma, and Spanish Republicans deported to death camps.
- Vittel (internment): 300 Jews sent to Drancy.

Luxembourg

 Fünfbrunnen (transit): Approximately 2000 Jews from Luxembourg and Jewish refugees were deported to death and concentration camps.

Netherlands

- Vught (transit and ponishment camp): 12,000 Jews deported to Westerbork.
- Westerbork (internment): 89,000 Jews and 500 Roma deported to concentration and death camps in Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

lbright

Figure 2

rigure 2			
MAJOR	CONCENTRATION AND LA	BOR CAMPS	
Camp	Location	Jewish Deaths	
Auschwitz I	Oswieçim, Poland	1.6 million	
Bergen-Belsen	Hanover, Germany	50,000	
Buchenwald	Weimar, Germany	60,000 to 65,000	
Dachau	Munich, Germany	35,000	
Dora-Nordhausen	Harz Mountains, Germany	8125	
Mittelbau/Mittelwerk		20,000	
Flossenbürg	Upper Palatine, Bavaria	27,000	
Gross-Rosen	Lower Silesia, Germany	105,000	
Janówska	Lvov, Ukraine	40,000	
Jasenovac	Zagreb, Croatia	20,000	
Kaiserwald	Riga, Latvia	10,000	
Klooga	Tallinn, Estonia	2400	
Mauthausen	Linz, Austria	120,000	
Natzweiler-Struthof	Strasbourg, France	17,000	
Neuengamme	Hamburg, Germany	55,000	
Ninth Fort	Kovno, Lithuania	10,000	
Pawiak Prison	Warsaw, Poland	37,000	
Plaszów	Kraków, Poland	8000	
Poniatowa	Lublin, Poland	15,000	
Ravensbrück	Berlin, Germany	92,000	
Sachsenhausen/Oranienburg	Berlin, Germany	105,000	
Sajmiste/Semlin	Serbia	50,000	
Sered	Slovakia	Theresienstadt)	
Stutthof	Poland	65,000 to 85,000	
Theresienstadt	Prague, Czechoslovakia	33,430	
Trawniki	Poland Prague, Czechoslovakia, College Lublin, Poland	10,000	

(Hogan 700)

Figure 3

	MAJOR JEWISH GHETTOS	
Ghetto	Country	Population
Amsterdam	Netherlands	100,000
Bedzin	Poland	27,000
Bialystok	Poland	35,000 to 50,000
Budapest	Hungary	70,000
Chernovtsy	Romania	50,000
Grodno	Poland	25,000
Kovno/Kaunas	Lithuania	40,000
Kraków	Poland	19,000
Lida	Belorussia	9000
Liepaja	Latvia	7400
Lódź	Poland	205,000
Lublin	Poland	34,000
Lvov	Ukraine	110,000
Minsk	Belorussia	100,000
Mir	Belorussia	2500
Novogrudok	Belorussia	6000
Radom	Poland	30,000
Riga	Latvia	43,000
Salonika	Greece	56,000
Shanghai°	China	10,000
Ternopol	Ukraine	12,500
Theresienstadt	Czechoslovakia	90,000
Vitebsk	Belorussia	16,000
Vilna	Lithuania	41,000
Warsaw	Poland	400,000 to 500,000

The ghetto was administered by the Japanese occupational government with the assistance of the Jewish welfare organization.

(Hogan 701)

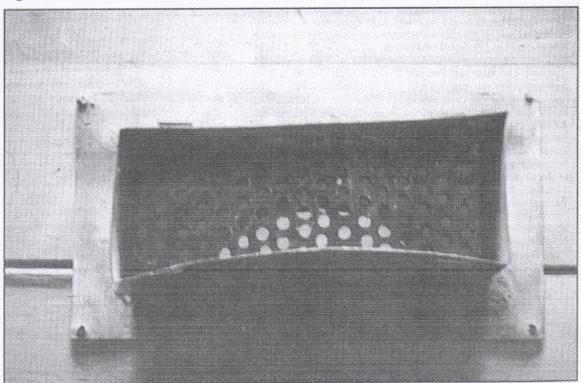
(Hogan 701)

Figure 4

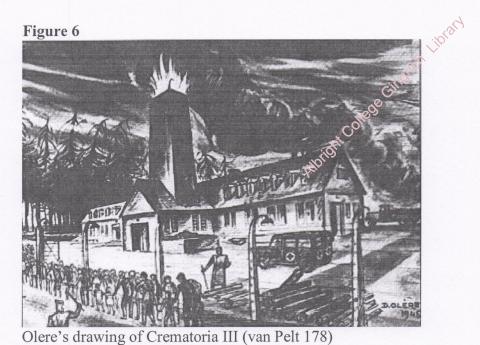
JEWS KILLED DURING THE HOLOCAUST BY COUNTRY			
Country Albania	Jews Killed	Perc. of Country's Jews Killed	1. Between ten to 12 Jews were deported from Albania to Bergen-Belsen.
Austria	50,000	36^{2}	2. When the Nazis annexed Austria in March 1938,
Belgium	25,000	60^{3}	there were 185,000 Jews living in the country. Thou- sands of Jews fled after the <i>Anschluss</i> and subsequent
Belorussia	245,000	65	Kristallnacht pogrom in November 1938.
Bohemia/Moravia	80,000	89	3. Only 10% of the victims were citizens of Belgium
Bulgaria	11,400	144	prior to the war.
Denmark	60	1.3	 The Jewish victims came exclusively from Thrace and Macedonia, territories awarded to Bulgaria by Hitler.
Estonia	1500	35	5. Out of a Jewish population approaching 2000, a small
Finland	7	2.8^{5}	number of Jewish refugees were deported to labor
France	90,000	26	camps in Estonia.
Germany	130,000	55	 From 1941 to 1945, the British interned 1500 Jews destined for Palestine on Mauritius; 124 perished. In
Great Britain	130	6	1939, two Jews were killed by the British Navy when
Greece	65,000	807	their ship was sunk attempting to enter Palestine. At least three Jews were deported to camps during the
Hungary	450,000	70	German occupation of Britain's Channel Islands.
Italy	7500	205	7. Includes Corfu (1800), Rhodes (1540), and Salonika
Latvia .	70,000	77	(42,000).
Lithuania	220,000	94	 Jews were deported during the Nazi occupation of Italy, which began in 1943.
Luxembourg	1950	50	9. This estimate of Jewish victims is likely to increase,
The Netherlands	106,000	76	possibly by as much as 250,000, as scholars examine
Norway	870	55	documents made available after the collapse of the for- mer Soviet Union.
Poland	2,900,000	88	10. The Swiss policy of refoulement, enforced from
Russia	107,000	119	1938 until July 7, 1944, curtailed the flow of Jewish refugees into Switzerland. Although approximately
Romania	270,000	33	30,000 Jews found refere in or passed through Switzer-
Slovakia	71,000	80	land, at least 10,000 fews were turned away. Although trains destined for concentration and death camps in
Spain		_	the East were allowed to be routed through Switzer-
Sweden		_	land, its prewar Jewish population of 12,000 was not turned over to the Nazis.
Switzerland		10	D'Includes Jews from Bosnia, Croatia, Rab, and Ser-
Ukraine	900,000	60	bia. Most Jews in the Italian Zone of Occupation were
Yugoslavia	60,000	8011	not deported or released to the Nazi or <i>Ustasa</i> .

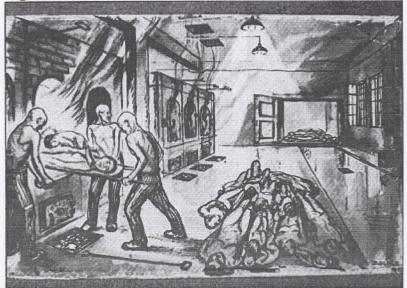
(Hogan 702)

Figure 5



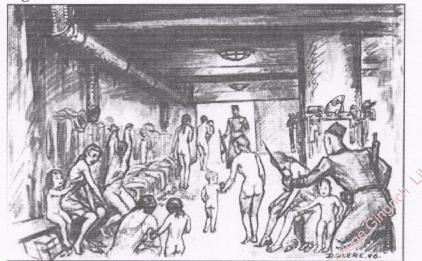
Rear view of one of the 145 galvanized plates, perforated by hand, which were set into and nailed to the wooden fresh air ducts in the upper part of Leichenkeller 1 of Krematorien II and III. Toxicological analyses were carried out in 1945 by the Cracow Forensic Institute. The report, signed by Dr Jan Z Robel, was written on 15th December 1945 and transmitted to the Examining Judge, Jan Sehn. (Pressac 233)



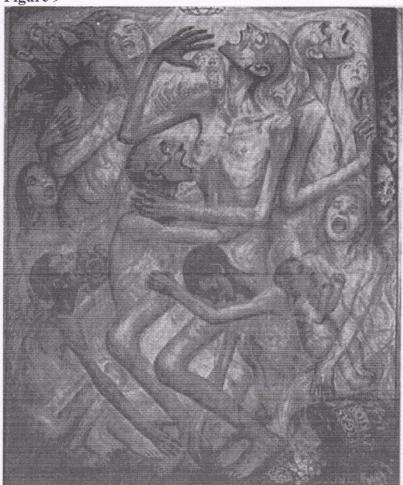


Olere's drawing of the furnaces of Crematoria III (van Pelt 179)

Figure 8

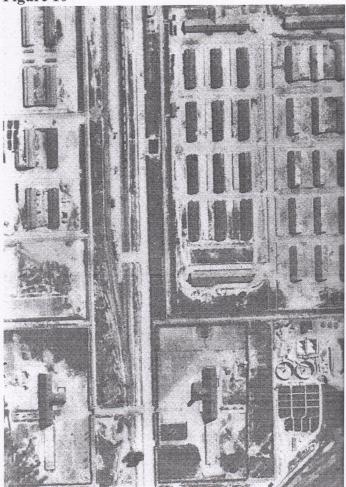


David Olere's drawing of the undressing room of Crematoria III (van Pelt 178)



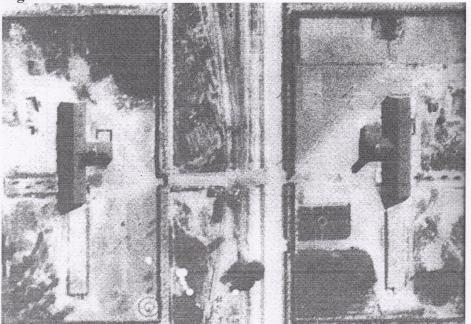
David Olere's rendering of death by Zyklon B gassing (Pressac 258)

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Aerial photograph of the southwestern part of Birkenau, taken August 25, 1944 (van Pelt 175)

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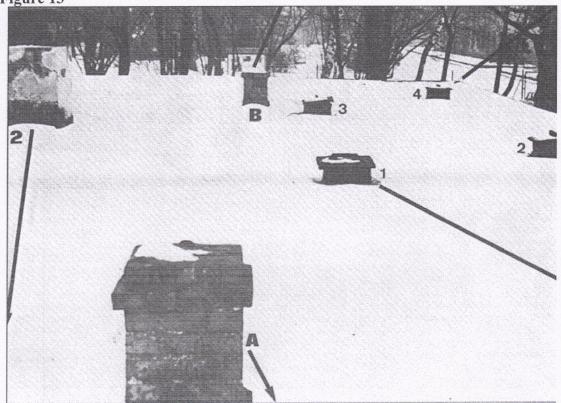
Detail of the aerial photograph of Crematoria 2 and 3, taken on August 25, 1944 (van Pelt 175)

Figure 12 The Train Photograph



Figure 3. Photograph by team under SS-Unterscharführer Dietrich Kamann during construction of Crematorium II. Gas chamber visible in front, and three Zyklon "chimneys" can be identified. Hereafter the "Train Photograph." Courtesy of Auschwitz State Museum, PMO neg. no. 20995/494, Kamann Series; and Yad Vashem Archive.

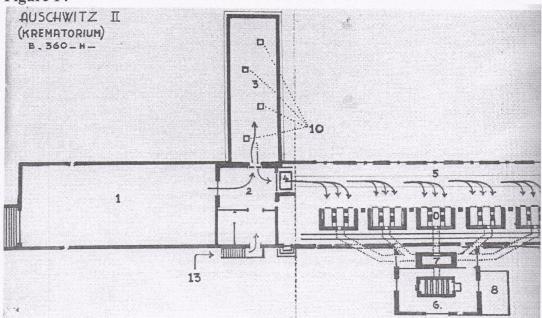
(Keren 13)



Overall view of the roof of Krematorium I, looking southeast. On the right hand side are the four openings for pouring Zyklon-B [1 to 4] reconstructed after the war. On the left, the two probable ventilation chimneys for the air raid shelter [A and B] and one of the two ventilation chimneys for the furnace room [2]. (Pressac 150)

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Figure 14



David Olere's drawing of the floorplan of Crematoria 2, showing the staggered arrangement of the columns which allowed for the introduction of Zyklon B into the gas chambers

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