

Trial ends with claim of Jewish conspiracy

Douglas Davis

LONDON: David Irving told the High Court in London last week that some of the world's largest Jewish organisations are involved in an international conspiracy against him.

The self-described Holocaust revisionist's claim was the centrepiece of his 104-page closing address at the end of a two-month libel case against American Holocaust historian Dr Deborah Lipstadt and her British publisher, Penguin Books.

Irving has alleged that his reputation was damaged and his career wrecked by Lipstadt's 1994 book, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, which, he claims, depicted him as a Holocaust denier who distorts historical data to suit his own ideological goals.

The trial, which has attracted international attention, has been described as the most important trial involving the Holocaust since Adolf Eichmann, the chief engineer of the Holocaust, was convicted in Israel in 1961. A ruling is expected to be delivered in about three weeks.

The plaintiff and defendant have shown sharply contrasting styles. Irving — who served as his own attorney and appeared to relish the spotlight — wasted no opportunity in and out of court to make statements supporting his claims that Auschwitz was not a death camp or

destruction of Jews; Lipstadt, a professor at Emory University in Atlanta, has sat silently throughout the proceedings.

Asserting that Israeli Holocaust specialist Yehuda Bauer paid for and directed Lipstadt's book, Irving alleged that Bauer urged Lipstadt to incriminate him. The book, said Irving, is part of a 30-year international campaign, led by the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, JTA, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and others, which had aimed to discredit him.

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"It is quite evident that the ADL, in cahoots with Lipstadt, set itself the task of destroying my career," he said, asserting that "the real defendants in this case are not represented in this court".

But, he added, "we have them to thank for the spectacle that has been presented in this courtroom since January." Without their financial assistance, he said, it is doubtful whether the expensive defence team could have "mounted this

colossal assault on my name".

As a result of their campaign, he continued, Germany, Austria, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa have banned him.

Irving has represented himself — in sharp contrast to the large legal team defending Lipstadt — and he claimed that the defence case had cost some \$US6 million and at least 20 combined years of research. "This blinding and expensive spotlight has been focused on the narrowest of issues," he said, "yet it has still generated more noise than illumination."

Irving has described Auschwitz as a "fable" and insisted that there

was no evidence to suggest that Hitler ordered the systematic mass destruction of the Jews.

He was particularly scathing

about JTA (the Jewish Telegraphic Agency), claiming that it provided material in 1992 for Lipstadt's assertion that Irving was to have participated in a gathering in Sweden, which was later cancelled, that would have been a "confluence between anti-Israel, antisemitic and Holocaust denial forces". Among others who Lipstadt said were scheduled to attend the conference were Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, Holocaust revisionists, representatives of the Islamic fundamentalist groups Hezbollah and Hamas, and the ultranationalist Russian group Pamyat.

Irving also claimed that a 1995 JTA report accused him of "having supplied the trigger mechanism for the Oklahoma City bomb". "That item," Irving told the court, "was picked up by the American, and then faintly echoed by the British, press. It was only months later that I found out who had started that lie."

A JTA report, dated March 4, 1996, said Timothy McVeigh's lawyer had gone to London to investigate whether British neo-Nazis provided components for the Oklahoma City bombing in April 1995 that killed 168 people. The report named Irving as one of three British citizens whom the FBI had subpoenaed to "provide information on the alleged European link"

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In his 24-page closing address, defence lawyer Richard Rampton





Dr Deborah Lipstadt

declared that the trial had exposed Irving's views as a "fraud". Irving based his claim that Auschwitz was not a death camp on pseudo-scientific research, said Rampton. He noted that Irving has never trav-



David Irving

elled to Auschwitz to examine the archaeological remains or the documentary evidence in its archive.

"It follows that some other reason must be sought to explain his devotion over many years to the bizarre idea that no significant numbers of people were murdered in the homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz/Birkenau," said Rampton.

The reasons, he continued, were not hard to find: "As the evidence in this court has shown," he said,

not hard to find. "As the evidence in this court has shown," he said, "Irving is a right-wing extremist, a racist, and, in particular, a rabid antisemite."

Whether antisemitism had led him to become a Hitler apologist or *vice versa* was unimportant, added Rampton. "Whether they are taken together or individually, it is clear that they have led him to prostitute his reputation as a serious historian — spurious though it can now be seen to have been — for the sake of a bogus rehabilitation of Hitler and the dissemination of his virulent antisemitic propaganda."

JTA