
Denying the Holocaust

YOUR review of *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, by Deborah Lipstadt (Book World, July 11), is so full of factual errors that I would suggest that Lipstadt return to teaching religious studies at Emory University and leave history to the less biased. Since Lipstadt serves up my worthless carcass as a terrible example of all that's wrong with the human race, and your reviewer, Paul Johnson, innocently reports what she says, I ask you to reprint this letter, not in my defense but as an exercise in journalistic accuracy.

Johnson's review cites a number of Lipstadt's assertions that are not true. Some samples: She says that Liberty Lobby, which I serve as an officer and (low-paid) employee, is virtually identical to the Institute for Historical Review, Noontide Press and the American Mercury and supports them financially. The facts, however, are that we have never contributed a dime to the IHR, et al., nor has our 16,000-member Board of Policy ever voted to take any position on the "Holocaust."

The confusion on the general subject of the "Holocaust" is exemplified by the artwork used in the review—a pile of corpses, allegedly at Dachau, presumably gassed Jews. But "everyone" knows that there were no gas chambers at Dachau. Even Abba Eban and Simon Wiesenthal have stated this.

Incidentally, revisionists do not deny that the Third Reich was anti-Semitic and that millions of people were killed in World War II, all of them needlessly, many under horrible circumstances and that many were Jews. War is Hell. War itself is a crime and all criminal investigators know that the truth of a crime lies in the details. That's what revisionists seek—the details, the truth. And that's no crime.

Perhaps Lipstadt's confusion about Liberty Lobby's connection with the IHR is that I (not David McCalden or Finklestein or whoever) founded the IHR and I personally sympathize with its healthy skepticism, which I was taught by my betters is or at least was the politically correct *avant garde* attitude. Working for Liberty Lobby even as a revisionist only proves that I can walk and chew gum at the same time, it doesn't prove that the IHR and Liberty Lobby are the same thing.

As for Deborah Lipstadt: Get thee back to thy nunnery and theology. Theologians don't need facts but historians do.

WILLIS A. CARTO
Treasurer, Liberty Lobby
Washington, D.C.

Paul Johnson's review of Deborah Lipstadt's book about "Holocaust denial" not only contains serious errors of fact, but manifests the very closed-mindedness he finds so repellent in others.

Johnson's lack of familiarity with the basic facts of the subject is shown by his confusion about the name of the wicked organization he wrongly identifies as the "Institute for Historical Research."

Contrary to what Johnson asserts, no prominent revisionist claims that the *Diary of Anne Frank* was "written by a professional New York playwright in collaboration with Anne Frank's father."

Revisionist scholars—including best-selling British historian David Irving, Arthur Butz of Northwestern University, and French professor Robert Faurisson—are not "deniers." They readily acknowledge the full scope of the Jewish tragedy during the Second World War.

As even prominent Holocaust historians

quietly acknowledge, though, many once supposedly "proven" Holocaust stories are clearly not true. For example, no serious historian still defends claims of gassings at Dachau and Buchenwald—charges that were supposedly proven at Nuremberg.

Skepticism about the orthodox Holocaust story is growing, not because it is anti-Semitic, but because more and more thoughtful people agree that revisionist arguments correspond with the facts.

More dangerous than "Holocaust denial" is the largely ignored campaign of threats, book-burning and violence (including murder) against those who challenge Holocaust claims. In several countries (such as France), special laws treat "Holocaust deniers" as criminals. Similar laws dealing with any other issue would provoke the outrage from prominent intellectuals and newspapers. In our society, the Holocaust story is regarded as more sacred than the traditional religious faith of the great majority of our citizens.

MARK WEBER
Editor, Journal of Historical Review
Institute for Historical Review
Newport Beach, Calif.

In his review of Deborah E. Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust*, Paul Johnson does not hesitate to attach the dread label of "anti-Semite" to anyone who questions any of the purported facts of the Holocaust. And he agrees with the author of the book that special laws should be invoked against anyone questioning these facts, rather than relying on the laws which we currently have against libel and slander which suffice for all other cases.

This letter is not about whether, or to

Letters



FROM "THE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST," EDITED BY YITZHAK ARAD (MACMILLAN PAPERBACK, 1992)

Bodies of prisoners piled in Dachau. This photograph was taken soon after the concentration camp was liberated.

what extent, the Jewish (and gay, and gypsy, and "undesirables") Holocaust occurred, but rather to point out that it is a very dangerous thing to restrict honest inquiry and opinion. I can think of no subject so sacrosanct as to prohibit free discussion. Our freedom of speech is one of our most precious rights, and should not be curtailed in *any* way.

DORIS RAUSCH
Columbia

There is a serious misstatement of fact in Paul Johnson's review of Deborah E. Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust*. In it, he writes that President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia "insists that only 900,000 Jews died."

For your information, President Tudjman tends toward Raul Hilberg's approximate figure of 5,100,000 as the one best documented (per his book, *Wastelands of Historical Reality*, pp. 155-156). Hilberg is mentioned in Lipstadt's book as well and has never, to my knowledge, been called a "Holocaust denier." Why then Tudjman? The 900,000 figure is the one for which Raul Hilberg says there exist actual death certificates. The misunderstanding arose, I believe, in an article on this issue in the New York Times, in which the Croatian ambassador to the United Nations, Mario Nobile, was misquoted as having said that President Tudjman supported the 900,000 figure. A retraction was subsequently printed.

J.E. BUSIC
Embassy of Croatia

In his review of *Denying the Holocaust*, Paul Johnson writes that "denial activities in no case spring from genuine efforts to question or revise established history or from any concern for the truth, but are conducted by convinced fanatics whose anti-semitism long antedated any 'scientific' interest in Holocaust studies. A few gullible fish, like Noam Chomsky, may have been hooked, but the vast majority of explicit deniers are motivated simply by hatred of Jews."

Neither the writing nor the syntax is especially beautiful here but the clear allegation against Chomsky is that he belongs to the category of "explicit denier." May I invite Johnson to produce a single passage of Chomsky's work that would substantiate such a grave and damaging claim? If he cannot do so, he will owe an apology not just to Chomsky but to you and your readers for treating such a serious matter in such a propagandistic and deceitful way.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS
Washington, D.C.

In Paul Johnson's review of Deborah Lipstadt's book, he makes one small but very important error. Johnson refers to Fred A. Leuchter as "a Boston engineer . . . who specialized in constructing execution apparatuses." Johnson, in this particular case, has been taken in by the deniers that he writes about in the review. Fred A. Leuchter is not an engineer—nor has any credentials that would remotely qualify him as such. In a well known court case, Leuchter was charged with illegally practicing engineering and a Massachusetts court barred him from identifying himself as an engineer.

In addition, Leuchter has no real expertise in the construction of execution apparatuses. On several occasions he sought consulting work in the U.S. penitentiary system as an expert on executions, but was never hired because he lacked the expertise. His expertise in this area is nonexistent.

SAM LAMBROZA
Fredericksburg

One point comes to mind from reading the review of *Denying the Holocaust*, something which may be cleared up by reading the book. Today, black college students seem at least as likely to question the Holocaust as white students—probably more so, judging by the rise in black anti-Semitism, on and off campus, and the popularity of "educators and leaders" such as Leonard Jeffries. This letter is not the place to try and explain black anti-Semitism, aside from remarking that those who hate Jews, or think they do, make it clear they are looking for an easy target to express their hatred of white society, regardless of the legitimacy of the target. Look at the black woman at Harvard who chose flying a swastika as a way to express her outrage at a white southern conservative woman who flew a Confederate battle flag.

Some Holocaust denial may come from sheer ignorance—the black woman at Harvard honestly seemed surprised that Jews were particularly offended by the swastika—a tribute to the decline of American history education. One has to suspect, though, that much comes from efforts of some black leaders, and their many supporters, to maintain the black place as the "most persecuted"—the unfortunate ultimate goal in this era of the cult of the victim. They lack the sophistication to separate the Jewish experience in this country from that of European Jewry—to recognize that Nazi German actions do not detract from the historical tragedy of slavery. These black leaders also lack the moral courage to take a look at their own black community, to see the degree to which cultural problems might be limiting black achievement. By their lack of moral fortitude, by raising false issues, they make the fight against real bigotry so much harder.

BRUCE BRAGER
Arlington

With reference to "anti-Semitic history" and the remarks
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