

An Open Letter to Holocaust Denier David Irving

Congratulations. Your life mission to denounce the systematic genocide of six million Jews by the Nazi Regime during World War II grows easier as time slowly creeps by. With many survivors gone and memories faded, the threat of the self-proclaimed “historical revisionist”— who declares the Holocaust an event fabricated by the Jews in order to gain sympathy and dollars— seems to grow stronger each day.

However, Mr. Irving, I write to you today as a proud member of the third generation of Jews after the tragedies of the Holocaust, and I assure you that no matter how far removed we may become from the physical events of World War II, the horrors that took place will never be forgotten or undermined.

In one of your famous speeches, you incredulously wonder: “How is it possible to gas millions of people in gas chambers and yet leave no significant residue of the poison gas used in the fabric of that gas chamber?” Yet, I too wonder: How can you dismiss the documented photographs and footage of thousands of Jewish lives reduced to piles of decaying bodies? How can you deny the testimony of World War II Nazi soldier Franz Suchomel, who confessed to witnessing the gassing as Jewish men, women and children crumbled lifelessly out of the chambers “like potatoes”?

Mr. Irving, people of all races and religions perished in World War II. From military soldiers to victims of the Pearl Harbor bombing, the mid-1900s saw dreams crushed and families broken. The Jewish population decrease during this time, however, was unprecedented in its systematic and scientific nature. In one of the surviving Nazi documents, Karl Jäger, commander of the Jewish extermination unit Einsatzkommando 3, writes that on the twenty-third of August 1941, in the small Lithuanian village of Ponovitch, his unit murdered “1,312 Jewish males, 4,602 Jewish females, and 1,609 Jewish children.” The sheer precision with which the Nazis annihilated the Jewish people is bone chilling.

Mr. Irving, in many ways you are similar to the very men who carried out the great tragedies of the Holocaust. The Nazis encrypted their mass killings in the same way you mask your radical anti-semitism. You call the pure dismissal of clear evidence as a means to perpetrate hatred on a religious group “historical revisionism.” The Nazis referred to gathering one hundred Jews together to dig their own graves as “special treatment.” Gassing to death was “processing,” and the transport of Jews to extermination camps for cremation was “resettlement.” These euphemisms epitomized Nazi Germany: externally progressive, but pure evil at the core.

This summer, I will be participating in Jewish Overseas Leadership Training. I will travel to Poland to experience the physical reality of the Shoah for the first time in my life. I will visit the Children’s Grave in Kielce, Poland, where 800 Jewish children were ritually massacred. I will

visit the Warsaw ghetto, where Jewish men risked their lives to wear tefillin in the morning. And while we will mourn the dead and lament their suffering, we will also celebrate the freedom we are so lucky to be blessed with today.

Finally, Mr. Irving, I thank you. You give the Jewish nation a daily reminder that we must never forget. We must never forget the anguished parents, sobbing for their missing children. The scared orphans, stranded with no direction. We must never forget the last goodbye of a relative taken away in a cattle car, or the last shema yisrael of a young man, calling out to God in the face of a Nazi firing squad. We must never forget.