

Free Speech in Danger

Why is this celebrated historian in prison?

by Matthew Downing
NATIONAL VANGUARD NEWS

DAVID IRVING (pictured) is a preeminent British scholar and historian, most renowned for his groundbreaking research into World War II and Soviet history. Irving is perhaps best known for his discovery of numerous original documents, many of which had been previously unexamined.

His endeavors have drawn both the acclaim of fellow researchers and the ire of well-funded special interest groups. He has bravely approached sensitive and controversy-laden issues, including under-reported British and American atrocities (such as the WWII firebombing of Dresden), as well as discrepancies in the media and historical portrayals of the Holocaust. His life's work has consisted of attempting to examine such issues in the broader context of the historical record, free of narrow biases, distortions, and political pressures.

Who wants him imprisoned?

The circumstances leading up to Irving's arrest stem from several speeches he gave in Austria in 1989, in which he raised critical questions about some of the statistical evidence pertaining to alleged wartime German atrocities.

Under Austria's draconian laws which criminalize such historical inquiry as "Holocaust denial" (a literal "speech crime"), a warrant was issued for Irving's arrest if he was ever to set foot on Austrian soil again.

The Holocaust is unique in that it is the only event in history deemed to need such legal protection against the questions and inquiries of historians: It is actually a punishable crime in several Western nations (Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and France, among others) to raise any questions, however sincere and well-founded, about its mainstream portrayal.

David Irving was arrested by Austrian police at gunpoint while en route to Vienna on personal business on November 11, 2005. He was then transferred to a maximum security prison, where he was held without bail. Following his trial on February 20th, 2006, to the shock of many international observ-

ers and academics, *Irving was sentenced to three years in prison* on the basis of having uttered "illegal speech."

A nonviolent thinker

Under no circumstances has Mr. Irving ever advocated, participated in, or pronounced any ethnic hatred or violence towards the Jewish community or anyone else—yet he is treated with more severity than many dangerous criminals. Although he is a best-selling author and a prominent and respected British citizen, his own government has so far done *nothing* to secure his release or to defend his basic civil liberties. Neither have the media made Irving's case a *cause celebre*, as they did with Salman Rushdie, who was never even arrested or charged.

Why Protest?

In the West, the French philosopher Voltaire is widely revered for having said, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

This sentiment is the hallmark of any truly free and open society. Our freedom of speech and freedom of inquiry rest upon the protection of all speech, *especially* that which is unpopular or is considered "dangerous" by the powers that be.

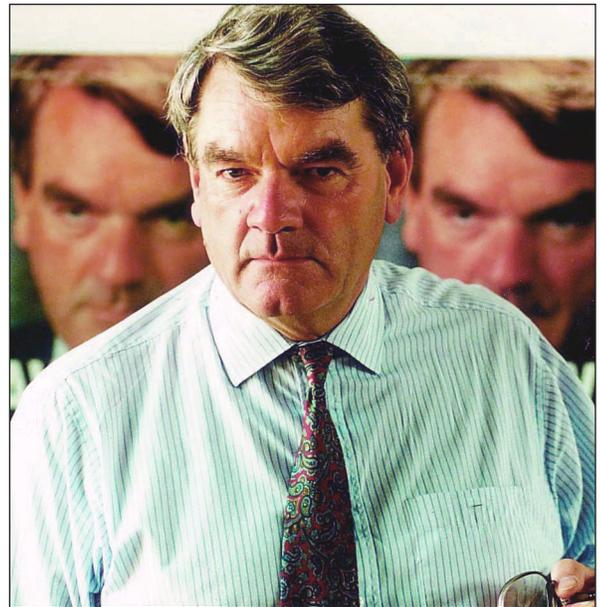
If we truly believe in freedom, it is our duty to safeguard the free speech of those individuals and institutions with which we agree—and those with which we disagree.

Any attempt to stifle free inquiry and rational discourse upon any subject whatever—including the Holocaust—is a move towards tyranny and suppression of fundamental civil rights.

Orwell was right

Orwellian laws which make *any* form of political, historical, or religious speech—no matter how controversial—into a criminal offense have no place in a free society.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights is very clear on the right to freedom of speech: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression." David Irving is



currently imprisoned in a maximum security penitentiary usually reserved for violent offenders. He is serving time on the basis of an historical opinion he voiced in 1989!

Our freedoms are threatened

When a First World, supposedly "democratic" nation such as Austria imprisons and persecutes individuals on the basis of their speech, it is clear we are living in dangerous times. *Laws like Austria's, which define speech as a crime, set a dangerous precedent. They threaten the freedom of everyone.*

Historians, whose essential task it is to question and dissect every aspect of the past in order to reach the deepest objective truth, must never be constrained from asking questions by governments or special interest groups.

Join us in expressing solidarity with Mr. Irving, demanding his freedom, and calling for an end to laws which criminalize free thought, free inquiry, and free speech. Write, call, or fax the Austrian embassy and demand amnesty for David Irving today:

Ambassador Eva Nowotny, Ph.D
3524 International Court, NW
Washington, DC 20008-3027
Tel: (202) 895-6700
Fax: (202) 895-6750
austrianembassy@washington.nu

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POST OFFICE BOX 5145
CHARLOTTESVILLE • VA 22905 • USA
NATIONALVANGUARD.ORG