

David Irving

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

We have just entered the month of Adar. It is the month of Jewish "carnevale" and the downfall of irrational hatred. So it's appropriate to write about another example of the latter.

David Irving, one time historian of note when he concentrated on facts, is, according to an objective English judge, "an anti-Semitic racist". This is why President Ahmadinejad of Iran is an admirer of his and wants him to come to Iran to chair a conference that will, of course, prove that the Holocaust never happened. Don't we just love "academic" conferences when the conclusion has already been decided upon?

At his trial in Austria this month he professed to have seen the light and repented. Yes, he did as recently as 1989 assert that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, but now, having read Eichmann's diaries (been available for forty years), he accepted there might have been one or two it'sy bitsy ones. The Austrian judge said he did not for one moment believe his change of mind or his apology. And he was right, because two days later, from his cell, he told the BBC, "Given the ruthless efficiency of the Germans, if there was an extermination program to kill all the Jews, how come so many survived?" Indeed, and how come the Nazis lost the war!

Shortly a whacko called Ernest Zundel, deported from Canada to Germany, faces similar charges. I wonder if he will also recant his belief that the Nazis invented Unidentified Flying Objects, UFO's.

Some fifteen countries have a law which makes Holocaust Denial an offence. But neither in Britain nor in America is there such a law. There, warped minds, regardless of race or religion, are free to claim whatever they like about Jews, Nazis and gas chambers (just don't display the Ten Commandments anywhere in public!).

Since it is rather difficult to fly in the face of overwhelming evidence (even Left Wing ideologues have found this a problem) the next best thing, if one cannot deny the Holocaust, is the now seemingly universally accepted equation of Israelis with Nazis. No one has yet shown that there are gas chambers in the West Bank, but irrationality knows no boundaries. "[As long as the heart preserves desire, the mind preserves illusions.](#)"

I have to admit that I have never been in favor of making any ideas illegal. We all know the aphorism, "[I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.](#)" In our society this means allowing Muslim clerics to declare that we are a corrupt doomed bunch of sinners and that those societies that allow them to say this should be wiped off the map (so long as they are the ones left standing).

It is precisely because some extremists want to stop us making fun of religious pomposity and lunacy that we must fight for the rights of lunatics.

The issue should never be one of censoring thought, however crooked, but of controlling actions to ensure one fanatic or another, regardless of background or faith, can impose his or her sick ideas on anyone else.

Compulsory censorship never works, whether it's to do with politics, entertainment, pornography or religion. It stokes up resentment. It drives evil thoughts underground and it give Iranian Ayatollahs another excuse for castigating Western double-standards (don't even ask about theirs). Wherever it is around the world, in the long run, more availability of ideas and opinions liberates. More restrictions constrict. Look how China fears the internet. And, incidentally, look at the Western internet companies who are so enslaved to material profit that they kowtow to Chinese censorship. No wonder we in the West are accused of hypocrisy.

Just as the NGO conference in Durban revealed the extent of the poison of anti-Semitism and its infection of almost the entire NGO community, so too conferences that allow all sorts of madness to be aired reveal the nature of the disease, who its proponents are, and tends to encourage more research to nail the lies and distortions. Of course, they never do any good because, as we know, you can get away with blue murder so long as you supply China with oil and ruin the world to supply American SUV's.

The answer to idiots is to expose their idiocy. There is a fascinating contradiction in Proverbs 26 where it says both, "[Do not answer a fool according to his folly.](#)" and, "[Answer a fool according to his folly.](#)" I believe this means that where a fool is incapable of hearing another point of view, then don't even try. But where it is not the fool so much as the idea that is the problem, then reply by addressing the idea. Trying to muzzle a fool like Irving only makes him a martyr and gives him more publicity!

The reaction of the Israeli cartoonists to Ahmadinejad is the best one. Let's have our own anti-Holocaust cartoons. Only sick people will enjoy them, but they would demonstrate that there are no sacred cows and everything can be aired and ridiculed, because in our religion it is neither the thought nor the word that counts, but the action (Ethics 1.17).

In the end, facts speak, historians reveal more than they conceal, and to quote from the Bible again (Psalms 85.12). "Truth bursts forth from the earth." Delighted as I am that Irving is sitting in jail, I do not believe there should be laws against ideas, only actions. The answer to mad ideas lies in education, not legislation.

[submit feedback](#)