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## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Briefing Paper**

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## **International Holocaust Denier to Speak in Billings: Human Rights Network Notes Potential Connection to Local Creativity Movement**

An internationally-known Holocaust denier, David Irving, is scheduled to come to Montana in early May to speak about a prominent member of Adolph Hitler's Third Reich. Irving plans to be in Billings on May 6, 2011.<sup>1</sup>

David Irving bills himself as 73-year-old British writer who has authored 30 books on the military history of World War II and Nazi Germany. However, his reputation as a historian has been discredited because of his sympathy for the Third Reich and anti-Semitism. A 1996 court case found that he has "for his own ideological reasons persistently and deliberately misrepresented and manipulated historical evidence."

"If David Irving was ever a legitimate historian, that time has passed," says the Montana Human Rights Network's Travis McAdam. "Now, his audiences tend to be hardcore white supremacists and anti-Semites. Irving is a reminder that we must remember history and learn from the atrocities of the past to make sure they don't happen again."

Irving is on a spring tour across the West giving presentations titled, "The Life and Death of Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's Lieutenant. 44 years in 44 minutes." [Himmler](#) was a leader of Hitler's SS and a key architect of the Holocaust. According to an Irving website, people who purchase tickets for his presentation about Himmler will have the event's location e-mailed to them. The tour includes stops in Portland, Seattle, Spokane, Kalispell, Billings, Bismarck, and Fargo. For more background on Irving, see "David Irving: A Disgraced Historian" below.

Irving's stop in Billings follows increased white supremacist activity in the area over the past few years. The Montana Creativity Movement's [Allen Goff](#) has been [a ringleader](#) of this activism, and he has consistently been in trouble with the law. In May 2010, Goff was acquitted

of [felony weapons](#) charges for shooting a Hispanic teenager. [Evidence of Goff's white supremacist](#) activities was withheld from the jury on the judge's orders, and Goff claimed the shooting was in self-defense. While he avoided the felony conviction, he did [plead guilty](#) to a misdemeanor weapons charge. Just a few months later, [Goff violated parole](#) by shoplifting a baseball cap from a store. In November 2010, he was again arrested, this time for [felony assault](#) with a weapon for pointing a gun at and threatening to kill an American Indian in a store parking lot. While awaiting trial, Goff has been active in white supremacist recruiting and communications online, in addition to organizing local and regional meetings and events.<sup>2</sup>

“We cannot say for sure that David Irving is coming to Billings because of Allen Goff and the Montana Creativity Movement's activities,” says Eran Thompson, a Human Rights Network board member and the chair of Not In Our Town Billings. “However, we think it's more than just a coincidence that Irving picked Billings and Kalispell, which are two places that have seen an explosion in white supremacist organizing over the past few years.”

Before speaking in Billings, David Irving has a presentation scheduled in Kalispell. In Kalispell, nationally-known white supremacist [April Gaede](#), and her husband Mark Harrington, have participated in a variety of public [white supremacist events](#) in the area, in addition to supporting the creation of an Aryan Homeland in the Flathead Valley that is called [Kalispell Pioneer Little Europe](#). Both Gaede and Harrington currently face assault and criminal-mischief charges for their alleged actions against a community member. Additionally, Gaede helped bring Canadian white supremacist [Paul Fromm](#) to speak in Kalispell in January 2011.<sup>3</sup> Kalispell is also home to two prominent members of The Creativity Movement, [Craig Cobb](#) and [Zac Harp](#).

## **David Irving: A Disgraced Historian**

David Irving has been described as the most skillful preacher of Holocaust denial in the world today.<sup>4</sup> His reputation as a historian was widely discredited after he unsuccessfully brought a libel suit against American historian Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books in 1996. In her book, Lipstadt had called Irving a Holocaust denier, falsifier, and bigot, and said that he manipulated and distorted real documents. The court found that Irving was an active Holocaust denier, anti-Semite, and racist, that “associates with right-wing extremists who promote neo-Nazism,” and that he had “for his own ideological reasons persistently and deliberately misrepresented and manipulated historical evidence.”<sup>5</sup>

Irving wrote his first book in 1963, and it was about the Allied bombing of Dresden during World War II. The book was successful, but Irving's works began to include revisionist history. He began writing biographies, and many aging former mid-ranking and high-ranking Nazis donated diaries and other material in hopes of a favorable story. Irving has described his work as the act of “stone-cleaning” Hitler, during which he clears off the “slime” that he feels had been unjustly applied to Hitler's reputation.<sup>6</sup>

Until the mid-1980s, Irving moved between being a serious author and an anti-Semitic Holocaust denier. However, his continued praise of Hitler's Third Reich and his anti-Semitic remarks began to damage his reputation. In a 1983 speech, he proclaimed Hitler to be the “biggest friend the Jews had in the Third Reich.”<sup>7</sup> In a 1986 speech in Australia, he argued that photographs of

both survivors and victims of the Holocaust taken by Allied soldiers in the spring of 1945 proved that the Allies were responsible for the Holocaust, not the Germans.<sup>8</sup>

At a speech in Munich, Germany, in 1990, Irving claimed there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz and, as a result, he was convicted of Holocaust denial in Germany in 1991.<sup>9</sup> Irving has since been banned from visiting Germany.<sup>10</sup> Irving claims that, in 2004, he was also banned from New Zealand.<sup>11</sup> In 2005, he was arrested in Austria, where Holocaust denial is a crime, because of a 1989 presentation in which he said there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz. He was banned from entering Austria after his release in 2006.<sup>12</sup>

In 1991, Irving told the *Jewish Chronicle* that, “The Jews are very foolish not to abandon the gas chamber theory while they still have time.” Irving went on to say that he believed anti-Semitism will increase all over the world because “the Jews have exploited people with the gas chamber legend” and that “In ten years, Israel will cease to exist and the Jews will have to return to Europe.”<sup>13</sup>

Irving is part of a radical right-wing faction that works to rewrite history and spread a hateful message in communities around the world. His visit to Montana only further perpetuates the efforts of local white supremacists. Especially in the Flathead Valley, [the pro-Nazi and pro-Hitler films](#) shown by local white supremacists are presented as educational events to create dialogue about history. In reality, the films and Irving are tools used by anti-Semites and white supremacists to try and make their beliefs appear less offensive and more academic.

“All Irving tries to do is make anti-Semitism more palatable by promoting his version of revisionist history,” says the Network’s McAdam. “He hasn’t fooled legitimate historians, the courts, or governments around the world. We have confidence that neither Billings nor Kalispell will be duped by his current road show.”

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<sup>1</sup> Stormfront, “David Irving US Tour in April and May 2011,” Feb. 13, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> *Billings Gazette*, April 20, 2010; *Billings Gazette*, May 18, 2010; *Billings Gazette*, July 2, 2010; *Billings Gazette*, Sept. 10, 2010; *Billings Gazette*, Nov. 30, 2010; Postings, Creativity Forum and Montana Creativity Movement website.

<sup>3</sup> Stormfront, “Paul Fromm to Speak in Kalispell January 19<sup>th</sup>,” Jan. 8, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman, *Denying History* (2002), University of California Press.

<sup>5</sup> *The Guardian*, “The Ruling Against David Irving,” April 11, 2000; BBC News Online, “Hitler Historian Loses Libel Case,” April 11, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler* (1999), Harper Perennial, p.232.

<sup>7</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (1993), New York Free Press.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial* (2002), Indiana University Press.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (1993), New York Free Press.

<sup>11</sup> David Irving, website, <http://www.fpp.co.uk/newzealand/index2.html>.

<sup>12</sup> *Mail Online*, “My Death Camp Tours Aren’t Sick: Holocaust Denier David Irving Defends Plans for ‘Nazi Travel’ Tourist Trail,” Sept. 23, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Stern, *Holocaust Denial* (1992), American Jewish Committee.