Victory for Deborah Lipstadt

AJC played a significant but little known role in Professor Deborah Lipstadt’s April 11 victory in a libel suit brought against her by Holocaust denier David Irving. “With David Harris and many others, including Bob Goodkind and Bob Rifkind, AJC quietly, but with utter conviction, supported [the defense],” said James Libson, a partner at Lipstadt’s London law firm, Mischon de Reya, which was given an award at the Annual Meeting. “AJC’s efforts have been remarkable. It has provided true leadership, which has been vindicated in the trial result.” Ken Stern, AJC’s expert on hate groups, contributed to the case as “a key member” of Lipstadt’s defense team.

This is “a story of which we can all be very proud,” said E. Robert Goodkind, chair of AJC’s National Council and of the Annual Meeting, where Lipstadt made her first public appearance since the trial.

Professor Lipstadt:
“This [trial] could have been in many respects a valley of extreme darkness. I sat in court and watched David Irving dancing on the graves of victims. I watched him make fun of women and children. Make fun of testimony in Nuremberg. Make fun of Elie Wiesel, whom he called Elie Weasel; make fun of Jewish organizations; make fun of fine, upstanding, wonderful people, and talk about them in the most perverted way possible.

“This trial was not about proving that the Holocaust happened. We don’t need any judge for that. As fine a judge as Charles Gray is, the history of the Holocaust would have stood without him. We were there to prove that [Irving] is not a historian. That this man lies and manipulates, and he cannot be trusted.

“If we go to Psalm 23—there was darkness, but there was also tov v’chesed, goodness and mercy. Irving was right about one thing: There was a conspiracy, not an international Jewish conspiracy, but a conspiracy of goodness, of people who abhor racism and anti-Semitism.

“When you encounter pure evil, there is no compromise. I feel blessed to have been given the opportunity and the support to be able to stand up to someone who spreads so much evil, and most of all to stand up for so many who can no longer stand up for themselves.”

“This is a man who is filled and motivated by hatred, who wants to and enjoys doing evil. This is a man who lies and then believes his lies.”

Professor Deborah Lipstadt, speaking of Holocaust denier David Irving