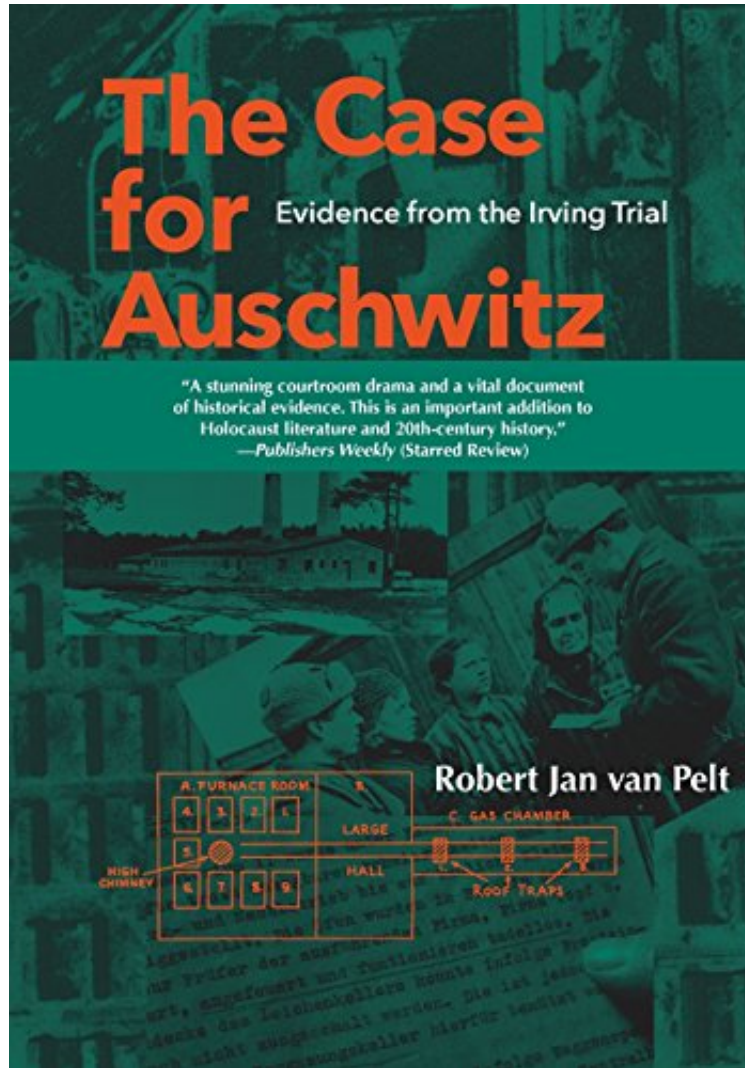


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The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial

Robert Jan Van Pelt

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Robert Jan Van Pelt : The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial:

From January to April 2000 historian David Irving brought a high-profile libel case against Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt in the British High Court, charging that Lipstadts book, Denying the Holocaust (1993), falsely

labeled him a Holocaust denier. The question about the evidence for Auschwitz as a death camp played a central role in these proceedings. Irving had based his alleged denial of the Holocaust in part on a 1988 report by an American execution specialist, Fred Leuchter, which claimed that there was no evidence for homicidal gas chambers in Auschwitz. In connection with their defense, Penguin and Lipstadt engaged architectural historian Robert Jan van Pelt to present evidence for our knowledge that Auschwitz had been an extermination camp where up to one million Jews were killed, mainly in gas chambers. Employing painstaking historical scholarship, van Pelt prepared and submitted an exhaustive forensic report that he successfully defended in cross-examination in court.

Although at times potentially difficult for the lay reader, this book is worth reading for its explanation of how and why Auschwitz became central in the Irving-Lipstadt trial, as well as why the gas chambers have become so important for Holocaust denial. It is a significant contribution to the Holocaust canon. (Jewish Book Council) Fascinating insights into the conduct of the case and the main personalities . . . (Jewish Chronicle) Readers of this book, which will become the sine qua non of all writing about the Holocaust, should be warned that it describes the gruesome nature of Holocaust history, and the equally gruesome role of those who have sought to deny it. (The Jerusalem Post) The newly released paperback version of Van Pelts definitive 2002 book *The Case of Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial* shows that the best defense against malicious efforts to doubt the obvious is exhaustive familiarity with sources coupled with simple logic. . . . These are just two small examples from Van Pelts massive study, whose overwhelming empirical heft leaves no doubt about Auschwitzs harrowing historicity. (Jewish of Books) The Irving case has done for the new century what the Nuremberg tribunals or the Eichmann trial did for earlier generations. (The Daily Telegraph) The bulk of the book is the methodical and chilling presentation of materials presented at the trial . . . interwoven with Irving's testimony and defense. Van Pelt has arranged an enormous amount of complex material succinctly and to great effect. Read as a whole, the book is a stunning courtroom drama and a vital document of historical evidence. This is an important addition to Holocaust literature and 20th-century history. (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) About the Author Robert Jan van Pelt is Professor in the School of Architecture, University of Waterloo, Canada. He is author (with Debrah Dwork) of *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* and winner of a National Jewish Book Award, 1996, and of the Spiro Kostof Book Award of the Society of Architectural Historians.