

# Ernst Zundel

Ernst Zundel, a German-born publisher, author and civil rights activist, has been a major figure in the worldwide Holocaust revisionist movement. For seven years he has been held behind bars, first in Canada and now in Germany, for his peaceful expression of non-conformist views. He is the most prominent “prisoner of conscience” in the western world today.

He is the author of countless booklets, newsletters and essays. He has made a name for himself as a prodigious publisher, a one-man public relations firm, and an able public speaker and organizer. Energetic, tenacious and courageous, he is dauntless in struggle against apparently insurmountable odds and seemingly invincible adversaries.

Ernst Zundel was born on April 24, 1939, in a small town in the Black Forest region of southwestern Germany. He emigrated to Canada at the age of 19, where he soon married and became the father of two sons. His career as a graphic artist was successful, with his work appearing, for example, on the front cover of Canada’s national news magazine, *Maclean’s*.

Setting aside his thriving career, he dedicated himself to the great task, as he saw it, of redeeming the sullied reputation of his fellow Germans. Through his Samisdat publishing house he distributed worldwide a prodigious quantity of books, booklets, leaflets, newsletters, and audio and video cassettes. Simon Wiesenthal, the well-known “Nazi hunter,” called Zundel the world’s number one distributor of allegedly dangerous literature and cassettes.

Zundel is probably best known for his central role in the “Holocaust Trials” of 1985 and 1988. He was brought to court in Toronto on a charge of “publishing false news,” and specifically for publishing a reprint edition of a

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Ernst Zundel with Ingrid Rimland at an IHR conference, May 2000

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Demonstrators in downtown Los Angeles, Feb.4, 2005 call for Zundel's release

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Zundel speaks at IHR conference in May 2000

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booklet entitled *Did Six Million Really Die?*.

Zundel's two lengthy trials – the 1985 trial lasted two months, and the 1988 trial lasted four months – have been the closest thing anywhere to full scale debates on the Holocaust issue. For the first time ever, “Holocaust survivors” and Holocaust historians were closely and critically questioned under oath about their claims and views.

To wage the legal battle that was forced upon him, he brought together an impressive international team of revisionist scholars, legal specialists, researchers, and many others. From numerous libraries and archives in North America and Europe, this group assembled at “Zundelhaus” one of the most impressive collections of evidence anywhere on this chapter of history.

Among those who testified on Zundel's behalf in the trials were Robert Faurisson, David Irving, Mark Weber, William Lindsey, Udo Walendy, and Bradley Smith. As a result of the two trials, an enormous quantity of compelling evidence refuting the Holocaust extermination story was presented to the court and thereby was made part of the permanent public record. Perhaps the most important of this evidence was the historic testimony of American gas chamber expert Fred Leuchter about his on-site forensic examination of the alleged extermination gas chambers in Poland.

Zundel was found guilty in the 1985 trial, but the verdict was set aside by the provincial appeals court. It ruled that the judge in that trial had, among other things, given improper instructions to the jury, and had improperly excluded defense evidence. In May 1988, at the conclusion of the second Zundel trial, the jury declared him guilty. A few days later, he was sentenced to nine months imprisonment.

On appeal, Canada's Supreme Court threw out the conviction, declaring on August 27, 1992, that the archaic “false news” law under which he had been convicted was a violation of the country's Charter of Rights. This was not only a personal vindication by Canada's highest

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With Ingrid Rimland in Palm Springs

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Zundel with John Sack

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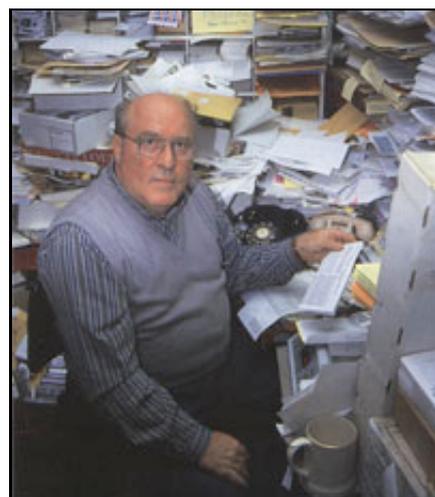
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Zundel with Ingrid Rimland in San Francisco

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At work at Zundelhaus



court; Ernst Zundel secured an important victory for the rights of all Canadians.

Zundel's next great legal battle was fought out before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in Toronto on charges, instigated by Jewish groups, of promoting "hatred or contempt" against Jews through the "Zundelsite" Internet web site ([www.zundelsite.org](http://www.zundelsite.org)), operated by Ingrid Rimland from the United States. In this legal action, as the Tribunal's presiding Commissioner declared, the truth or validity of the supposedly "hateful" items was not a consideration. (Ultimately the Tribunal declared the "Zundelsite" to be unlawful, but because the site is based in the US, the ruling is unenforceable.)

During the 42 years he lived in Canada, Ernst Zundel was never convicted of a crime. He was, however, repeatedly a victim of violence and hate. He survived three assassination attempts, including by arson and pipe bomb. He's also endured years of legal harassment and repeated jailings.

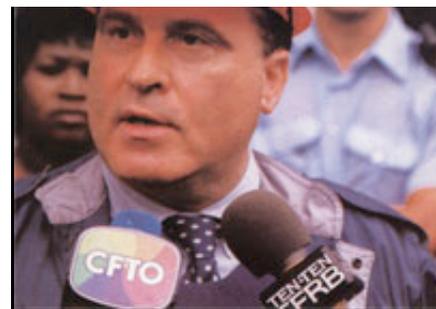
After more than four decades in Canada, including a failed effort to acquire Canadian citizenship, he moved to the United States, where in January 2000 he married Ingrid Rimland.

His wife, a gifted writer and noted author in her own right, was born in an ethnic German Mennonite community in Ukraine. As a child she and her family were victims of Soviet rule and the ravages of World War II. After the war she lived for a time in Paraguay and Canada, and then for years in California. Ingrid Rimland holds a doctoral degree in education, and is a naturalized US citizen.

On February 5, 2003, Ernst Zundel was arrested at their quiet home in the mountain region of eastern Tennessee. He was seized on the pretext that he had violated immigration regulations, or had missed an interview date with US immigration authorities, even though he had entered the US legally, was married to an American citizen, had no criminal record, and was acting diligently, and in full accord

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Toronto Holocaust trial, 1980s

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Toronto Holocaust trial, 1980s

with the law, to secure status as a permanent legal resident.

After being held for two weeks, he was deported to Canada. For two years – from mid-February 2003 to March 1, 2005 – he was held in solitary confinement in the Toronto West Detention Centre, on the pretext that he is a threat to national security.

His arrest and detention generated wide media attention. A few Canadian newspapers, including Toronto's prestigious *Globe and Mail*, and several independent analysts, acknowledged the injustice of his incarceration on an empty pretext.

Among those who protested Zundel's unjust treatment was Bill Dunphy, a veteran investigative journalist and editor for the daily *Hamilton Spectator*. He spent six years probing Canada's "white supremacist" movement, and got to know Zundel personally. Although he has no sympathy for Zundel's views, in a hard-hitting column (*Hamilton Spectator*, May 14, 2003) he told readers:

"Our government has seized and branded Ernst Zundel, stripped him of his human rights, tried him in secret and found him wanting, and will now hand him over to a foreign government anxious to throw him in jail..."

"... Zundel – who did this country a favour by wiping off the books our disgraceful False News laws – has never once been convicted of a criminal offence in this country, never once found to have violated the hate crime laws that rest snugly around the throat of free expression in this country.

"Calculating correctly that there was no political cost, no 'down side' to slipping on the jackboots to kick a reviled old man out of our country, our government cobbled together their best insults and innuendo, and Lord knows what secret 'evidence,' and branded Ernst Zundel a threat to national security.

"I know this man, his local and international contacts and I know this movement. And after

reading the 58-page ‘unclassified’ summary of the government’s case, I can assure you there is no justice here. Their ‘evidence’ is riddled with errors and misinformation, hearsay and inflammatory innuendo. Dead men walk again, and the shattered bits of shoddy secret networks long since collapsed under the weight of their own ineptitude are made whole and menacing once again. It is a shameful piece of dishonest, unreliable tripe.”

The Canadian Association for Free Expression (CAFE), a free speech advocacy group, fought for Zundel’s release. “Mr. Zundel is quite literally a political prisoner,” said CAFE director Paul Fromm, who also served as Zundel’s legal representative in his detention hearings. “He is being held in solitary confinement solely for the non-violent expression of his political views.”

The allegation that Zundel might be a threat to national security “is mischievous nonsense,” said Fromm. “Zundel has been politically active in Canada for 40 years. He’s a public figure. His writings and speeches are available on-line. He’s been investigated for years by the police. He’s an open book. Zundel has never advocated or practised violence, nor have his followers,” Fromm added. “He’s a pacifist and a publisher.”

Zundel was held in Canada not because his views are unpopular, or because he was a “security risk.” He was in prison there because Jewish groups wanted him there, and because he promoted views that the Jewish-Zionist lobby considers harmful to its interests.

This lobby is the decisive, critical factor in the decades-old campaign to silence him. The only sustained and institutionalized effort to imprison Zundel has come from this lobby, which includes the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canadian Holocaust Remembrance Association, and the League for Human Rights of B’nai B’rith (with the Anti-Defamation League, its counterpart in the US).

On March 1, 2005, Zundel was deported to

Germany, just as Jewish groups had been demanding. Since then he has been held in the Mannheim prison where he faces years of imprisonment for the “thought crime” of “denying the Holocaust.” (“Holocaust denial” is against the law in Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland and some other European countries.)

On June 29, 2005, the public prosecutor in Mannheim formally charged Zundel with inciting “hatred” by having written or distributed texts that “approve, deny or play down” genocidal actions carried out by Germany’s wartime regime, and which “denigrate the memory of the [Jewish] dead. The first and foremost of the writings cited in the indictment are texts posted on the “Zundel site” website, which is registered and maintained by his wife in the United States, where all such writings are entirely legal.

Zundel’s three-month trial concluded on February 15, 2007, when a court in Mannheim sentenced him to five years imprisonment for the crime of “popular incitement” under Germany’s notorious “Holocaust denial” statute. The 14 specific violations cited by the court included postings on the US-based “Zundel site” website. The court thus upheld claims by German authorities to punish individuals for writings that are legal in the country where they are published. Jewish groups quickly, and predictably, expressed approval of the verdict.

In recent years, growing numbers of scholars, intellectuals and newspapers in Europe and other countries have condemned the laws in some European countries under which Zundel and others have been imprisoned, fined and forced into exile for expressing skeptical views on “the Holocaust.” These laws, critics point out, are selective, hypocritical and violate basic principles of free speech and free expression.

Ernst Zundel, who sometimes describes himself as a “Swabian peasant,” is an outgoing, good-humored man who is blessed with a rare combination of unflagging optimism and practical ability. He maintains this infectious

spirit even under very trying conditions. He is an unusually alert and sensitive individual with a keen understanding of human nature. He knows how to persuade, cajole and encourage others to give their best for the greater good. He inspires confidence, loyalty and affection.

Of this remarkable man, Robert Faurisson wrote in 1988: "Zundel may once again go to prison for his research and beliefs or be threatened with deportation. All this is possible. Anything may happen when there is an intellectual crisis and a realignment of historical concepts of such a dimension. Revisionism is the great intellectual adventure of the end of this century. Whatever happens, Ernst Zundel is already the victor."

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For more about Ernst Zundel, the injustice against him, and the worldwide campaign to secure his freedom, see the [Zundelsite](#), including "[David Against Goliath](#)".

See also:

["Ernst Zundel: Letters from Prison"](#)

["American Rally for Zundel's Freedom"](#) (Feb. 2005)

["Ernst Zundel: Prisoner of Conscience, Victim of Thought Crime"](#)

["Who is Ernst Zundel. And Why is He in Jail?"](#) (Sept. 2003)

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