

The apologist for terror and the BBC

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The chances are you haven't heard of Nicholas Kollerstrom. At first glance this North London resident, who holds a PhD in astronomy, appears quaintly eccentric with his keen interest in the "science" of alchemy. Harmless enough you might think. But behind the veneer Nicholas Kollerstrom is in fact an antisemite, Holocaust denier and apologist for terror.

Having written a number of books on astronomy quite how Kollerstrom came to dip his toes in the foetid waters of Holocaust denial is unclear. But it was not long before Kollerstrom was fully immersed in it. It was to be some baptism.

On 22 February 2007 Kollerstrom joined the forum of an American Holocaust denial website called ironically the Campaign for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH). His user name was "astro3". CODOH is run by Bradley R. Smith, a veteran Californian antisemite who founded the organisation in 1987 with the assistance of Mark Weber of the Institute of Historical Review (IHR). Smith too was closely associated with the IHR, which is the world's leading forum for Holocaust denial, and Weber, a former member of the neo-nazi National Alliance, was a co-director of CODOH. Smith used to publish a newsletter called Prima Facie, which denied that Jews were exterminated during the Holocaust and which was gleefully advertised in Spearhead, then the house organ of the British National Party.

In an essay entitled "The Auschwitz 'Gas Chamber' Illusion" Kollerstrom argued that although there were gas chambers at Auschwitz these "were operated for purposes of hygiene and disinfection, in order to save lives and not take them". The real victims, he argued, were the Germans because: "As surprising as it may sound, the only intentional mass extermination program in the concentration camps of WW2 was

targeted at Germans. From April, 1945 five million Germans were rounded up after surrendering, and deliberately starved until well over one million had died."

By comparison the Jews had a rather nice time. In an article entitled "School Trips to Auschwitz" posted on CODOH in March 2008 Kollerstrom put forward his view that Auschwitz was not in fact a horrific death camp, but a Nazi-run Butlins-style holiday camp, where inmates could sunbathe by "the elegant swimming pool" while watching water-polo matches, and paint pictures and read books serenaded by no fewer than six orchestras. They could also go to the cinema, theatre or, if the urge took them, the brothel, or simply write postcards to loved ones, which the postman would collect "twice weekly".

Kollerstrom believes his arguments are original and groundbreaking. However, as even a cursory perusal of his writings reveals, his "research" is nothing of the sort. It represents the undigested and regurgitated pseudo-science of comprehensively discredited sources such as Fred Leuchter. Kollerstrom denies he is a Holocaust denier. He might even believe it. He recently wrote to the Jewish Chronicle protesting his innocence and denying he was a Nazi sympathiser.

Whether or not he is a Nazi sympathiser is immaterial. He uses far-right antisemitic sources to argue far-right antisemitic causes. Kollerstrom is a Holocaust denier.

Holocaust denial is not Kollerstrom's only interest. He is also particularly active in what is broadly known as the 9/11 "truth" movement, which peddles some of the craziest conspiracy theories around.

Kollerstrom is not, as he is wont to style himself, a courageous lone researcher seeking to penetrate beyond the "official" narrative of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and 7 July 2005. He is a fantasist who seeks to defend the indefensible. Of the 7/7 bombers he wrote: "Very simply, there is no evidence that puts the four alleged bombers in London on that morning, let alone setting off explosives, that would stand up in a court of law for two minutes. Period, end of story."

Kollerstrom completely ignores the incontrovertible evidence of their guilt, harassing and distressing the victims' families with his spurious claims that it was a "false flag" operation perpetrated by "CIA-Mossad-MI6" to buttress the case for the "war on terror". One could dismiss him as a deluded idiot but taken together with his Holocaust denial it is hard to see him as anything other than an apologist for terror.

His activities were highlighted on 12 April when he attended the launch of the peace activist Milan Rai's book about the London bombings and attempted to hijack it, giving a speech from the floor on the supposed "innocence" of the terrorists. Survivors of the 7/7 attacks such as Rachel North were appalled. She was not alone. On 14 April Kollerstrom was unmasked as a Holocaust denier by the Blairwatch website.

Three days later Tony Gosling, who moderates the 911forum website to which Kollerstrom contributed, banned discussion of the Holocaust in a thread entitled "Mossad trick – Link 9/11 Truth to Holocaust Denial". Even when confronted with irrefutable proof that Kollerstrom was an antisemite, the "truth" movement interpreted it as evidence of an Israeli plot to discredit their beliefs by linking them to antisemitism.

Kollerstrom aside, there is ample evidence that antisemitism and Holocaust denial remain rife within the so-called "truth" movement, where the denizens of such forums can be found muttering darkly about 9/11 being a "Zionist crime", which dovetails neatly with Islamist claims that it was an "inside job".

Perhaps the most famous son of the "truth" movement is the former MI5 agent turned "whistle blower" David Shayler who, if the Daily Mail is to be believed, now proclaims himself to be the Son of God. Further evidence that Shayler is experiencing some psychological difficulty came in a recent speech in which he stated, "we know from documents like the Protocols of the Elders of Zion that the New World Order were going to use control of the money supply to create depressions and recessions". The Protocols is a notorious forgery from tsarist times, often quoted by nazis.

Kollerstrom had held an honorary research fellowship in University College London (UCL) Science and Technology Studies. However, when his activities became known UCL terminated the fellowship with "immediate effect" on 22 April.

Running out of forums in which to peddle his odious views, Kollerstrom turned to the Iranian satellite television station Press TV, founded in July 2007 "to break the global media stranglehold of Western outlets" and to compete with other satellite channels such as the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera. It is funded up to the hilt by the Iranian regime to the tune of 27 million dollars.

In its mission statement Press TV claims to offer "unbiased" reporting and "in-depth and complete analyses of current affairs, portraying viewpoints, which are often ignored by current mainstream media outlets". Quite what this meant was revealed on 18 May 2008 when Press TV reproduced on its website Kollerstrom's article "The Walls of Auschwitz", which claimed the gas-sing of the Jews was "scientifically impossible".

Press TV became acquainted with Kollerstrom through the agency of David Irving's cheerleader-in-chief, Lady Michele Renouf. On 7 May, shortly after his dismissal from UCL, Kollerstrom had approached her for "advice" on whether he would be able to "travel safely" to Germany to present his paper "the Walls of Auschwitz" to an academic conference in Berlin on the Holocaust. Never mind that he had not been invited nor was welcome at what was after all a genuine historical conference rather than an antisemitic free-for-all. Renouf advised him against going as he would no doubt be imprisoned, though this did not deter her from seeking a

press pass for the event herself, which was refused.

Renouf recommended to Press TV that they interview Kollerstrom about his "scientific article". Renouf has some clout with the Iranian media, boasting on her website of her "elected role" to take Tehran's antisemitic road show to Europe following her participation in the Tehran-sponsored Holocaust denial conference. There, to her evident delight, she met President Ahmadinejad, the toast of antisemites the world over following his calls for Israel to be wiped off the map.

Press TV duly broadcast an interview with the "distinguished academic" on 14 May. Kollerstrom evidently hoped that a scientific journal could be persuaded to sponsor his own on-site chemical analysis of the walls of Auschwitz "in the tradition of the Leuchter Report and the Rudolf Report".

His self-induced fall from grace did not deter the BBC from inviting Kollerstrom to be the subject of one programme in the new series of The Conspiracy Files to be broadcast in autumn. There was outrage when it was revealed that the BBC had paid his expenses though it emphatically denied paying him a fee. The Evening Standard revealed how in a particularly ghoulish manner Kollerstrom took to pestering and harassing the families of those who had lost loved ones in the 7/7 bombings. He put it to the father of one victim of the Tavistock Square bus bombing that her body had been placed there by the British, American and Israeli security services. He appears unmoved by the distress he caused.

According to the Evening Standard the BBC also paid for him to travel to Leeds to try to meet the family of the 7/7 ringleader Mohammed Sidique Khan and the relatives of the other bombers. They all refused to meet him. The victims' families have uniformly branded the BBC's disgraceful indulgence of Kollerstrom's warped theories an utter outrage. John Taylor, whose daughter died at Aldgate, observed "he is helping the terrorists more than anything and I am not happy with the BBC giving him a platform".

There are plenty of others equally astonished that the BBC should use public money to further the activities and agenda of a hardcore Holocaust denier and apologist for terrorism.

Britain's Holocaust deniers

Michele Renouf Cheerleader-in-chief to the writer David Irving, Lady Michele Renouf, who gained her title from a brief marriage to the Australian financier Sir Frank Renouf, has earned a reputation as one of the most active antisemites in Britain and indeed Europe. Renouf, who runs Telling Films, a company that distributes DVDs denying the Holocaust, was banned from addressing the Croydon BNP branch by Nick Griffin, the party chairman, for fear her presence might taint the BNP.

Ever one for the double standard, Griffin was spotted sharing a platform with her in the US together with David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader, in 2005. She attended the Holocaust denial conference in Tehran in 2006 and has maintained her links to Iranian antisemites ever since.

Richard Edmonds who was the BNP's national activities organiser in the 1990s, has recently found a new acceptability within the BNP for the Jew-baiting and Holocaust denial he has made his speciality for three decades both here and abroad. This should come as no surprise in a party that has adopted Arthur Kemp's classic antisemitic work *March of the Titans* as its main ideological primer. After the BNP came into existence, Edmonds picked up from where Martin Webster, the national organiser of the National Front during its 1970s heyday, left off by producing a new edition of the NF's *Holocaust News*. Hundreds of thousands of copies of this hate sheet were distributed internationally. A devotee of David Irving Edmonds demonstrated against Irving's imprisonment in Austria outside the Austrian Embassy in 2005.

Yakob Zaki Born James Dickie, Yakob Zaki is a Muslim convert who works as an associate director of the pro-Iranian Muslim Institute, in which capacity he has contributed Holocaust denial articles to its publication *Crescent International* as well as the Tehran-based publication *Kayhan*. Addressing a rally of the Islamist group *al-Muhajiroun* in Wembley in April 1998 Zaki declared: "nobody was gassed to death in the concentration camps ... David Irving has the right idea, destroy the Holocaust myth and you have destroyed Israel."

David Irving Once upon a time David Irving had a promising historical career ahead of him and his books were favourably reviewed by mainstream broadsheet papers. But his reputation has gone downhill since he was branded a liar in a libel action over his 1968 book *The Destruction of Convoy PQ17*. He has accumulated bans from entering several countries and has convictions in Europe. He famously lost a libel action against the American academic Deborah Lipstadt, when Mr Justice Gray described him an "active Holocaust denier", an antisemite and racist who "associates with right-wing extremists who promote neo-Nazism" and who "for his own ideological reasons persistently and deliberately misrepresented and manipulated historical evidence". He

was imprisoned in Austria in 2005 for “glorifying and identifying with the German Nazi Party”. Nevertheless Irving maintains his high standing among antisemites the world over and enjoys substantial financial backing from them.

James Thring who is the convener of Planning for Peace and the author of *Peace with Iran*, was a close confidant of the veteran antisemite Lady Jane Birdwood. In May 2002 he spoke at a conference in Baghdad alongside the Russian fascist Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the French far-right [*This is a mistake for "far left"*] activist Serge Thion and the Respect MP George Galloway. He has declared that Israel is “an illegal, criminal, psychopathic, belligerent, apartheid entity bent on desecrating the Holy Land and destroying anyone or even any country that tries to seek justice for the Palestinians”. After David Irving’s imprisonment in 2005 Thring was among those who demonstrated outside the Austrian Embassy for his release.

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