

# DEBATING THE HOLOCAUST



# Debating the Holocaust

A New Look at Both Sides

**By Prof. Dr. Thomas Dalton**



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## Author's Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of this book, published in 2009, underwent three initial printings, each with slight textual and layout modifications. The final version, marked 'Third printing,' has sufficed for the past six years. But recent developments in the news, in world events and in the historiography of the Holocaust have necessitated a revised second edition of this book.

The general organization and chapter structure remain unchanged. The most-significant revisions are as follows: Chapter 4 on the death matrix is now based on the 6-million overall death toll, rather than Raul Hilberg's estimate of 5.1 million. Correspondingly, working (orthodox) figures for five of the six death camps have also been significantly increased; Auschwitz remains largely unchanged. Also, the sections on the ghettos and on the *Einsatzgruppen* have been significantly expanded in order to give appropriate space to these two important aspects. Chapter 5 on Chelmno now includes reference to three important works on that camp that were not available for the first edition. The account of the excavations on the grounds of the former "Operation Reinhardt" camps in Chapter 8 has been updated based on recent developments at those sites. Chapter 9 on Majdanek has been significantly modified to reflect the recent writings of current director of the camp museum Tomasz Kranz. In Chapter 11, the 'revisionist Holocaust' death-toll estimate has been increased from 516,000 to 570,000, though this reflects no fundamental shift in outlook. Many of the statistics and factual data in Chapter 12 have been updated. And the epilogue has been significantly expanded.

Importantly, however, the general conclusion is unchanged: the traditional Holocaust story is deeply flawed, and its advocates continue to resort to lies, deception and heavy-handed oppression to stifle open discussion. Only an impartial and unbiased investigation can get to the root of the present debate. Here, as before, the reader is invited to be his own judge.

Thomas Dalton  
1 May 2015



## Introduction

This is a book about the Holocaust and about two competing views of that event. On the one hand we have the traditional, orthodox view: the six million Jewish casualties, the gas chambers, the cremation furnaces and mass graves. We know about the death camps. We are told about incriminating documents, photographs and hard evidence. Countless books and films reiterate the conventional view. Historians can call on thousands of surviving witnesses to give us eyewitness accounts. Traditionalists have the weight of ordained history on their side.

On the other hand, there is a small, renegade band of writers and researchers who refuse to accept large parts of this story. They explicitly challenge the conventional view of history. Researchers who do such work are generally known as *revisionists*. They seek to revise the orthodox account of some past event. Holocaust revisionists, however, are a special breed. They challenge not simply historians, but an entire infrastructure dedicated to maintaining and promoting the standard view. They present counter-evidence; they expose inconsistencies; they ask tough questions. And they are beginning to outline a new and different narrative.

Thus has emerged something of a debate—a debate of historic significance. This is no peripheral clash between two arcane schools of thought regarding some minutia of World War II. It is about history, of course, but it also speaks to fundamental issues of our time: freedom of speech and press, the operation of mass media, manipulation of public opinion, political and economic power structures and the coercive abilities of the State. It is an astonishingly rancorous and controversial debate with far-reaching implications.

Most of the public is only dimly aware of this debate, if at all. Nearly everyone knows that “six million Jews were killed by the Nazis,” and that gas chambers were used in the killing. But few have any idea about the origins of this story, its rationale and its justification. Fewer still know of the serious questions that have been raised against the traditional view; if they have heard of them, it is in the context of “a few right-wing neo-Nazi anti-Semites” who are trying to attack the Jews by questioning the Holocaust.

And no more than a handful of individuals truly understand the depth of the revisionist attack on the mainstream view.

The fact that so few are aware of what may be called the “Great Holocaust Debate” is perhaps unsurprising. Much has been invested in the conventional story. Textbooks and encyclopedias have been written about it. Historians have staked their personal reputations on it. Politicians have passed laws defending it. And wealthy and powerful interest groups have good reasons to sustain it. In short, very few of those in positions of influence want to acknowledge any kind of legitimate debate. There is no incentive to publicize it, and strong pressure to avoid it. Those in the public eye know that, should they broach this subject, they will suffer the consequences. Advertisers will drop out. Financial backers will disappear. They may be sued. They will lose access and perhaps their jobs. They will be shunned. They will be vilified. And it will all be legal.

Despite this overwhelming influence of orthodoxy, the many problems of the Holocaust story refuse to be suppressed. Time and time again, in small and often unexpected ways, cracks in the traditional view appear. A surprising admission, a foolish statement, a slip of the tongue, a blatant absurdity; and those ‘troubling questions’ arise once again. Today, more people than ever suspect that all is not well with the standard view of the Holocaust—hence the need for a book such as this.

\* \* \*

The Great Debate is marked by a striking partisanship. The traditional story is defended primarily by survivors, Jewish writers and researchers, and those who suffered at the hands of Nazi Germany—in other words, by people with a self-interest in sustaining the dominant view of a genocidal Nazi regime and an innocent and victimized Jewish people. Of the thousands of books on the subject, the vast majority are by Jewish authors. The revisionist perspective, by contrast, is promoted by a very small number of people: primarily Germans, people of German descent, and those inclined to be pro-German or anti-Jewish—again, not an unbiased group.<sup>1</sup> Charges of “lies,” “conspiracy” and “hoax” are frequently launched by both sides. This leaves the average person in a quandary: he is faced with partisan advocates on both sides, and rarely, if ever, gets a complete and balanced picture.

My goal is to remedy this shortcoming. I intend to present an objective, impartial look at this debate. I will discuss the latest and strongest arguments on both sides, examine the replies and offer an unbiased assessment. This is a challenging task, to say the least, but I believe that I am reasonably well

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<sup>1</sup> Of course there are other revisionists not among these groups. Prominent revisionist Germar Rudolf has argued that, proportionately, the French are the most-represented group among revisionists.

suiting for it. Unlike the vast majority of writers on the Holocaust, I am not Jewish—either by religion or ethnicity; nor are any members of my family. I am not of German descent. No one in my immediate family suffered or died in World War II. I am neither Muslim nor Christian, so I have no religious bias. My background is as a scholar and academic, having taught humanities at a prominent American university for several years. I have a long-standing interest in World War II and in the present conflict in the Middle East.

To anticipate my overall conclusions, let me make my stance clear at the outset. After considering all the evidence, I find that the revisionists have a very strong case. Their argumentation is solid, their sources are well-substantiated, and their research is of a high caliber. It is not ironclad, however, and where problems arise, I attempt to call them out. But overall, the bulk of their arguments point to one general conclusion: that the traditional Holocaust story is significantly flawed. Orthodox historians have largely failed to respond to the many challenges that the revisionists raise. Instead, they seem to prefer to cover up, slander or avoid engaging with revisionism. This fact alone strongly suggests that the orthodoxy has nothing to say in reply.

In what follows, I attempt to be a fair judge of both sides in this Great Debate. Every judge must make determinations. I do the same. But the fact that I find in favor of the revisionists—at least for now—does not invalidate my objectivity. I came to this debate a true skeptic, and it is only by weight of evidence and argumentation that I am persuaded of the strength of the revisionist view. Conceivably this could change in the future. I remain open to new evidence and new arguments. I have done my best, here, to fairly weigh both sides. In the end, whether I have succeeded in offering an objective analysis of this debate, will be for the reader to decide.

This book is targeted at the general, educated reader, but it holds to a high standard of scholarship. In examining the writings of the two opposing sides, I have taken nothing for granted. To the greatest extent possible, I have verified all quotations, checked all calculations, and noted errors—though I must say that laudably high levels of scholarship are to be found on both sides. Throughout this book I have attempted to use commonly available sources, should the reader wish to confirm any statements or quotations I offer here.<sup>2</sup> I have concentrated on English-language sources; this has its drawbacks, but fortunately most of the important sources are available in English, and so the

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<sup>2</sup> Wherever possible, quotations include in-text citations. For example, (Hilberg 2003: 29) refers to page 29 of Hilberg's 2003 publication (*The Destruction of the European Jews*), which can be found in the bibliography at the back. Such citations both let the reader know the time frame of the quotation and avoid an excessive multiplication of footnotes. The end objective, after all, is to clearly cite reliable and verifiable sources, and I think I have achieved this goal. And, unlike most books on the subject (of either side), I have included a full and complete index and bibliography.

problem is not too great. Where relevant, I have cited essential non-English writings as well.

I have also shown a preference for hard-copy publications—books and journal articles—over Internet publications. Web-based material is always questionable. It can change from one day to another, and disappear the next. Such sources are typically less-well-researched, and often rely on other, equally unreliable Web-based sources for their arguments. On the other hand, there are certain obvious advantages. Much controversial material can be published *only* on the Web, and this point must be noted. Also, it is very convenient, for example, that several complete revisionist texts are available free online. (This very fact should mitigate the notion of a profit motive of the revisionists.) And the rise of online video services such as YouTube, Vimeo and Hulu allow access to audio-visual material that can have a greater impact than printed works. Thus, as appropriate, I have included relevant Web-page information.

Finally, I use terminology indicating the provisional nature of claims about the Holocaust. My use of “alleged,” “so-called,” scare quotes, and similar devices is simply meant to indicate that I am withholding assent until the case is fully examined. I tend to be skeptical of most things told to me by those in positions of power and influence, and this subject is no different. I recommend that the reader do the same.

As for my occasional quips, jabs and weak attempts at humor, I can only say that this is not intended as insult or dismissal. I aim to take a sometimes plodding and tedious debate and make it interesting and readable; it is a topic of profound importance, after all. But when one makes outrageous claims or puts forth obvious nonsense, *and then expects to be taken seriously...* then a sarcastic jab may be entirely appropriate.

\* \* \*

Some might question the relevance of this whole topic. They might point out that the event under discussion happened over 70 years ago, that most who experienced it are dead, and that the enmities of the war are long gone. America and the European nations are friends and at peace (with each other, at least!). Japan is an important trading partner and poses no military threat. So why bother with the Holocaust? What’s the big deal? “Yes, the Jews suffered,” some may say. “So just leave them alone. Let them have their ol’ Holocaust.”

I think it does matter, and not only to those who have a vested interest. For several reasons: First, there is the straightforward question of history. Regardless of what one may think, the Holocaust was an event of major historical significance. As with any such historical event, it is essential to get

the facts straight and to develop consistent and coherent views about what happened. To understand what did, or did not, happen is vital for understanding the world of the mid-20th century, and by extension, the world of today.

Second, we are not allowed to forget about it, even if we wanted to. Coverage of the Holocaust is standard fare in every school curriculum. Children the world over read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Night*, *Number the Stars*, *Waiting for Anya*, and *Butterfly*. Students are taught about the gas chambers and the six million, about the innumerable Nazi atrocities.<sup>3</sup> We see Holocaust miniseries on television, *Schindler's List* and documentaries like *Night and Fog*. We celebrate "Holocaust Education Week," and we acknowledge January 27 each year as the "International Day of Commemoration" of Holocaust victims, as declared by the UN in 2005.<sup>4</sup> School children collect 6 million pencils, or 6 million paperclips, or 6 million pennies.<sup>5</sup> We visit Holocaust museums. We take college courses from endowed chairs in Holocaust studies. This is not by accident. It is a deliberate plan to make sure we "never forget." And if we can never forget, then we should at least get the story straight.

Third, there is the drama of the debate itself. It is unlike anything else—the name-calling, the suppression of ideas, the jailing of dissenters, the burning of books. It is a debate that can scarcely be mentioned in polite company. It is, in a very real sense, one of the last taboos in Western civilization. But

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<sup>3</sup> For example, in February 2008, French President Nicolas Sarkozy proposed strengthening an existing mandate to teach the Holocaust; his idea was that "every fifth-grader will have to learn the life story of one of the 11,000 [Jewish] French children killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust (*New York Times*, Feb 16)." The proposal was rejected by the Education Ministry five months later, but even so, one wonders what could have impelled Sarkozy to propose such a thing; perhaps his own Jewish ancestry had something to do with it (a grandfather was Jewish).

Not to be outdone, the British then proposed that "every secondary school [in the UK] is to get a Holocaust specialist to ensure that the subject is taught comprehensively and sensitively" (*Times Online*, 7 Nov 2008). Ten percent of these specialists will receive a master's degree in "Holocaust education." "The scheme is part of a wider Holocaust education project funded by the Government" and a national charity. The project will also "send two sixth-formers [ages 16 and 17] from every school to Auschwitz" each year.

In late 2010, it was reported that Australia will include the Holocaust, for the first time ever, in their national education curriculum (*JTA*, Dec 19).

<sup>4</sup> In 2011, the United Nations agency UNESCO signed an agreement with Israel "to promote Holocaust education and combat its denial" (*JTA*, Mar 8). This, after passing a 2007 General Assembly resolution that "condemns without any reservation any denial of the Holocaust" (A/Res/61/255).

<sup>5</sup> On 20 September 2004, the Associated Press reported on a middle school in Tennessee where, back in 1998, "students hoped to collect 6 million paper clips—one to remember each person killed in the Holocaust." Thanks to global publicity, they ultimately collected some 30 million clips. In that same year, *Paper Clips*, an "award-winning" Miramax documentary, was released. Regarding the pencils, a Texas junior high school issued a press release on 15 May 2007: "Six million pencils for Holocaust project." In May 2011, High Tech High School in Chula Vista, California, began a project to collect 6 million pennies. Not to be outdone, in September of that year, a Canadian high school undertook to collect "13 million pennies, one for each person who died in the Nazi genocides, including six million Jews" (*Toronto Globe and Mail*, Sep 4).

as we know, taboos never last. They are the product of a given era, of specific social and political forces. When those forces shift, as they inevitably do, the taboo is lifted. Now is perhaps such a time.

Fourth, we have the underlying issue of free speech. I take a radical position in support of free speech. Speech is an (almost) absolute right. There is virtually no topic that should be out of bounds. Barring only such obscure cases as an immediate threat to human life, no words or ideas should be beyond discussion. I support vigorous and open debate on every conceivable topic, the Holocaust included. Suppressing speech only drives thought and expression underground; it can only lead to unethical and reprehensible manipulation of the public's ability to think for itself, and perhaps even violent response to the suppression. Those in power always have reason to fear free speech—all the more reason to defend it.

Fifth is the monetary angle. Billions of dollars have been given as restitution to Israel, to individual survivors and to Jewish organizations. These are tax dollars, provided by the workers of the affected nations—primarily Germany and Switzerland, to date. Restitution claims have not ended, and will likely not end in the foreseeable future. As recently as 2008, the Belgian government agreed to pay \$170 million to survivors, their families and the “Jewish community.” This is rather astonishing, given that Belgium was a *victim* of the war, not an aggressor. (The official reason: Belgium “failed to resist hard enough” against Nazi deportation of Jews.) Germany, though, suffers a seemingly unending parade of reparation deals. In late 2014, they were compelled to establish a new \$250 million fund “for child survivors”; this fund is intended “to recognize psychological and medical trauma caused during their deprived childhoods.” Compensation money, arising directly from the conventional Holocaust story, in turn flows back to sustain it. Restitution money buys political clout, where—in the US at least—it ends up as campaign contributions and issue ads. It encourages lawmakers to legislate in support of Israel and against revisionism—and they do.

Sixth, the State of Israel itself was a direct result of the Holocaust. In November 1947, two and a half years after the end of the war in Europe, the UN General Assembly approved Resolution 181, calling for independent Arab and Jewish states in Palestine. Jewish leaders immediately began formation of a political infrastructure, and declared the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948. There were precursor events, of course. The Zionist push for a Jewish homeland began in the late 1800s, and the Balfour Declaration of 1917 promised “a national home for the Jewish people.” The process was thus in motion several decades before the end of World War II, but the Holocaust was the last straw. This is widely acknowledged today. In 2009, Israeli Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, declared the Holocaust

to be Israel's "raison d'être."<sup>6</sup> A 2012 survey found that fully 98% of Israelis consider it fairly or very important that a "guiding principle" for Israel is "to remember the Holocaust."<sup>7</sup> Hence, if the Holocaust is called into question, so is the legitimacy of the Jewish state.

Seventh, the mere existence of Israel has far-reaching consequences. Its creation sparked the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian Arabs, which led to several wars and ultimately to the present Israeli occupation of the West Bank and other Palestinian lands. This occupation in turn is a crucial factor in the global "war on terror," which is in reality a war on Islam. The influential group of people who promote and defend the Holocaust are by and large the same people who push for war against Muslims worldwide. The same ideology—militant right-wing Zionism—is a major factor in both. In the United States, this same Jewish lobby also coerces the government to send roughly \$6 billion per year to Israel in the form of military and economic aid.

Eighth: If we can be misled—or fooled, or deceived, or lied to—about the Holocaust, what other events might we be misled about? The same social forces that could give rise to and sustain a deficient Holocaust story could produce countless other stories that might be exaggerated, embellished, distorted or falsified.

Finally, the Great Debate tells us something important about the power structure of Western nations. Revisionists challenge not only orthodoxy; they challenge the power of the State. The leading advocates of the conventional view are in positions of great influence. They are wealthy. They have many supporters and virtually unlimited resources. They are able to turn the power of the State, and public opinion, against revisionism, and they do. The revisionists, few in number and poor in means, have only ideas. But as the Masked Man once said, *ideas are bulletproof*. They have a power of their own, unmatched by money, military or government. Ideas can penetrate to the heart of truth. This is the promise of revisionism. Whether it succeeds, time will tell.

\* \* \*

To repeat, I attempt here to take an impartial look at this clash of views. My role here is not that of a revisionist. I am a bystander in this debate, observing and commenting on a collision of ideas. This book is not a book of revisionism. It is a book *about* revisionism, and about two competing views of the truth. It assesses the ability of each side to marshal evidence, and to create a clear and consistent picture of the past.

The revisionist view of events is so far from what has been portrayed that we may have a hard time comprehending its possibility. A colleague once

<sup>6</sup> *New Republic* (6 Oct 2009).

<sup>7</sup> *Ha'aretz* (30 Jan 2012).

told me that he would be no more shocked to find no Eiffel Tower in Paris than he would to learn that the revisionists were right. Yet we can scarcely avoid asking ourselves this question: *Is it really possible that the traditional Holocaust story is wrong?* And not merely a little wrong, but significantly and fundamentally flawed? This is for each reader to decide. My objective is not to impose an overall conclusion, but rather to illuminate and articulate the main points, and to comment on their validity. I expect the reader to take nothing I say for granted. He is invited to check my sources, verify my quotations, and check my math. Ultimately, the reader must decide.

In such a complex issue as this one, it is wise to avoid making hasty judgments. My own journey was rather long. The present work was, in a sense, 30 years in the making. For roughly the first 10 years of my adulthood, I fully accepted the orthodox view. After all, the consensus was nearly universal, and I had no good reason to question it. During the next 10 years, doubts began to creep in. I started hearing stories that sounded odd, little points of conflict or contradiction, and strange gaps in the conventional storyline. Later, I decided to begin a serious inquiry into the topic. I tracked down dozens of books on both sides, and spent many long hours in careful research. The results of my investigation are presented below.

I sense a turning point in the debate. It seems to be moving out of the shadows and into the realm of serious and legitimate discourse. Revisionists have strong arguments in their favor, and, despite book burnings and jail terms, they are not going away. Traditionalists seem of late to have lost their momentum. Perhaps they have no more counterarguments. Perhaps they have tired of defending the conflicting stories of survivors and witnesses. Perhaps they have reached the limit of their ability to fashion a comprehensible picture of those tragic events of more than 70 years ago. The debate will surely reach a new resolution, and I suspect that the result will be something different than what we presume today.

PART I

SITUATING  
THE HOLOCAUST DEBATE



## Chapter 1: The Great Debate

There can be no denying the Holocaust of the mid-twentieth century: it was called World War II. Roughly 50 to 60 million people died worldwide—about 70 percent of whom were civilians.<sup>8</sup> They died from a variety of causes including guns, bombs, fire, disease, exposure, starvation, and chemical toxins. Within this greater Holocaust there existed many lesser holocausts: the tragic demise of millions of Soviet POWs in the hands of German authorities; the Allied fire-bombings of Dresden, Hamburg, and Cologne; the killing of hundreds of thousands of German soldiers and civilians by the victorious Allies after the formal end of the war; the US nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which incinerated 170,000 women, children, and elderly; and the Jewish Holocaust of Nazi Germany. It is this last Holocaust which has been the topic of heated debate over the years. It is this Holocaust that I address in this book.

Of the millions who died in the war, about 10 percent, or six million, are claimed to have been Jews killed by the Nazi regime, both in Germany and in its occupied territories. This Jewish Holocaust—*the* Holocaust, many would say—has been the subject of intense study for more than 70 years now, ever since the postwar Nuremberg trials of 1945 and 1946. Thousands of books and articles have been written on it; numerous films describe it; countless news stories have covered it. According to some, it is the “most well-documented event in history.”<sup>9</sup>

In order to properly examine the Holocaust, we first need to know what exactly it was. The basic outline of the conventional story has been mapped out for several decades now, and there is today a rough consensus. Here is one “widely accepted definition”:

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<sup>8</sup> According to standard sources, about 17 million soldiers died on all sides: 7.5 million for the Soviet Union, 3.5 million for Germany, 1.3 million for Japan, and some 4.7 million for all other countries combined. Civilian deaths are hard to determine, but the estimated losses in just the Soviet Union (19 million) and China (10 million) were huge. If we add 6 million Jews and roughly 3–5 million civilians in all other countries, we arrive at a total close to 55 million.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Rabbi Abraham Cooper said this: “No crime in the annals of history has been as well documented as Nazi Germany’s Final Solution, the state-sponsored genocide that systematically murdered 6 million European Jews” (*Huffington Post*, 17 May 2012). According to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) website, “The Holocaust is one of the most well-documented events in history” (article: “Holocaust Denial and Distortion”, 2019).

When historians talk about the “Holocaust,” what they mean on the most general level is that about six million Jews were killed in an intentional and systematic fashion by the Nazis using a number of different means, including gas chambers. (Shermer and Grobman 2000: xv)

Here is another definition, from an official source—Michael Berenbaum, former director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.:

[The Holocaust was] the systematic state-sponsored murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War 2. (1993: 1)

These definitions imply that three key components are essential to the orthodox view: (1) the killing of roughly six million Jews; (2) homicidal gas chambers; and (3) intentionality on the part of the Nazi leadership. Should we lack any one of these three, according to this view, we have a tragedy, perhaps—but something less than ‘the Holocaust.’

The conventional story begins with the persecution of German Jews in the 1930s. It accelerates with the round-up of Jews under German control in early 1940. It becomes mass murder with the shootings in the Soviet Union in mid-1941. It ends with gas chambers, mass graves, and burned corpses—either in open pits or crematoria. This heinous act, it is claimed, was a singular pinnacle of human evil. “Adolf Hitler [was the] incarnation of absolute evil,” according to the late, famed survivor Elie Wiesel; indeed, he says, Nazi crimes against the Jews “have attained a quasi-ontological dimension.”<sup>10</sup> For Bartov (2015: 11), the Holocaust is a “black hole of violence and depravity.” The Auschwitz crematoria are “the most perverse, insidious, indeed utterly demonic circumstances in the entire Nazi genocidal apparatus”; they reside “in the lowest chambers of hell,” and represent “the very essence of Nazism’s bottomless evil” (*ibid*: 241).

There remain, however, many open issues and many unanswered questions. Revisionists make challenging and troubling claims, ones that threaten to overturn major aspects of the Holocaust story:

- Key witnesses to the Holocaust have either falsified or greatly exaggerated important aspects of their stories.
- The figure of ‘six million’ has little basis in fact. This number, which theoretically could only have been known after the war, actually traces back decades before.
- Major death camps, like Bełżec, Sobibór, Chełmno, and Treblinka, have largely vanished—as have the remains of most of their alleged victims. Such a thing is not possible.
- Both of the alleged means of gassing victims—cyanide gas (under the brand name Zyklon B) and carbon monoxide from diesel exhaust—are impractical, unworkable, and simply ridiculous.

<sup>10</sup> *Time* magazine (13 Apr 1998).

- No ‘Holocaust order’ from Hitler has been found; nor was there any budget or any plan. How, then, could the Nazis have pulled off their perfect crime?
- Wartime air photos do not substantiate the traditional account of events.
- Why are there, even today, so many survivors?

It seems that no two writers on the Holocaust have the same opinion on these matters.

As I outlined in the Introduction, the disputants in the Great Debate fall into two clearly defined groups: *traditionalists* and *revisionists*. Were this any other matter of historical dispute, the two camps would typically engage in cordial, lively and fact-based argumentation. They might attend joint conferences, praise each other’s ingenuity, share lunch, and even grant a deferential respect to one another. But not with the Holocaust. Here, none of the usual rules apply. A kind of argumentative chaos reigns. *Ad hominem* attacks fly. Absurd charges are issued. As Specter (2009: 4) sees it, “Holocaust deniers... are intensely destructive—even homicidal.” Reputations are impugned, and basic intelligence is challenged.<sup>11</sup> Strategic confusion and targeted obfuscation are the norms.

For starters, consider the names of the two groups. Holocaust revisionists are often called ‘Holocaust deniers’ by mainstream writers. This appellation is both derogatory and technically almost meaningless. What does it mean to ‘deny’ the Holocaust? How much of the conventional view does one have to reject in order to be a ‘denier’? Take the three pillars of the Holocaust story. What does it mean to “deny” the six-million figure? Is ‘five million’ denial? Unlikely, given that orthodox icon Raul Hilberg consistently argued for roughly that figure. Four million? No—early traditionalist Gerald Reitlinger claimed in 1953 that the death toll could be as low as 4.19 million. To my knowledge, no one has ever called him a Holocaust denier. One million? Five hundred thousand? We can see the problem here.

What about intentionality? Does this refer to Hitler alone? Or must it include the likes of Himmler, Goebbels, Eichmann and Göring? And how are we to judge intention? Spoken and written words can be misleading; discerning one’s intention has long been a notorious philosophical problem. Clearly there is no ready answer to these many questions. It seems that being a ‘denier’ is rather like being an ‘anti-Semite’—essentially in the eye of the beholder.

Revisionists in turn often refer to their opponents as ‘exterminationists’—as in, those who believe that the Nazis were on a quest to eliminate

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<sup>11</sup> The *ad hominem* attack is, of course, a common and elementary logical fallacy. Traditionalists hold the clear lead in the name-calling sweepstakes, though certain of the revisionist activists are well known for this tactic. As might be expected, name-calling—on either side—is a fairly sure sign of a deficiency of arguments.

the Jewish people from the face of the Earth. Traditionalists reject not only this label, but any label at all; any group designation implies that they are simply one school of thought, to be held on equal footing with the revisionists. The notion of a competition between schools of thought is anathema to them. In their eyes, there is only one basic truth about the Holocaust, and they are its guardians.

Some traditionalists have demonstrated amazing levels of arrogance. A good example is Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1992: xxiv):

It should be understood once and for all that I am not answering the accusers, and that in no way am I entering into a dialogue with them. ... [T]he contribution of the “revisionists” to our knowledge may be compared to the correction, in a long text, of a few typographical errors. That does not justify a dialogue... [O]ne should not enter into debate *with* the “revisionists”. ... I have nothing to reply to them and will not do so. Such is the price to be paid for intellectual coherence.

Deborah Lipstadt mimics this stubbornness: “I categorically decline” to debate them, she says (1993: xiii). Such a reluctance to engage in debate suggests, of course, a fear of losing. The leading revisionists rarely pass up an opportunity to debate; the leading traditionalists, to the best of my knowledge, have never accepted one.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, most traditionalists are themselves ‘deniers’; they deny that there is anything to debate at all.

More seriously, we now have a situation where the power of the State has been brought to bear against revisionism. In 1982 two influential Jewish groups, the Institute of Jewish Affairs and the World Jewish Congress, created a plan to combat the growth of revisionist publications. They issued a report, “Making the Denial of the Holocaust a Crime in Law,” calling for widespread legislation against revisionism. Israel passed such a law in 1986, and France and other countries followed in the 1990s. Today there are 19 countries that have enacted or expanded laws against Holocaust denial,<sup>13</sup> ostensibly to combat racist hate crimes against Jews or other minorities. Penalties ranging from severe fines to imprisonment can now be levied against those who openly challenge the conventional Holocaust story. The presumption is that revisionist writings or speeches will inflame violent extremists,

<sup>12</sup> With perhaps two minor exceptions: Traditionalist Michael Shermer appeared on the *Phil Donahue* television talk show in 1994, along with revisionists Bradley Smith and David Cole. And in 1995, Shermer debated revisionist Mark Weber. Videos of both events are available online.

<sup>13</sup> The current list includes Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Israel, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Switzerland. The latest additions to this honor roll include Hungary (2010) and Greece (2014). Italy’s and the UK’s 2016 laws consider Holocaust revisionism an offense only if committed in conjunction with explicitly disparaging the victims. It may strike one as odd that modern industrial nations like these, which claim to uphold the right of free speech and inquiry, could resort to the banning of certain books and ideas—especially today, more than 70 years after the event. And odd it is; I elaborate on this in Chapter 12.

or will ‘corrupt the youth’ (Germany), or will somehow bring unacceptable pain to Jewish people or others sympathetic to their suffering. I am unaware of any cases in which revisionist writings have been shown to be a contributing factor to anti-Semitic violence—but perhaps this is beside the point.

In recent years, several prominent revisionists have been arrested for challenging the traditional Holocaust account. Ernst Zündel, a flamboyant publisher and promoter of right-wing literature in Canada, was arrested in February 2003 in Tennessee for violating United States immigration statutes. He was quickly deported to Canada and held in prison for two years as a “national security threat.” In March 2005, Zündel was deported once again, this time to his native Germany—where he was instantly arrested and charged with distributing hate literature, and with maintaining a US-based revisionist Web site. In February 2007 he was sentenced to five years in prison, the maximum allowable under current German law. He was freed in March 2010, having served five years. He died in Germany in 2017.

Gerhard Rudolf, a onetime doctoral candidate in chemistry in Germany, published the influential revisionist works *Vorlesungen über Zeitgeschichte* (“Lectures on Contemporary History,” 1993) and *Grundlagen zur Zeitgeschichte* (“Foundations of Contemporary History,” 1994). In a throwback to the Middle Ages, copies of his books that were within the reach of the German authorities were not only confiscated, they were burned. Tried in 1994/95, he was sentenced to fourteen months in prison. Rudolf eventually fled to the US but was arrested on immigration charges in late 2005 and deported back to Germany. In March 2007, the German legal system sentenced Rudolf to an additional prison term of two and a half years for his publishing activities abroad. He was released in July 2009.

Noted British writer and historian David Irving came slowly and hesitantly to revisionism, over a period of several years.<sup>14</sup> He had been sympathetic to the German side at least since his 1977 book *Hitler’s War*, but did not start to seriously question the Holocaust until the mid-1980s. It was not so much his writings as his speeches and interviews that got Irving into trouble. In 1993, Lipstadt labeled him a denier and neo-Nazi sympathizer in her book *Denying the Holocaust*. Irving sued for libel, losing in 2000. He was then arrested in Austria in November 2005 for an act of ‘denial’ committed sixteen years earlier, back in 1989. A Viennese court sentenced him to three years in prison in February 2006, though he was granted early release in November of that year.

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<sup>14</sup> It is debatable whether or not Irving truly counts as a Holocaust revisionist; his position continually shifts on this issue. Traditionalists almost uniformly portray him as such, but he himself apparently denies it, and other revisionists are reluctant to include him among their number (see Scott 2016; Graf 2009). For the purposes of this book, however, I will classify him as a “soft” revisionist.

Between 2003 and 2019, Austrian Engineer Wolfgang Fröhlich, a specialist in disinfection and pest control, spent a total of 13 years in Austrian prisons for his various peaceful but at times provocative books and letters contesting the traditionalist Holocaust narrative. This is the most-extreme case of modern-day persecution of peaceful historical dissidents ever recorded (Hernández 2015).

More recently, we have cases such as that of German-Australian revisionist Dr. Fredrick Töben, who served three months in jail for a denial-related offense in August 2009. And in February 2015, French revisionist Vincent Reynouard was sentenced (again) to prison, this time for two years. His crime: posting on-line videos challenging the conventional Holocaust story. The local French court actually saw fit to double the sentence that was sought by the prosecution. ‘Deniers’ are evidently a dangerous lot; no leniency shall be shown.

Such attacks, in addition to significantly raising the stakes of the debate, have a stifling effect upon free speech and academic freedom generally. Many groups and individuals have strongly opposed such heavy-handed acts of state censorship, despite disagreeing with the revisionists. Notable intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky—himself no revisionist—have spoken out on their behalf. One must wonder: How serious a threat can these people be? Why are they able to draw the attention of national legislators around the world? Whom do they threaten? And perhaps most important—Are they on to something? Do they in fact have a case to make that the Holocaust story is fundamentally deficient? The State does not attack those who argue for a flat Earth, nor warn against some imminent alien invasion. Those who are irrational, or cannot make a coherent case, pose no threat, and thus are left alone. Apparently the ‘deniers’ are not in this category. This fact alone should make the average person wonder—Could they be right?

## The Core of Revisionism

Unlike the traditionalist view, revisionism resists a general characterization. The alternate depiction of events that revisionism promises is only dimly outlined at present, and opinions are too disparate and too variable to form a truly cohesive view. Nonetheless, there are certain points of broad agreement among a majority of serious revisionists; these constitute a kind of core of revisionism today. Among the general points of agreement are the following:

- Hitler did indeed dislike the Jews, and strongly desired to rid Germany of them. This desire was shared by most of the top Nazi leadership. Their antipathy had three sources: (1) Jewish domination of major sectors of

German finance and industry;<sup>15</sup> (2) the Jewish role in the treasonous November Revolution at the end of World War I;<sup>16</sup> and (3) the prominent Jewish role in Soviet Bolshevism, which was seen by most Germans as a mortal threat.<sup>17</sup>

- To achieve their goal, the Nazis implemented various means, including evacuations, deportations, and forced resettlement. Their main objective was to remove the Jews, not kill them. Hence their primary goal was one of *ethnic cleansing, not genocide*. This is why no one has ever found a Hitler order to exterminate the Jews.
- Of course, many Jews would likely die in the process, but this was an unavoidable consequence.
- The Germans actively sought places to send the Jews. One option under consideration was to forcibly acquire the island of Madagascar from France, and to ship them there.<sup>18</sup>
- By mid-1941, due to speedy victories in the Soviet Union, large areas of territory came under German control, and hence a new option emerged—the Jews would be shipped to the East.
- After late 1942, things were turning bad for the Germans. Shipments to the East were no longer viable, and furthermore all available manpower was needed to support the war effort. Thus deportations became subordinated to forced labor—hence the heavy reliance on Auschwitz, which was first and foremost a labor camp.
- A major problem with deporting and interning large numbers of Jews was disease, especially typhus. Therefore, a major effort was needed to kill the disease-bearing lice that clung to bodies and clothing. All Nazi camps were thus equipped to delouse and disinfest thousands of people.

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<sup>15</sup> Traditionalist researcher Sarah Gordon (1984: 8-15) gives a good account of this dominance: “The reader may be surprised to learn that Jews were never a large percentage of the total German population; at no time did they exceed 1.09 percent of the population during the years 1871 to 1933... [In spite of this, the Jews] were overrepresented in business, commerce, and public and private service... Within the fields of business and commerce, Jews... represented 25 percent of all individuals employed in retail business and handled 25 percent of total sales...; they owned 41 percent of iron and scrap iron firms and 57 percent of other metal businesses.... Jews were [also] prominent in private banking under both Jewish and non-Jewish ownership or control. They were especially visible in private banking in Berlin, which in 1923 had 150 private (versus state) Jewish banks, as opposed to only 11 private non-Jewish banks...”

This trend held true as well in the academic and cultural spheres: “Jews were overrepresented among university professors and students between 1870 and 1933... [A]lmost 19 percent of the instructors in Germany were of Jewish origin... Jews were also highly active in the theater, the arts, film, and journalism. For example, in 1931, 50 percent of the 234 theater directors in Germany were Jewish, and in Berlin the number was 80 percent...”

<sup>16</sup> See Dalton (2019: 76-81).

<sup>17</sup> See Dalton (2019: 54-59).

<sup>18</sup> For a good account of this episode, see Mattogno and Graf (2005: 179-193).

- The primary means for killing lice was in ‘gas chambers,’ in which clothing, bedding, and personal items were exposed to hot air, steam, or cyanide gas. The gas chambers described by witnesses really did exist—but each one was built and operated as a disinfesting chamber, not as a homicidal gas chamber.
- The larger part of witness testimonies—both from former (Jewish) inmates and from captured Germans—consists of rumor, hearsay, exaggeration, or outright falsehood. This does not mean that entire testimonies are invalid, but only that specific claims must be verified by scientific methods before we should accept them. In particular, claims about huge casualty figures, mass burials and burnings, and murder with diesel exhaust are largely discredited.
- The total number of Jewish deaths at the hands of the Nazis—the ‘six million’ number—is highly exaggerated. The actual death toll was perhaps 10 percent of this figure: on the order of 500,000.

Individual revisionists place emphasis on different aspects of the above account, but all would likely agree with all these points.

## Four Myths

An inquiry into the Great Debate of Holocaust revisionism cannot even begin until a few prominent myths are dismissed. Four are of particular importance:

***Myth #1:*** *Revisionists believe that the Holocaust ‘never happened.’*

This is a common caricature of the revisionist position. It implies a belief that there were no widespread deaths of Jews, that they suffered no persecution, that there were no gas chambers of any kind, and perhaps even that no Jews actually died at the hands of the Nazis. Those traditionalists who make this claim are being disingenuous at best. They seem to want the reader to believe that revisionism is so far out of touch with reality, and so extreme in its views, that it can be safely disregarded.

No serious revisionist doubts that extensive deaths of Jews occurred, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, at least. No serious revisionist doubts that a catastrophe ‘happened’ to the Jews—whether they call it a ‘holocaust’ or not is incidental. Revisionists *do* dispute that the number of deaths was anything like five or six million. All accept that gas chambers existed in most or all of the German concentration camps; but they dispute the *purpose* of those chambers. And revisionists dispute that any German camps were ever built or operated as ‘extermination camps.’

In one sense, the very statement of this myth is loaded. As I explained earlier, the event called ‘the Holocaust’ requires intentionality, homicidal gas chambers, and some 6 million Jewish deaths. If any of these three points is found to be significantly in error, then technically, ‘the Holocaust’ did not happen. But this, of course, is not what orthodox historians mean when they make this charge. In fact, they never actually explain *what* they mean when they invoke this myth. Hence any such statement, by either side, to the effect that the Holocaust ‘never happened’ is pure propaganda.<sup>19</sup>

*Myth #2: Photographs of corpses prove the Holocaust happened.*

We all have seen the gruesome pictures of bodies stacked up outside some crematorium (Dachau), or unceremoniously dumped into pits (Bergen-Belsen). These are offered as proof of ‘Nazi barbarity,’ and of the slaughter of the Jews. Yet many things about such photos are misleading. For one, we do not know, or at least are not told, whose bodies those are. They could be Jews... or Polish internees, or Soviet POWs, or German inmates. In fact little effort seems to have been made to actually identify, or autopsy, any of those bodies.

Second, those famous photos came from the camps liberated by the British and Americans—primarily Bergen-Belsen, Nordhausen and Dachau. The problem is that these were not extermination camps. From the ‘real’ extermination camps, we have no corpse photos at all.<sup>20</sup> This fact alone should give us reason to consider whether aspects of the traditional story might be suspect.

Third, there were rampant outbreaks of typhus and other diseases that claimed thousands of lives in all the camps; yet the photos are used to imply that these were gassing victims. And fourth, the photos show at most several hundred corpses. This is so far from ‘six million’ that the vaunted photographs are almost meaningless as ‘proof’ of the Holocaust.

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<sup>19</sup> The continued invocation of this myth borders on the absurd. As a case in point, consider the 2005 BBC series “Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution.” After five hours of air-time—and no discussion of revisionist challenges—they insert, at the very end, a statement by former SS officer Oskar Gröning. As an elderly man, Gröning now sees it as his task “to oppose Holocaust deniers who claim that Auschwitz never happened.” He adds, “I have seen the crematoria. I have seen the burning pits. And I want you to believe me that these atrocities happened. I was there.” Of course, no revisionist in his right mind denies the existence of crematoria, pits, or the Auschwitz Camp. Hence Gröning’s statement is meaningless—added for mere dramatic effect.

<sup>20</sup> With one possible exception: two disputed (dubious) photos of Auschwitz showing a couple dozen corpses, possibly being burned. See Chapter 10.

**Myth #3:** *The Holocaust was a ‘hoax.’*

This idea rests in large part on the writings of Arthur Butz, above all his widely read book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* (1976/2015). Butz continues to hold to this notion today, as did a handful of other revisionists, such as Robert Faurisson and Fritz Berg.

I explore this whole idea in more detail in Chapter 12, but briefly, what is a hoax? The term derives from the pseudo-Latin phrase *hax pax max* used by Renaissance-era conjurers and magicians to impress their audience. This same phrase is the source of the more benign magical incantation ‘hocus pocus.’ A ‘hocus pocus’ refers to a fabrication intended to entertain and amuse, whereas a hoax came to mean a fabrication intended to *deceive*, in a malicious sense. Both refer to contrived circumstances, carefully arranged to achieve a desired effect.

Now, it certainly is possible that the Holocaust story—especially the mass murder in gas chambers, and the ‘six million’—was a kind of deliberate fabrication to achieve a desired effect of deception. But to my knowledge, no revisionist has offered any specific evidence to support this contention. Without solid evidence of deliberate falsification of at least large parts of the Holocaust story, we are unjustified in calling it a hoax. Individual lies, exaggerations, even gross exaggerations, do not qualify as hoaxes. Therefore, in my opinion, the Holocaust was not a hoax.<sup>21</sup>

However, this obviously does not mean that the story is true! It may still be rife with falsehoods, lies, and assorted absurdities. But there are many other ways in which untrue depictions of events can come to be widely believed, some of which are relatively innocent. Lacking hard evidence, we should grant the benefit of the doubt. Revisionism should attack the story, not the motive.

Traditionalists in turn leap on this hoax label and use it to their advantage.<sup>22</sup> They take it to mean a kind of global conspiracy, a large-scale collective effort to deceive the general public. They say, “Those deniers actually believe that the Jews could pull off this monumental fraud! They actually think that thousands of historians, writers, journalists, government leaders—everyone, in fact, who supports the standard view—are in on the scam, all conspiring to assist the powerful Jews. How stupid can they be?” And there is some weight to this. You cannot claim massive fraud without a solid basis for it. If someone lies, call it a lie. If someone utters a blatant absurdity, call it absurd. Revisionists risk looking foolish, and only hurt their cause, by arguing for a hoax.

That said, there is a kernel of truth in this myth. It may be fair to say that certain parties took undeniably tragic events and made the most of them.

<sup>21</sup> Crowell (2011: 9, 23), for one revisionist, concurs.

<sup>22</sup> For a good recent example, see Perry and Schweitzer (2002: 208-211).

They assumed the worst possible outcome, the worst possible death tolls, and turned the worst rumors into ‘truths.’ It may have been something like a fish tale, in which one catches a trout but claims it was a shark. Now, a fish tale is not a hoax—presuming that one *actually went fishing*, and *actually caught something*. It is untruthful, deceitful, and perhaps even malicious, but not a hoax. The undeniably tragic deaths of many thousands, whose remains were utterly obliterated, can easily become ‘millions.’ A falsehood, an exaggeration, a fish tale—but not a hoax.

Unfortunately the situation goes from bad to worse. An exaggeration gets repeated over and over. It becomes the basis for trials, billions of dollars in reparations, imprisonments, even death sentences. Then it must be defended at all costs. We can well imagine how such a situation could come about, step by step, over the course of 70 years.

***Myth #4: Revisionists are right-wing neo-Nazi anti-Semites.***

Again, a classic ploy: impugn your opponent so that the reader will be inclined to dismiss him. Unfortunately this occurs repeatedly in almost every traditionalist book that even touches on revisionism. Other, related charges usually follow. Zimmerman (2000: 119), for example, writes, “Everyone who has studied this [revisionist] movement realizes that the ultimate goal of denial is the rehabilitation of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich.” Quite a claim! One wonders how Zimmerman knows such things, and what his evidence might be.

Are revisionists right-wing? Since being right-wing is no crime, their critics presumably mean *far* right, which, they imply, is an evil thing. Of course this is only evil from the perspective of the left, but more to the point, it implies that traditionalists are not themselves right-wing—often far from the truth! Hard-core traditionalists, by whom I mean the militant Zionists, are among the most right-wing activists around—as are the evangelical Christians, who typically are strong supporters of Israel and the standard Holocaust story. Portraying all revisionists as right-wing is clearly a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

When revisionist writings touch on political issues, they are most often neutral with respect to the political spectrum. More important, this point is irrelevant to the arguments at hand. Whether a given revisionist is right, left, or center has no bearing on his arguments or his critique. Rudolf (2004) has noted that “revisionism is neither left nor right.” Anyone from any point on the spectrum may see the need to challenge the traditional view. Two of the more-prominent early revisionists, Paul Rassinier and Roger Garaudy, were staunch leftists. Recently, left-leaning political activists have begun to raise

questions about the Holocaust. If the traditionalists don't like what the revisionists are saying, then they must counter their arguments, not slander someone's character.

Are revisionists neo-Nazis? None of the major writers openly admits to being a National Socialist, and few seem to care much about burnishing Hitler's image. And, as with the right-wing accusation, even if a revisionist were openly National Socialist, or an open admirer of Hitler, it would be irrelevant to the arguments presented.

Are the revisionists anti-Semites? An anti-Semite is, technically, one who 'displays hostility or discrimination against Jews as a religious or ethnic group.' Thus it is either a form of racism or religious discrimination, against Jews *as a whole*. Yet, again, one finds no such attacks in any serious revisionist work. The academic revisionists are, on the whole, passably respectful of Jews. If they target an ideology, it is frequently Zionism. Not all Zionists are Jews, and not all Jews are Zionists; thus, an anti-Zionist stance is neither racial nor religious discrimination. In fact, it is Zionism that is more inclined toward racism, in its oppressive and discriminatory attitude toward Palestinians and Muslims in general. And it may even turn out that the traditionalists do more to foster anti-Semitism, if it happens that they are found to be promoting—and legally enforcing—an unjustifiable myth of Jewish suffering. One can only imagine the repercussions, if a large section of the public should come to believe that they have been lied to about the "greatest crime in history."

Today, 'anti-Semitism' has become a largely meaningless epithet, deployed either to slander one's opponents—or to shut them up. It is used simply because one does not like what the other says, and has nothing more intelligent to offer.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> A more-recent definition was endorsed in an official US government report, *Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism* (US Department of State, 2008). "Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." Specific forms of anti-Semitism include:

- "Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g., gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust)."
- "Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust."

But again, one wonders what is meant by such words as 'denying' or 'exaggerating.' Such terms are so broad as to potentially include almost any criticism, questioning or inquiry into the event. Hence my point that 'anti-Semitism' is so ill-defined as to be almost meaningless. Or worse: to be whatever those in power want it to be.

## Who's Who in the Debate

I will close this first chapter with a quick look at the main players on each side of the debate. Consider first the orthodox historians. Here we have an immediate problem. There are literally thousands of books on the Holocaust, and hundreds of new ones appear each year. The sheer number of authors is astounding. Everyone, it seems, is in on the game. Publishers who are reticent to publish on other worthy topics readily snap up proposals for new Holocaust books. Apparently it is a good career move to write, and to publish, on the Holocaust.

In order to bring some structure to the chaos of names, I will focus on the leading figures past and present, and on those few who have elected to engage with revisionism. Let me begin with those now deceased, and then move on to the currently active writers.

Among the more important past authors are:

- Gerald Reitlinger (died 1978). His book *The Final Solution*, first published in 1953, was one of the earliest detailed studies. It covered all aspects of the Holocaust, from the Jewish perspective. But there was one small problem: Reitlinger counted far fewer than six million deaths. His estimated range—from 4.2 to 4.58 million—is the lowest of any major author. Today such figures would border on heresy, but in 1953 there was no such tension. Even in the later revisions to his book, he did not significantly alter his numbers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Reitlinger is not often cited by traditionalists today.
- Lucy Dawidowicz (died 1990). Her major works included *The War against the Jews* (1975, 1986), and *The Holocaust and the Historians* (1981). She estimated a total of 5.9 million Jewish fatalities.
- Jean-Claude Pressac (died 2003). A pharmacist by training, and one of the few non-Jews to challenge revisionism. Pressac's work *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* (1989) was a direct response to the writings of Faurisson. A very detailed study of the design and operation of the Auschwitz crematoria and gas chambers, this work raised as many questions as it answered. It is far from the "definitive refutation" of revisionism that was sought.<sup>24</sup>
- Pierre Vidal-Naquet (died 2006). Author of *Assassins of Memory* (1992—French original in 1987), an early attempt to refute revisionism. Almost useless for assessing the validity of revisionist arguments, since he addressed nothing in specifics. An arrogant and polemical response to revisionism.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See the revisionist critiques in Rudolf (2016), Mattogno (2019), Rudolf (2019e).

<sup>25</sup> As a response see Faurisson (1982).

- Raul Hilberg (died 2007). Until his death, Hilberg was considered the preeminent expert on the Holocaust. His primary work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, first appeared in 1961. In 1985, the book was expanded to a three-volume set. A third edition came out in 2003, weighing in at nearly 1,400 pages. Like Reitlinger, Hilberg is notable for his low overall death toll; he consistently calculated 5.1 million victims, which has become the lower limit of the ‘acceptable’ range—though even this is rarely mentioned.<sup>26</sup>
- Yisrael Gutman (died 2013). His small brochure *Denying the Holocaust* (1985) was one of the first traditionalist writings to tackle the revisionist arguments, although it has not had much of a lasting effect on the debate.

Among current researchers, we have:

- Yitzhak Arad. His 1987 book *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka* remains the standard source for those camps—a rather amazing fact, given that it is over 30 years old. Arad was a research director at the Israeli Holocaust center, Yad Vashem.
- Shelly Shapiro. She compiled an anthology of essays against revisionism, *Truth Prevails: Demolishing Holocaust Denial* (1990).
- Kenneth Stern. He wrote *Holocaust Denial* (1993), which is only a cursory response to the arguments.
- Deborah Lipstadt. Her *Denying the Holocaust* (1993) is perhaps the best-known anti-revisionist work. Unfortunately, very little of this book addresses the actual arguments—as the reader is invited to confirm. Lipstadt and her book became widely known after historian David Irving sued her for libel. She is a professor of Jewish theology at Emory University in Atlanta.<sup>27</sup>
- Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman. Co-writers of *Denying History* (2000)—after Lipstadt, the next most popular anti-revisionist source.<sup>28</sup>
- John Zimmerman. His book *Holocaust Denial* (2000) was the first to seriously address, in detail, revisionist arguments. It is a technical, academic work, and plays a prominent role in the debate. Zimmerman is a professor of accounting at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.<sup>29</sup>
- Robert van Pelt. His hefty 2002 book *The Case for Auschwitz* arose from his expert testimony for Lipstadt at the Irving trial. He is a professor of the history of architecture at Waterloo University, Canada, and actively lectures on the Holocaust.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See the revisionist critique in Graf (2015).

<sup>27</sup> See the revisionist critique in Rudolf (2017b).

<sup>28</sup> See the revisionist critique in Mattogno (2017c).

<sup>29</sup> See the revisionist critique in Rudolf/Mattogno (2017: 89-197).

<sup>30</sup> See the revisionist critique in Mattogno (2019).

- Ian Kershaw. British historian, now retired, and author of several important works, including *Hitler 1936-1945* (2000) and *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution* (2008).
- Christopher Browning. An American historian, also retired. Author of *Ordinary Men* (1992), *The Path to Genocide* (1998), and *The Origins of the Final Solution* (2004).
- Richard Evans. Retired Cambridge historian and author of an important three-volume series, *The Third Reich* (2003-2008). Regarding the Holocaust debate, his major contribution was *Lying about Hitler* (2001), recounting his version of the Irving-Lipstadt trial.
- Peter Longerich. A German historian currently working at the University of London. His books *The Unwritten Order* (2003), *Holocaust* (2010), and *Heinrich Himmler* (2011) have been influential in sustaining the orthodox view. As the youngest of the major active writers, Longerich may be expected to be the standard-bearer for some time to come.
- Hans Christian Gerlach. Another German historian, currently at the University of Bern, Switzerland. His book *The Extermination of the European Jews* (2013) is one of the more-recent traditionalist texts on this topic.

In addition to these individuals, we must also include the standard reference works: *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (1990; I. Gutman, ed.) and more recently *The Holocaust Encyclopedia* (2001; W. Laqueur, ed.). Finally, we have the leading research organizations, which would include the Israeli group Yad Vashem ([www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)) and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)).

Anti-revisionist forces have been notably quiet since the year 2000. Just one new English-language book has appeared,<sup>31</sup> and only a handful of journal articles. This is in marked contrast to the outpouring of books by revisionists in that same period—some four dozen in total. Of course, thousands

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<sup>31</sup> The (unprinted) book—actually, a “white paper” available only as a PDF file online—is *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: Holocaust Denial and Operation Reinhard* (Harrison *et al.*, 2011). This is a unique case, however. The five authors are all ‘professional bloggers,’ not affiliated with any university or research center, and generally lacking in any formal qualifications. They have, in fact, been denounced by their fellow traditionalists for their shoddy practices. But the work does offer a detailed response to many revisionist arguments. It has generated an even-more-detailed revisionist response, *The “Extermination Camps” of “Aktion Reinhardt”: An Analysis and Refutation of Factitious “Evidence,” Deceptions and Flawed Argumentation of the “Holocaust Controversies” Bloggers* (Mattogno *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, a rather significant German-language book by Morsch *et al.* appeared in 2011 whose title translates to *New Studies on National-Socialist Mass Killings by Poison Gas*. It collects papers presented during a 2008 Berlin conference of mainstream Holocaust historians from around the globe claiming to refute revisionist arguments. By its title and mission, the book is designed to give an update to an earlier work by the world’s elite of traditionalist Holocaust historians (Kogon *et al.* 1993). Like its predecessor, however, the new book also mostly avoids naming any revisionist authors, let alone citing their works or addressing their arguments (see Mattogno [2016g] for a revisionist response).

of traditionalist books and articles have appeared in that time, but virtually none of these takes on the revisionist challenge. Officially, revisionism is now ‘unworthy’ of response; unofficially, it’s good policy to avoid a battle that you may well lose.

## And in the Other Corner...

Early revisionism, as mentioned, was marked by as much polemics and inflammatory language as scholarship. Revisionists thus tend to fall into one of two subgroups: *activists* and *academics*. Both groups are important, and both have their own roles to play. Both groups require fortitude and courage, though in different ways. Naturally, some individuals fall into both categories; Faurisson and Töben come to mind.

For our purposes, the second group is of chief interest. The activists make the news, and poke their finger in the public eye, but it is the academics that do the important groundwork to establish the basis for revisionist claims. Academic revisionists conduct careful, scientific examination of the circumstances of the Holocaust, and write high-quality articles and books on their critiques. They deserve to be taken seriously. Early academics would include such people as Franz Scheidl and Paul Rassinier, whose initial work dates from the 1950s. But things did not really start heating up until the mid-1970s. From then on, we find a growing number of serious, dedicated works. The major revisionist academics include:

- Arthur Butz. His 1976 book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* marked the beginning of serious revisionism, at least in the US. The latest revised edition came out in 2015. A dense and challenging book, but useful for scholarly research. Butz has a PhD in engineering, and is currently a tenured associate professor at Northwestern University, near Chicago, Illinois.
- Paul Rassinier (died 1967). He further developed his ideas in the 1960s, which appeared in English translations as *Debunking the Genocide Myth* (1978) and *The Holocaust Story and the Lies of Ulysses* (1990, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).
- Robert Faurisson (died 2018). In the late 1970s, he published some notorious revisionist articles in the French newspaper *Le Monde*. Since then he has been a leading figure in the movement, at once an academic and a promoter. His magnum opus is the nine-volume French work *Écrits révisionnistes (1974–2018)*. Faurisson was a retired professor of humanities from Lyon University.
- Wilhelm Stäglich (died 2006). A PhD and judge in Germany, he wrote *The Auschwitz Myth* in 1979 (English version 1986), causing an uproar.

- Walter Sanning. Pseudonym of a German scholar who wrote an influential study on worldwide Jewish demographic history: *The Dissolution of Eastern European Jewry* (1983/1990/2015).
- David Irving. A prominent historian and expert on the Third Reich. A borderline revisionist; the Holocaust is not really his area of expertise, but he seems to get drawn in time and again.
- Friedrich Berg (died 2019). A specialist on the diesel-exhaust issue. Berg is an engineer and has been a leading advocate of “scientific” revisionism, based on objective data and scientifically verifiable facts.
- Samuel Crowell (died 2017). Pseudonym of Alan B. Kennady, a former professor of history at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Though not a major figure in revisionism, Crowell was, along with Faurisson, the most scholarly. His monograph *The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes* (2011) is an excellent “literary analysis” of the many problems with the conventional account.
- Thomas Kues. A multi-lingual Swedish scholar. Kues has written some 50 revisionist articles, with a focus on the so-called ‘Reinhardt’ camps: Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka. Inactive since 2014.
- Germar Rudolf. As a scientist (chemistry), writer, lecturer and publisher, Rudolf is a leading figure in revisionism today. His *Dissecting the Holocaust* (2019, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) and *Lectures on the Holocaust* (2017, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) are essential reading for anyone serious about the subject.
- Jürgen Graf. A Swiss researcher and author or co-author of several important writings, including books on the Treblinka, Sobibór, Majdanek and Stutthof camps. He also wrote a definitive critique of Raul Hilberg, *The Giant with Feet of Clay* (2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), and a summary of revisionist criticism of 30 key witnesses on Auschwitz (2018).
- Carlo Mattogno. An Italian researcher, Mattogno is the leading writer of serious academic works. He has published detailed texts on the gas chambers and crematories of Auschwitz, and written or co-written major works on all five of the other ‘extermination camps.’ Unquestionably the leading technical expert among revisionists today.

If the reader is unfamiliar with most of the above names, we should not be surprised. There has been a concerted effort to ensure that the leading revisionist scholars are never engaged, never cited and never publicized. This is another clue that all is not as it seems in the Great Debate.

With this short background in place, we can now begin to take a serious look at the traditional Holocaust story, analyzing its strengths and weaknesses. Chapter 2 will recount this story and examine the troublesome nature of historical truth—troubles which are greatly magnified with the Holocaust.