

ADDENDUM

"The Fate of Jews in German Hands: An Historical Enquiry into the Development and Significance of Holocaust Revisionism"

In January 1993 I submitted to the University of Canterbury the attached thesis for examination. I gained my M.A., with First Class Honours in History, and subsequently completed my Ph.D., also at Canterbury. I am now a Senior Lecturer in Defence and Strategic Studies at Massey University in Palmerston North, where I teach military history, strategy and operational art.

Looking back on my M.A. thesis with the benefit of hindsight, and eight years of subsequent research, I can now see that it contains several errors of fact and interpretation. Given that the thesis deals with a controversial and highly sensitive topic, and could potentially cause pain to the Jewish Community, I would like briefly to clarify several important points.

First, I remain convinced that any individual, regardless of ethnicity, nationality and political persuasion, should be able to investigate any aspect of the past, and to form and express conclusions based upon his or her own understanding of the evidence, without fear of punishment or ridicule for deviating from accepted wisdom. To deny an individual this right is out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

Having said this, I can now see that I failed in my MA thesis to place adequate analytical weight on the motivation of numerous authors on the Holocaust, even though some were obviously writing with a view to attacking Jews and rehabilitating Nazis. Although I don't believe that a writer's reason for writing, by itself, disqualifies his or her research from consideration, I should have demonstrated far more clearly the antisemitic nature of much of the revisionist literature. Extensive reading during the last eight years, coupled with the extremely negative experiences I have had with certain revisionists, strengthens my belief that they care less about recreating the past in an honest, even-handed and methodologically sound way than they do about spreading antisemitic or neo-Nazi conspiracies.

Second, subsequently published research by those far more skilled in physics and chemistry than I am convince me that my original assessment of the Leuchter Report of 1988 (dealing with the extant remains of buildings in Auschwitz) was excessively complimentary. The report contains serious errors of fact and judgement, several of them significant enough to rob the report of its evidential value.

Third, I have spent much time studying the reports of the Einsatzgruppen, which I obtained on microfilm from the National Archives in Washington a year or so after completing my MA, and miscellaneous other German documents relating to the Holocaust, which I found in the German Federal Archives in Koblenz and the German Military Archives in Freiburg. I am now convinced that the scale of Einsatzgruppen murders was greater than I had previously thought, and that many regular Army officers -- including Erich von Manstein and other illustrious generals -- knew murders were taking place. Some even provided assistance.

Fourth, having reflected more on the nature and evidential value of oral testimony, I now consider my criticism of certain sources too harsh. It is true that many statements about homicidal gassings based on the recollections of eyewitnesses contain incorrect dates, embellishments and inaccurate estimates of size and quantity, but this alone is not reason enough to disregard the sources or consider them entirely unreliable as evidence. Just because someone got the dimensions of a gas chamber wrong, or the number of people herded into it, does not mean that the gassing did not take place.

I recently tested myself in various rooms in my own house, guessing how big each room was and then measuring them with a tape measure. I estimated my living room to be almost half as big again as it actually was -- and this was done in a relaxed fashion, with no fear for my life.

Finally, I regret writing on page 17 that "hundreds of thousands of Jews (or even more) unnecessarily lost their lives during the Second World War. Pogroms, random atrocities and the Einsatzgruppen actions

claimed the lives of tens of thousands. Routine brutality claimed the lives of thousands more." These sentences may leave readers with the impression that the Holocaust "only" caused a few hundred thousand deaths and was no worse -- and may have been "better" (if such a word can be used for these horrific events) -- than, say, the Turkish massacre of Armenians during the Great War or the Hutu massacre of Tutsis during the mid-1990s.

That statement was careless and inconsistent with other passages in the thesis, which indicate that the Einsatzgruppen alone systematically murdered many hundreds of thousands. Moreover, extensive reading in subsequent years convinces me that, without doubt, *millions* of Jews perished during World War II, murdered by Nazis and their allies. The perpetrators used a range of methods, including gassing, shooting, physical exhaustion, and starvation, to carry out this monstrous crime.

My thesis represents an honest attempt on my part to make sense of events I wanted to understand better. Yet I now regret working on such a complex topic without sufficient knowledge and preparation, and hope this brief addendum will prevent my work causing distress to the Jewish community here in New Zealand and elsewhere or being misused by individuals or groups with malevolent motives.



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