

*“You, O king, were watching; and behold a great image!  
This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before  
you; and its form was awesome. This image’s head was of fine  
gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and his thighs of  
bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.  
You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which  
struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in  
pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the  
gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the  
summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that  
no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the  
image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”*

– Daniel 2: 31-35

## I. Introduction

According to the official version of history, during the Second World War the German National Socialists carried out a mass murder against the Jewish population that was unparalleled in its monstrousness and its systematic ruthlessness. Many millions of Jews, we are told, were taken from German-ruled lands and packed off to ‘extermination camps’ in the Polish territories and there killed, mostly in gas chambers but some in gas vans. We are also told the Germans massacred an immense number of Jews behind the eastern front. The total number of victims of gassing or shooting as well as of those who died from disease, exhaustion, hunger or other cause supposedly runs to five or six million.

This claimed unique genocide is usually labeled with the word ‘Holocaust’, which comes from the Greek word *όλοκαυστός* for “*entirely burned*”, and which has spread throughout and beyond the Anglo-Saxon language domain since the release of the US motion picture of the same name in 1979.

The version of the fate of the Jews during the Second World War just summarized can be found in all the dictionaries and history books of the Western world. It is taken as axiomatic in any public discussion on the ‘Holocaust’. Deviation from this version is discouraged. Dissenting voices are stilled by a powerful media censorship and in many European states they are suppressed with police-state terror tactics.

In the last few decades a vast literature on the ‘Holocaust’ has appeared, but there is general agreement that there is one work which can be regarded as the standard work on the subject: Raul Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews*.

Born in Vienna in 1926, the Jew Hilberg emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1939. In 1944 he joined the American Army. In 1948 he began to study the question of the destiny of the Jews under the National Socialist regime. In the years 1951/52 he worked in the Federal Documentation Center at Alexandria, Virginia, where his job was to evaluate captured German documents. In 1952 he was awarded a Master’s degree in Political Science, and in 1955 the Doctor’s degree in Law. As is the case with most other authors who have dealt with the ‘Holocaust’, he is not a historian by profession. However, for many years at the University of Vermont, in addition to International Relations and US Foreign Policy he has taught on the history of the Jews during the Second World War.<sup>1</sup>

*The Destruction of the European Jews* first appeared in 1961 and was reprinted unchanged in 1967 and 1979. In 1985, a “revised and definitive” edition with a few changes followed. Amazingly, the complete work was not published in German until 1982, and then only by a small publisher (Olle and Wolter in Berlin). It was called *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*. We will use the three-volume edition published May 1997 by Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag in Frankfurt, based on the “definitive” English version of 1985.<sup>2</sup>

Hilberg’s study on the ‘Holocaust’ claims to be the unrivalled best and most exhaustive work of its kind. This is made unmistakably clear in the introduction to the German edition of the work:

*“If the phrase ‘standard work’ has any meaning at all, Hilberg’s famous comprehensive history of the Holocaust must be considered as such. [...] The theme of this work is the malefactors, the plan, the method of operation and the operation itself. With the ‘coolness and precision’ which characterizes the great historians (Süddeutsche Zeitung) Hilberg traces the involvement and participation of the ruling elites in the government, in industry and the armed forces in the destruction of the Jews. The functional dedication of the ordinary bureaucrat, railway man, policeman and soldier to the work of annihilation will also be traced. A type of criminal steps forward (who will be named) who will never stand before a judge after 1945:*

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1 For Hilberg’s biography see the Introduction to the German edition of Hilberg’s work, (*Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt 1997), and also Barbara Kulaszka (ed.) *Did Six Million Really Die?*, Samisdat Publishers, Toronto 1992, pp. 5f. (online: <http://www.ihr.org/books/kulaszka/falsenews.toc.html>)

2 3 vols., Holmes and Meier, New York 1985.

*the Prussian general, the national conservative ministerial official, the diplomat, the jurist, industrialists, chemists and medical doctors.*

*Hilberg has collected and refined the material for his book throughout his lifetime. He is known as the best-informed specialist on the sources, which for the most part came from the perpetrators. They have recorded the proof of their deadly handiwork—with characteristic thoroughness—a hundred thousand times over—with official stationery and seals.*

*The present comprehensive history of the Holocaust is 'source material for specialists, analysis for theoreticians and a history book without parallel for the general public.' (Sunday Times)."*

That Hilberg's work is the result of an immense and devoted labor is recognized even by Revisionists, those who dispute the current version of the fate of the Jews in the Third Reich. For the Frenchman Prof. Robert Faurisson, one of the most prominent Revisionists, Hilberg stands "*high above Poliakov, Wellers, Klarsfeld and others like them.*"<sup>3</sup> Because of Hilberg's dominant position in orthodox 'Holocaust' literature the Revisionists have had to confront his work again and again. The first such confrontation was in 1964, three years after the appearance of the first edition of *The Destruction of the European Jews*. At that time, the Frenchman Paul Rassinier, a former Resistance fighter, ex-prisoner of the NS concentration camps Buchenwald and Dora, and the founder of Revisionism, made a full attack on Hilberg. In his book *Le Drame des Juifs Européens*, Rassinier made a thorough study of Hilberg's statistics on Jewish population losses during the Second World War. He rejected the latter's conclusion that the number of Jewish victims should be set at 5.1 million; he said Hilberg could only have arrived at this number by a gross manipulation of his data. According to Rassinier, and based on Hilberg's data, the real number of Jewish NS victims was less than one million.<sup>4</sup>

Revisionist research has not stood still in the more than 35 years since the appearance of Rassinier's critique of Hilberg. However, there has never been a comprehensive analysis of the methods Hilberg applied nor a critical appraisal of his conclusions. The purpose of the present work is to remedy that lack.

Our investigation will concentrate on the following points:

3 Robert Faurisson, "*Mon expérience du révisionnisme*", in: *Annales d'Histoire Révisionniste*, Nr. 8, Spring 1990; quoted from Robert Faurisson, *Écrits révisionnistes (1974-1998)*, 4 volumes, privately published 1999, p. 954 (v. III). (online: <http://aaargh.vho.org/fran/archFaur/1986-1990/RF9003xx1.html>)

4 Paul Rassinier, *Le drame des juifs européens*, Les Sept Couleurs, Paris 1964, Reprinted by La Vieille Taupe, Paris 1984, pp. 15-32, 107-221. (online: <http://aaargh.vho.org/fran/archRassi/dje/dje.html>)

- What proofs does Hilberg provide that the NS regime planned the physical destruction of Jews living in its area of control?
- What proofs does Hilberg provide for the existence of extermination camps, that is, camps erected solely or partially for the murder of Jews and provided with killing gas chambers for this purpose?
- What proofs does Hilberg provide for the figure of close to 5.1 million which he claims is the number of Jewish victims of National Socialist policy?

There will be no discussion on the persecutions and deportations of Jews during the Second World War nor on the suffering of Jews in camps and ghettos, which are doubted by almost nobody: Hilberg's work rests on uncontestably solid source material here. The mass shootings of Jews behind the eastern front are a different matter. It is not disputed by anyone that some shootings took place; what is in dispute by Revisionist researchers is the extent of these shootings as claimed by Hilberg and other orthodox historians. On this point too we will examine critically the numbers of victims Hilberg claims and the sources he has used.



In short, we will attempt to determine whether Hilberg's great work on the 'Holocaust' deserves the scholarly merit it lays claim to or must be found lacking.