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Thesis supporting Holocaust denial accepted at Canterbury University

By MIKE REGAN

In a letter published on page 6 in this issue of the *New Zealand Jewish Chronicle* Dr Joel Hayward, senior lecturer in history at Massey University, Palmerston North, withdraws the major conclusions of his University of Canterbury 1993 Masters thesis.

The thesis, which he embargoed for five years, came into the public domain late last year.

Professor Dov Bing of Waikato University's department of Political Science and Public Policy said his research showed that while embargoed, the thesis found wide circulation among well-known Holocaust deniers such as Dr Frederick Toben of the Adelaide Institute in Australia and David Irving of Great Britain.

The major conclusions of the Hayward thesis include such allegations as:

- there were no gas chambers, but rather they were propaganda devised by the Allies

- more than one million, but far less than six million were murdered

- the Leuchter Report, which claimed there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, had validity

- there was no means to carry out such a plan of mass murder, as there was insufficient capacity in the gas chambers to achieve it.

In accepting and approving the thesis and its conclusions Prof Bing said Canterbury University has "provided academic justification for what these people [Holocaust deniers] had been claiming outside the confines of academia for years."

Prof Bing, in his article on page 7 of this issue, points out how the Adelaide Institute and the Institute for Historical Review both welcomed the thesis.

To the best of Prof Bing's knowledge the Hayward thesis is the only one to be approved by a senior academic examiner and a chairperson of a department of History in the Western world.

Professor Graeme Wake, Dean of Postgraduate Studies at the University of Canterbury, in a statement made to the *NZJC*,

says "The University does not endorse any of the findings in theses that are passed for degrees. Our examining procedures are designed to grade the quality of the analysis and writing, the maturity of judgment, and the ability to absorb, transmute and present material".

The statement also noted the University's support for Dr Hayward's recent decision: "We encouraged Dr Hayward to take this step and to make his current views more widely known

in the light of the fact that his thesis was being misused. It is pleasing to see this is being done."

In 1997 Dr Toben tried to use the Hayward thesis in a case taken against him by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry to the Human Rights and Equal

Opportunity commission, under the Racial Hatred Act regarding a complaint about his Internet website. In the event, the case had already begun and Dr Toben was refused permission to present new testimony.

There has also been a suggestion that Mr Irving sought to use the Hayward thesis in his suit against Dr Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books for defamation (see article page 10).

In 1991 Joel Hayward, together with Yossie EtzHasadeh (previously Philip Woodfield, of Christchurch and now living in Israel) and Denis Green, established the organisation, Opposition To Anti-Semitism Inc (OAS). Their goal was to watch the activities of the few anti-Semitic groups in New Zealand at the time and to inform people about Holocaust revisionism.

Joel Hayward resigned from OAS about the same time as he started working on the thesis.

When Mr EtzHasadeh and colleagues heard of the work Joel Hayward was doing for his thesis they became alarmed, "Especially when reports of Hayward's public comments were so divergent from his private conversations," he told the *NZJC* recently. "His conclusions at that point were that there were Holocaust revisionist historians who were, as he put it, 'presenting balanced research that you had to deal with'. He contacted us, because he knew we weren't happy with his thesis, and wanted to meet a group of us to

Editors:

This PDF contains all the stories published by the *New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, April 2000, relating to a thesis supporting the claims of Holocaust deniers and accepted at one of New Zealand's major universities - Canterbury.

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Mike Regan

Editor

discuss its content."

An interview was arranged and secretly filmed.

The transcript of the interview, said Mr EtzHasadeh, was revealing, damning and needed to be made public. They transcribed the significant parts of the video and then tried corresponding with the University of Canterbury Registrar, Mr A.W. Hayward (no relation), to show him what Joel Hayward was working on and the conclusions he was arriving at. Mr EtzHasadeh said that the OAS wrote to the University, saying that Joel Hayward had stated to their organisation that his thesis would make claims in support of the main revisionist threads.

The University Registrar forwarded OAS's concerns to the head of the History department, Dr W.D. MacIntyre (now retired), who, says Mr EtzHasadeh, apparently chose to ignore their plea.

"Essentially they were very uncooperative," Mr EtzHasadeh said. "And in effect told us to mind our own business."

Canterbury University chose not to comment. The transcript of the video contained such statements as:

- "In my thesis I argue that Hitler didn't order the genocide of the Jews. That Hitler didn't know about the genocide of the Jews. That there was no plan for the genocide of the Jews."

- "I am also showing that there is not one shred of

CONTINUED, PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 6

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Dr. Hayward apologises for "mistakes I made as an inexperienced student"

Dear Sir,

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

Unfortunately, my M.A. thesis has been copied and is now being used – actually misused – by certain racist and anti-Semitic groups and individuals to add credibility to their nasty beliefs. These people have also exploited me in other ways in an effort to present me as somehow sympathetic. I am not. I abhor all

racism.

When I wrote the thesis in 1991/1992, I was inexperienced at the historian's craft and knew relatively little about the Holocaust and its complex historiography. Looking back through the thesis now, I can see that it contains several significant errors of fact and interpretation. In other words, I stuffed up. The conclusions are wrong. Given this, and the fact that the thesis deals with a controversial and highly sensitive topic, and has already caused pain to the Jewish community through its misuse by anti-Semites, I would like briefly to make one point very clear.

I believe that, without doubt, around

six million Jews perished during World War II. They were murdered by Nazis and their allies. The perpetrators used a range of methods, including gas chambers, shooting, physical exhaustion, and starvation, to carry out this monstrous crime.

My thesis represents a sincere attempt on my part to make sense of events I wanted to understand better. Yet I now regret being so uncritical of people's motives and working on such a complex topic without sufficient knowledge and preparation.

I have advised the University of Canterbury of my deep regret that some of my inadequate research is distressing

to the Jewish community, and especially to Holocaust survivors. I asked the University to withdraw the thesis from its library. The University declined, but responded with understanding and sensitivity, and has kindly permitted me to attach a formal addendum which clarifies my position. Consequently, anti-Semites will not be able to use my old thesis in support of their vile crusade.

May this letter serve as reassurance to the New Zealand Jewish community that I profoundly apologise for the mistakes I made as an inexperienced student, and that I have learned much since then.

Yours sincerely,
Dr J.S.A. Hayward

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Jewish Council president calls for Hayward degree to be revoked

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

documentary evidence showing that there was a plan to kill Jews."

- "I also argue that at Auschwitz there were no homicidal gas chambers designed as gas chambers and that with the possible exception of Kremas 2 and 3, none were used as homicidal gas chambers."

- "My estimate isprobably more than one million [Jews killed] probably less than two million.....I personally don't think the Nazis ever got their hands on six million Jews - I'm sorry, they didn't."

- "One point - the majority of reputable historians on the Holocaust are Jewish....95 per cent at least....and they're all pro-Zionist and they all have ties and connections with learning institutions in Israel."

OAS then decided to wait until the thesis was published before doing any more: "The problem was that when he completed the thesis he immediately embargoed it. This was unusual and meant no one could see it without his permission. That meant it got into the hands of the revisionists long before we ever got to see it. We only got to see it late last year," said Mr EtzHasadeh.

In a letter to the NZJC in 1998 in response to an article referring to Dr Toben's wish to use the thesis, Dr Hayward said:

"I state emphatically to your readers my rock-solid belief, based on extensive archival research and a thorough reading of published sources, that European Jewry did experience a ghastly holocaust.

"To be more specific, I believe European Jews suffered dreadfully during the 1930s and especially during World War II, when Germans and others maltreated, enslaved and murdered great numbers."

It should be noted that the Holocaust Hayward refers to (in his thesis) is one without gas chambers and where only a million or so Jews were murdered.

When the embargo of the thesis ended

last year, Dr Hayward tried to have Canterbury University withdraw the thesis. They refused but agreed to an addendum being attached.

In his one and a half page addendum Dr Hayward states:

"...with the benefit of hindsight and eight years of subsequent research, I can now see that it (the thesis) contains several errors of fact and interpretation."

He goes on to list those facts including

- not giving sufficient weight to the motives driving numerous anti-Jewish authors on the Holocaust

- reversing the weight he placed on the Leuchter Report

- he is now convinced the scale of the murders was far greater than he stated

- he now considers the criticism of some oral testimonies too harsh and

- he now believes without doubt that "millions of Jews perished during World War II."

Future readers of the thesis will be handed the addendum with the thesis but Prof Bing says it is misleading and if put alongside his letter to this newspaper (above) the differences are 'considerable'.

"Dr Hayward refers to 'several errors of fact and interpretation' but in his letter he clearly states the errors were 'significant', that he 'stuffed up' and he was 'wrong', said Prof Bing. "I believe the addendum should be removed and replaced with a clear and precise statement from Dr Hayward."

David Zwartz, president of the New Zealand Jewish Council, said he would be asking Canterbury University to cancel the degree awarded to Dr Hayward on the basis of his thesis.

"The University's reputation for scholarship is in question as long as it stands by this thesis which has been repudiated even by its own author," he said. "I commend the actions being taken by Dr Hayward in trying to have his

thesis withdrawn but can't understand how Canterbury University allowed it to be accepted in the first place. How can a reputable university accept a thesis based on flawed research?"

Mr EtzHasadeh believes New Zealand is now a prime place to validate the Holocaust denial message: "It has a very small Jewish community, people don't know too much about the Holocaust in general and [the universities have] small departments where you could slip something like this through".

Now that the thesis has been made public Mr EtzHasadeh would like to see

"some sort of response" from Canterbury University.

"Any response would be better than what they've done up to now. Up to now they've done nothing," said Mr EtzHasadeh. "I think they should face up to facts. They're the only university in the world which has authorised a thesis which supports the basic premises of Holocaust revisionists which say the whole thing as we know it is a lie. It might not say it in exactly those words but those are its basic conclusions. I don't think that's something you can just walk away from."

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IN February 1993 Joel Hayward submitted a Masters thesis entitled: *The Fate of Jews in German Hands: An Historical Enquiry into the Development and Significance of Holocaust Revisionism* (360pp). The thesis was accepted for examination by the Chief Supervisor, Associate Professor Vincent Orange. He examined the thesis and sent it for external examination to Professor John Jensen of the History Department at the University of Waikato. Mr Hayward received First Class Honours for his Master's degree.

The Hayward thesis was written in 1991/92 in the History Department of the University of Canterbury. It was submitted in February 1993. The reason why the thesis has just come to the attention of the public is because it was embargoed for more than five years at the request of its writer and with the support of his supervisor. The thesis became accessible to the public late last year.

Even though the thesis was embargoed, it is known that Dr Hayward distributed a number of copies of it. Dr Toben of the Adelaide Institute; Dr Countess of the IHR; David Irving of London; Dr Robert Faurisson of France; all received copies. In December 1998 Dr Hayward was listed as one of the speakers at the Adelaide Institute's First Revisionist Conference in Australia. Though he first agreed to participate he changed his mind and did not travel to Adelaide. When Dr Toben tried to use the Hayward thesis in a recent court case in Australia, Dr Hayward took steps to stop him. And when David Irving approached Dr Hayward to have him testify in his trial against Professor Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books in London, Dr Hayward, to his credit, declined.

In the seven years of its existence, the Hayward thesis has acquired considerable notoriety. The concluding chapter of the thesis can be found at The Nizkor Project Shofar Archive [1]. This file contains the writings of about 400 of the most notorious Holocaust deniers worldwide. In New Zealand, Hayward's concluding chapter has been posted on the newsgroup 'soc.culture.new-zealand (88313). The most notorious anti-Semitic Los Angeles-based Institute for Historical Review (IHR) have also paid attention to the Hayward thesis. The Institute is very active in Holocaust denial and its goals seem remarkably similar to those articulated by Nazism. In a report published in the Institute's *Journal of Historical Review* about the Adelaide Institute's Conference of August 7-9, 1998, Dr Robert Countess, a close associate of the IHR, cited the Hayward thesis 'as a noteworthy and courageous study that shows the seriousness of revisionist scholarship, and affirms the validity of numerous specific revisionist arguments'. [2]

Another website which has paid attention to the Hayward thesis is that of the infamous Adelaide Institute in Australia. The Director of this Institute, Dr Frederick Toben, who argues that the Nazi Holocaust

The Hayward thesis examined

Dr Joel Hayward's letter (page 6) is put into context by Professor Dov Bing, Department of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Waikato, who examines the thesis and the conclusions Hayward has subsequently withdrawn



Prof Bing

was a Jewish swindle, was recently imprisoned for nine months in Germany for Holocaust denial. Dr Colin Rubinstein, the executive director of the Jewish Affairs Council in Australia says of Toben: "He is propagating outright lies with the ultimate aim of rehabilitating the record of the Nazi regime". In a report on its First Revisionist Conference, Dr Hayward is being described as "the first historian to have written a Master's thesis on revisionism and the Holocaust". In a reference to the Hayward thesis it is claimed that it "supports what revisionists have been saying for decades". [3]

Hayward claimed as one of their own

The Holocaust deniers claim Dr Hayward as one of their foremost supporters. After all, the Hayward thesis appears to be the only academic study, to this writer's knowledge, in existence endorsing most of the central arguments of Holocaust deniers. In fact the thesis and its acceptance has given academic sanction to claims laid by Holocaust deniers who had operated until 1993 outside academia.

The only other academic thesis which denied the existence of the gas chambers was that of Henry Roques who submitted a doctoral thesis at the University of Nantes, France in 1985. Roques was a protege of the well-known Holocaust denier Faurisson. The award of a doctoral degree for this thesis caused an enormous public scandal and in 1986 French Minister of Higher Education revoked the doctoral degree.

Dr Hayward's letter (Page 6) is a courageous and timely statement. The statement, though, has to be put into context. Dr Hayward appears to be withdrawing the major conclusions of his thesis. On page 331 of the thesis, he wrote:

'A careful and impartial investigation of the available evidence pertaining to Nazi gas chambers reveals that even these apparently fall into the category of atrocity propaganda. Because of the seriousness of this statement, it is necessary to make the following defence'. Then Joel Hayward cites 12 points to underscore his absurd assertion. This is the central argument in the Hayward thesis.

In his letter to the *NZJC* in this issue Dr Hayward reverses his conclusion about the non-existence of the gas chambers.

The central document on which Dr Hayward previously based his claim that 'the gas chambers were atrocity propaganda' is the thoroughly discredited Leuchter Report. In a lengthy chapter on The Leuchter Affair, Joel Hayward argued that the 'Leuchter Report is probably the most damaging volley ever fired at accepted opinion on the Holocaust' (p.219) and elsewhere, 'Leuchter's unorthodox conclusions, which at first seem incredible, do appear to be supported by ample evidence' (p.208).

Leuchter contradictions

The most astonishing revelation in my research on the Hayward thesis came, when I discovered, that in December 1991, Joel Hayward published an article entitled: *Holocaust Revisionism in New Zealand: the Thinking Man's Anti-Semitism?* The article appeared in a journal on race relations called *Without Prejudice* published by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs. In this journal, which is widely read in the Jewish community, Joel Hayward referred to Leuchter as 'a self-styled specialist engineer'. In the thesis the reference to 'self-styled' has disappeared. It also needs to be noted that the editor added a detailed note to the (above) article, agreed to by Joel Hayward. Since the note is completely the opposite to what Joel Hayward argued in his thesis, it is worth quoting:

'Leuchter's' credentials as an engineer have been challenged by legal authorities in the United States, with the Judge in the Zundel case ruling conclusively that he had neither the formal training nor the practical experience to conduct the kind of 'scientific study' which he purports to have made of the gas chambers at the Nazi death camps. [4] Moreover, his 'report' - which the judge refused to accept as evidence in the Zundel trial (loc.cit.) - has been totally discredited by the author of an exhaustive study of the gas chambers at Auschwitz, Jean- Claude Pressac: 'Based on fake knowledge, inducing fake reasoning and leading to false interpretations, the Leuchter Report is inadmissible because it was produced in illegal conditions; because it overlooks the most basic historical data; because it is

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Editorial comment

The New Zealand
JEWISH CHRONICLE

University's unwitting support to Holocaust deniers

TODAY'S *New Zealand Jewish Chronicle* devotes a substantial number of pages to the story surrounding a thesis on Holocaust denial. It was written more than six years ago, embargoed until last year and now the author has retracted its conclusions. There's nothing particularly new in the conclusions reached in the Hayward thesis - it repeats the same time-worn theories, lies and half-truths Holocaust deniers have been pushing for years. What does astonish, disturb and concern is that a thesis which denies the existence of the gas chambers at Auschwitz should be sanctioned by a reputable academic institution. This is a scandal and a concern for all New Zealanders. As we know, it takes little provocation for racist views to surface. Holocaust deniers are first and foremost anti-Semitic. Why else would they want to rewrite the gruelling and gruesome story of six million Jews?

Take one of Hayward's conclusions: that probably less than two million Jews were killed - a common assertion of Holocaust deniers. Yad Vashem - the Holocaust museum and memorial in Jerusalem - has shelves stacked with files recording the names and details of more than three million relatives and friends remembered by survivors. What about the millions who can't be remembered? Those who lived in villages and towns where the devastation was 100 per cent, where generations of entire families were blotted out?

This writer's uncle returned to Russia from England to help with the revolution. He stayed, married, had a family and corresponded regularly with his mother in London - right up until the Ukraine was invaded by Germany. There's no doubt in this writer's mind that he and his family, his wife's family and all the other innocent Jewish families in his forgotten shtetl were murdered by the Nazis. Their names aren't included in Yad Vashem's files because too little information exists today. But the Holocaust denier would have the world forget their very existence.

Yet Canterbury University is unwittingly supporting and abetting such claims by apparently being the only university in the western world to accept a thesis supporting the claims of Holocaust deniers. Will New Zealand now be seen as a soft spot for Holocaust deniers to have their message gain academic sanction? The door was opened in Canterbury - how many have stepped in? Who is checking? Jewish students throughout New Zealand, and especially those at Canterbury University, must be concerned. Jewish students and potential students may be concerned for their cultural safety. Their fears are unlikely to be assuaged while the Hayward thesis has academic credibility.

What should be done? Some, including Dr Hayward himself, have called for the thesis to be withdrawn. Canterbury University refuses to do this - in some ways understandably. The document is written, it has been read around the world, they can't now destroy it. They could be accused of tampering with history if they tried.

It is this newspaper's opinion that Canterbury University should immediately revoke Hayward's degree leaving the thesis in their archives as just another document. At the same time they might like to answer a few other questions: What control does the University have over matter produced by graduate students? Are they happy with the quality of supervision and scholarship surrounding the Hayward thesis? How can they guarantee the supervision and scholarship for their current graduate students? Can their previous honours' students have confidence in the way their theses were treated? What is the responsibility of the university? It wouldn't be a bad idea to also find some way of apologising to New Zealand society and to the memory of the six millions Jews murdered in Nazi Europe.

Canterbury University statement

Comments on procedures: MA Thesis of Joel Hayward

The University of Canterbury was invited to comment on Dr. Joel Hayward's letter, the thesis and their position.

The University gave Dr Joel Hayward the opportunity of writing an Addendum to his original MA thesis: *The Fate of Jews in German Hands: An Historical Enquiry into the Development and Significance of Holocaust Revisionism*, which was examined in 1993. The degree was subsequently awarded. This was received and incorporated into his thesis in January of this year. It sets out the perspectives he now has on this sensitive issue and the validity of the references he used in the thesis.

We encouraged Dr Hayward to take this step and to make his current views more widely known in the light of the fact that his thesis was being misused. It is pleasing to see this is

being done. The University has a policy of maintaining open access to scholarship produced, and accepted for, a research degree. To do otherwise would be counter to the traditions of scholarship expected of a premier research University.

The University does not endorse any of the findings in theses that are passed for degrees. Our examining procedures are designed to grade the quality of the analysis and writing, the maturity of judgment, and the ability to absorb, transmute and present material.

Professor Graeme Wake
Dean of Postgraduate Studies
University of Canterbury

Deniers delighted by academic acceptance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

scuttled by gross errors of calculation; and because it is suspect of falsification. The Leuchter Report lands in the cesspool of pretentious human folly'. [5]

The same article is mentioned in the Hayward thesis bibliography, so we can assume that the thesis supervisor, Associate Professor Orange, was aware of this. Yet there is no explanation in the thesis for this extraordinary turnabout.

Six millions deaths refuted

The other conclusion in the Hayward thesis refers to the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust. On page 336 of the thesis, Joel Hayward wrote:

'The total number of Jewish deaths is probably impossible to determine, as even scholars upholding orthodox opinion agree. Figures range from four to six or seven million. No estimate has been offered in this thesis, although the total would undoubtedly be more than one million and far less than the symbolic figure of six million'.

In other words, even though he clearly states that he has not researched this matter, he is, nevertheless, ready to say that the generally accepted total by reputable Holocaust historians of about six million Jewish deaths, should be accepted as a mere 'symbolic figure'. More specifically Joel Hayward suggests the estimate to be 'more than one million'. Elsewhere in the thesis he is not so generous. On page 17 he suggests the figure to be 'hundreds of thousands of Jews or even more'.

In his letter in this issue, Dr Hayward

suggests that he was inexperienced when he wrote this thesis. That may be so, but it should be noted that his fellow founders and committee members in a organisation called Opposition to Anti-Semitism Incorporated, argued with him at the time about all the major points in his thesis.

Caught in the web of Holocaust deniers

In 1991 it seems that Joel Hayward had been caught in the web of Holocaust deniers. Although he set out to critically analyse their views in an objective academic manner, he ended up supporting them. He came to admire people like Irving, Faurisson and Weber. As he noted in his conclusion:

'Some Revisionist books and articles (such as those by Weber, Irving and Faurisson) are balanced and authoritative, containing both solid research and highly-developed analysis'.

References

- 1- www.us.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/people (look under 'h')
- 2 - The Report is posted on the IHR website.
- 3 - The report can be found on the Adelaide Institute's website.
- 4 - See Arthur Goodman, *Leuchter: Exposed and Discredited by the Court*, in Shelley Shapiro (ed.), *Truth Prevails - Demolishing Holocaust Denial: the End of the Leuchter Report*, New York, 1990, p79.
- 5 - Jean-Claude Pressac, *The Deficiencies and Inconsistencies of the Leuchter Report*, in Shelley Shapiro (ed.) op.cit.p.55

Some related Internet sites

The Nizkor Project - dedicated to the millions of Holocaust victims
www.nizkor.com
David Irving's website. Contains his version of the British trial
www.fpp.co.uk/trial/index.html

Anti-Defamation League
www.adl.org/
Simon Wiesenthal Centre
www.wiesenthal.org/
Adelaide Institute
www.adam.com.au/fredadin/index.html

The techniques of Holocaust denial

By PROFESSOR DOV BING, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

Canterbury University warned

The Christchurch-based organisation, Opposition to Anti-Semitism Inc., wrote to The Registrar of the University of Canterbury in May 1992 pointing out the direction being taken by Joel Hayward in his thesis. These extracts are taken from that letter:

"I am writing to you regarding Opposition to Anti-Semitism's (OAS) concern about the MA thesis of a History student at Canterbury University. The name of the student is Stuart Hayward (also known as Joel Stuart Hayward)....

"He said that he has spent 64 pages critiquing the [infamous] Leuchter Report and he "came to the conclusions that Leuchter's report is essentially flawless". This report has been soundly and totally discredited - it purports to prove that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz!....

"Stuart: My thesis supervisor is a man called Dr Vincent Orange, who's been at the University of Canterbury as PhD senior lecturer since 1961. That's 31 years now. He's written three biographies on the Second World War plus two more general books on the Second World War. He's a very well regarded scholar. He said in November, "OK! I agree there were no gas chambers...."

"While OAS has absolutely no wish to have Stuart's thesis censored in any manner, we are deeply concerned about what he has told us he is including in his thesis, and also about the impact that his beliefs on the Holocaust may have on his thesis. The information he has given us is in direct opposition to that of all reputable historians....

"A student at this level should know better and must be expected to have gained the research skills to enable him to tell the difference between serious historical research and anti-Semitic Holocaust revisionism (in the guise of serious historical research)....

"OAS do not believe an MA would be awarded on the basis of such a thesis. However as the University of Canterbury is the final judge of the worth (or lack thereof) of Stuart's work, we feel that it is important to let you know what he has told us so that you can deal with this as you see fit...."

The letter was signed by Kingsley N. McFarlane, President. Opposition to Anti-Semitism Inc

Introduction

Historical revisionism is an honest endeavour that is undertaken by many historians. Any work that examines a well-understood facet of history and comes to a new conclusion may be said to be revisionist history. Holocaust denial, which refers to itself as Holocaust Revisionism, is not history at all. It is one of the most notable anti-Semitic propaganda movements to develop over the last two decades. It is also an organised effort to deny the reality of the Nazi regime's systematic mass murder, partly in gas chambers, of nearly 6,000,000 Jews in Europe during the Second World War.

On the surface, the Holocaust deniers portray themselves as individuals engaged in a legitimate, dispassionate quest for historical knowledge and truth. They dress themselves in pseudo-academic garb. They assert that the accepted premise, that Nazi Germany engaged in a premeditated campaign of systematic genocide against the Jews, is one that does not stand up to honest scholarly scrutiny.

They do not deny that Hitler engaged in persecution and discrimination against Jews in Germany and German occupied countries. They even admit the existence of concentration camps. They argue, however, that the actions of the Nazis were in large part a legitimate response to Jewish misdeeds and disloyalty during wartime. As such, the measures taken and the use of concentration camps, is not to be seen as qualitatively different from similar wartime actions of the Western Allies and the Soviet Union.

Only Germany has been singled out for special condemnation, they argue, and this only because it lost the war. They also often deny the existence of any German plan or programme to systematically murder the Jews in gas chambers.

The cynical truth comes by way of an obscure extremist group, which boasts: 'The real purpose of Holocaust Revisionism is to make National Socialism an acceptable alternative again.' (1) This explains the stance taken by Holocaust deniers.

The roots of Holocaust denial

Holocaust denial can be found in the bureaucratic language of Nazi policy itself. The Nazis sought to camouflage the genocidal intent of what they called 'The Final Solution to the Jewish Question'. In France, an obscure group of post-war Trotskyites led by Paul Rassinier denounced evidence of the genocide as 'Stalinist atrocity propaganda'.

An organised propaganda movement took root in 1979 when Willis Carto, founder of the Liberty Lobby - the largest anti-Jewish propaganda organisation in the United States - incorporated the Institute for Historical Review (IHR). The IHR publishes the *Journal of Historical Review* (JHR) and its members meet at annual conventions.

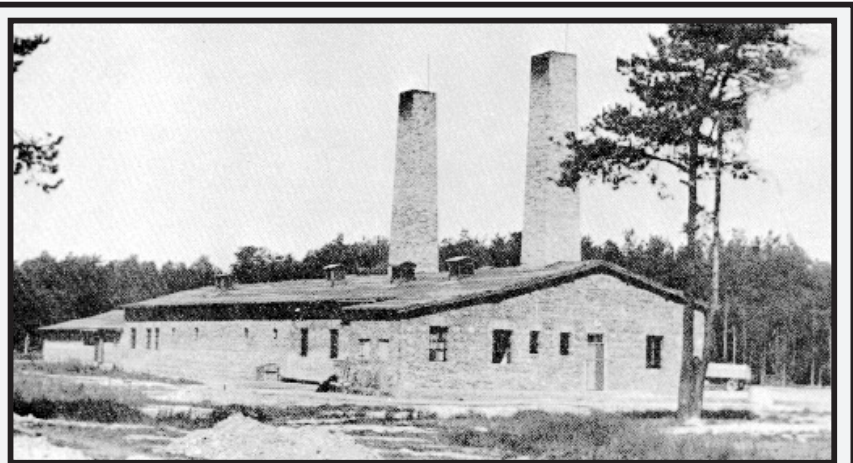
The reactions of historians

In December 1991 the Governing Council of the American Historical Association (AHA), the largest and oldest professional organisation for historians in the USA, unanimously approved a statement condemning the Holocaust denial movement, stating: 'No serious historians question that the Holocaust took place'.

The Council's action came in response to a petition circulated among members calling for an official statement against Holocaust denial propaganda. The petition had been

signed by more than 300 members attending the organisation's annual conference. In 1994 the AHA reaffirmed its position in a press release which stated that 'the Association will not provide a forum for views that are, at best, a form of academic fraud'.

In France, in response to Robert Faurisson's assertion that there had been no gas chambers in the Holocaust, 34 of France's leading historians issued a declaration that reads in part: 'Everyone is free to interpret a phenomenon like Hitlerite genocide according to his own philosophy. Everyone is free to compare it with other enterprises of murder committed earlier, at the same time or later. Everyone is free to offer this or that kind of explanation; everyone is free, to the limit, to imagine or to dream that these monstrous deeds did not take place. Unfortunately, they did take place and no one can deny their existence without committing an outrage on the truth. It is not necessary to ask how technically such mass murder was possible. It was technically possible, seeing that it took place. That is the required point of departure of every historical



An overview of Krema4 in Auschwitz. The gas chambers are in the back; in the foreground, the morgue and the crematorium.

inquiry on this subject. This truth it behoves us to remember in simple terms: there is not and there cannot be a debate about the existence of the gas chambers'.

The full text of this declaration appeared in 'Le Monde', February 21, 1979.

Holocaust denial arguments

There are a number of well known arguments which the Holocaust deniers repeat. Their arguments are rather simplistic and could be ignored, were it not for the fact that they are being taken seriously in some university circles. The following are summaries of some of the major assertions by Holocaust denial propagandists, with brief factual responses:

A) There were no gas chambers used for mass murder at Auschwitz and other concentration camps

Gas chambers were the primary means of murder used against the Jews in the Holocaust. A directive establishing large-scale gas chambers was issued in the fall of 1941. Between January 1940 and August 1941, 70,273 Germans - most of them physically handicapped or mentally ill - were gassed in hermetically sealed gas chambers disguised as shower rooms.(2) Three directors of the mass murder, Erhard Wetzel, Alfred Rosenberg and Victor Blank met in 1941 with Adolf Eichmann to discuss the use of gas chambers in the mass murder programme. (3) Thereafter, Christian Wirth and Dr. Kalmeyer were sent to Poland to begin construction of the gas chambers.(4)

Mobile gassing vans, using the exhaust fumes of diesel engines, started in November 1941.(5) At least 320,000 Chelmo prisoners, most of them Jews, were killed by this method; a total of 870,000 Jews were murdered using gas vans and diesel-powered gas chambers. (6) Gas chambers were installed and operated at Belzec, Lublin, Sobibor, Majdanek and Auschwitz-

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The techniques of Holocaust denial

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Birkenau from September 3, 1941 until November 1944 (7). At its height the programme accounted for as many as 20,000 victims per day. (8) Authorities have estimated that approximately two to three million Jews were murdered in the gas chambers. The total number of Jews killed in the Holocaust remains at nearly 6,000,000, of whom approximately 1,000,000 were killed in Auschwitz. (9)

B) The estimate of six million Jewish losses during the Holocaust are greatly exaggerated

Holocaust deniers first argued that there were no gas chambers and then moved on to claim that without gas chambers it was simply not possible to murder so many Jews. Some suggest 325,000 as a realistic figure, others about a million (at least) and then go on to argue such deaths were caused as a result of war action; natural deaths and being sentenced to death. Being sentenced to death implies that these Jews exacted such punishment because they had broken the law and had therefore met with their just deserts.

The figure of six million can be demonstrated by comparing Europe's Jewish population before and after the war.

Even after making allowances for those who fled Europe, there are nearly 6,000,000 who cannot be accounted for. The Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry, meeting in April 1946, put the total Jewish losses at 5,721,500. The historian and international jurist Jacob Korherr arrived at a figure of 5,820,960. The German historian Helmut Krausnick, put the number nearer to 7,000,000. Studies of censuses, statistical analyses and other demographic studies of European Jewry have consistently demonstrated the accuracy of the 1946 assessment. (10)

The Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust (5,860,129) and Davidowicz (5,933,900) offer a country by country accounting of Jewish death. The table (right) is based on Davidowicz (11).

C) The Nuremberg Trials were a farce

This is another centre-piece of Holocaust denial propaganda. The deniers claim that the top Nazis' evidence cannot be relied upon because as indicted war criminals they were trying to protect themselves; saying what would most likely be expedient for the outcome of the trial.

The Nuremberg Trials were based on a carefully prepared process. Discussions of the treatment of war criminals started as early as October 1943. (12) The first trials began in the autumn of 1945. The chief defendant was Hermann Goering. The prosecution had selected a further 20 leading Nazis.

The trials resulted in one 10-year sentence; one 15-year sentence; two 20-year sentences and three life sentences. Eleven received the death penalty and three were set free. Hardly a rubber stamp verdict. The defendants, moreover, had access to 206 attorneys - 136 of whom had been Nazi party members.

A second round of trials resulted in 25 death sentences; 20 life sentences; 97 sentences of 25 years or less and 35 not-guilty verdicts. (13)

D) Testimony of survivors is unreliable; there is no objective documentation proving the Holocaust.

No crime in history has been as well documented as the Holocaust. It is demonstrated by a myriad of documents, the majority of them Nazi-authored and captured by Allied troops before the Germans could destroy them. Davidowicz wrote: 'the German documents captured by the Allied armies at war's end have provided an incomparable historical record, which, with regard to volume and accessibility, has been unique in the annals of scholarship the national archives and the American Historical Association jointly have published 67 volumes of Guides to German Records

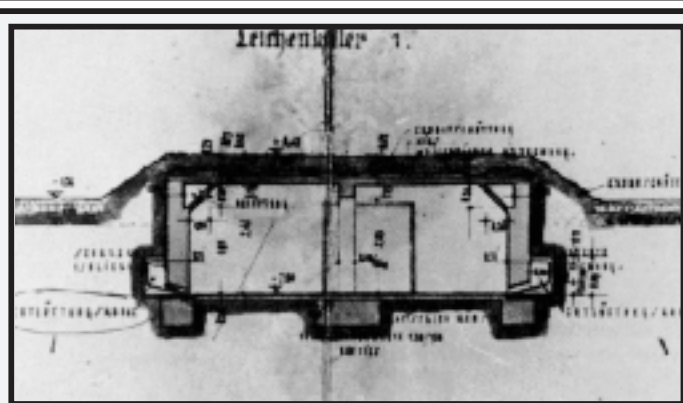
Estimated number of Jews killed in the 'Final Solution'

Country	Estimated pre-'Final Solution' population	Estimated Jewish population annihilated	
		Number	%
Poland	3,300,000	3,000,000	90
Baltic countries	253,000	228,000	90
Germany/Austria	240,000	210,000	90
Protectorate	90,000	80,000	89
Slovakia	90,000	75,000	83
Greece	70,000	54,000	77
The Netherlands	140,000	105,000	75
Hungary	650,000	450,000	70
SSR White Russia	375,000	245,000	65
SSR Ukraine*	1,500,000	900,000	60
Belgium	65,000	40,000	60
Yugoslavia	43,000	26,000	60
Romania	600,000	300,000	50
Norway	1,800	900	50
France	350,000	90,000	26
Bulgaria	64,000	14,000	22
Italy	40,000	8,000	20
Luxembourg	5,000	1,000	20
Russia (RSFSR)*	975,000	107,000	11
Denmark	8,000		
Finland	2,000		

* The Germans did not occupy all the territories in this republic

Microfilmed at Alexandria, VA. For my work I have limited myself mainly to published German documents'. (14)

The author then lists 303 published sources. Among these sources are the writing of Adolf Hitler; Heinrich Himmler; Rudolf Hoess and Alfred Rosenberg.



The plan of the gas chamber of Kremas II in Auschwitz. The air extraction system (which the Holocaust deniers claim didn't exist) is clearly shown. Remains of the air-extraction system can still be seen in the ruins.

Similarly Raul Hilberg, in his three-volume edition of 'The Destruction of the European Jews' wrote that the accumulated paperwork of the German bureaucracy was vast enough to survive in significant quantities, and even sensitive folders remained. (15)

Both the first hand testimony of survivors who lived through the death camps, as well as the reports and confessions by the perpetrators - a gross juxtaposition - leave little doubt as to the nature of Hitler's 'Final Solution'. Horrifying films and photos of killing operations and their aftermath can only begin to give a picture of the extent of Nazi atrocity.

It should be noted, that Nazi war crimes' suspects who stood trial for their crimes never claimed that the crimes of which they were accused were fictional. They argued instead that they were 'only following orders'.

Countless new records from the former Soviet Union have recently become available. The evidence for the Nazi death machine has by virtue of such data become so overwhelming that on October 9, 1981, Judge Thomas T. Johnson of the California Supreme Court, took judicial notice of the Holocaust, ruling that 'the Holocaust is not reasonably subject to dispute. It is capable of immediate and accurate determination by resort to resources of reasonable, indisputable accuracy. It is simply a fact'.

Conclusion

The attempt to deny the Holocaust enlists a basic strategy of distortion. Truth is mixed with absolute lies. By juxtaposing lies with truth, the lies are given validity. The assertion that there were no gas chambers is a monstrous lie. In fact, Holocaust denial is a peculiarly postmodern phenomenon. It is both an expression of, and a refutation of, the key postmodernist dogma; that there is no such thing as truth, historical or otherwise, there are only 'constructions', 'competing narratives' with no reason to 'privilege'. Indeed a dangerous phenomenon.

In an attempt to hide the fact that they are fascists and anti-Semites with a specific ideological and political agenda, the Holocaust deniers state that their objective is to uncover historical falsehoods. This way they have been able to sow confusion. They do this amongst the confused and the disoriented.

Holocaust deniers have found a ready following amongst the Ku Klux Klan; Neo

Nazis, skinheads and other extremist groups and more recently within universities.

If Holocaust denial has demonstrated anything, it is the fragility of memory, reason and history. (16) Professor Lipstadt observed 'that the deniers also sport an outward veneer, but rather than expose who they are, it camouflages them. The stripping away of the deniers' cloak of respectability reveals that at their core they are no different from these neo-fascist groups. They hate the same things and have the same objectives - the destruction of truth and memory. But the deniers have adopted the demeanour of the rationalist and increasingly avoid the easily identifiable one of the extremist. They attempt to project the appearance of being committed to the very values that they, in truth, adamantly oppose: reason, critical rules of evidence and historical distinction. This is what makes Holocaust denial such a threat'. (17)

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