

V. The Massacres Behind the Eastern Front

1. The Initial Situation

On 22nd June 1941, the Wehrmacht marched into the USSR. The official version of history has it that this was an unprovoked attack. On the other hand, Revisionists such as the Russian historian Suvorov and the German historian Hoffmann maintain that by doing so, Hitler was able to forestall an impending Soviet attack.³²

In the territories taken by the Germans, Soviet partisans stirred up a bloody underground war which took the lives of many German soldiers. The Soviets boasted that their partisans had killed 500,000 members of the German army.³³ The Germans reacted to these actions—which violated international law—the way other occupying powers before and since have done, with severe reprisal measures even against the civilian population.³⁴ Many civilians were shot as hostages, whole villages were burned to the ground.

32 Victor Suvorov, *Icebreaker: Who Started the Second World War?*, Hamish Hamilton, London 1990; V. Suworow, *Der Tag M*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1995; V. Suworow, *Stalins verhinderter Erstschlag*, Pour le Merite, Selente 2000; E. Topitsch, *Stalin's War*, Fourth Estate, London 1987; W. Post, *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, Mittler, Hamburg 1995; F. Becker, *Stalins Blutspur durch Europa*, Arndt Verlag, Kiel 1996; F. Becker, *Im Kampf um Europa*, Leopold Stocker Verlag, Graz/Stuttgart 1993; W. Maser, *Der Wortbruch. Hitler, Stalin und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Olzog Verlag, Munich 1994; J. Hoffmann, *Stalin's War of Extermination*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Capshaw, AL, 2000; J. Hoffmann, "Die Sowjetunion bis zum Vorabend des deutschen Angriffs", in: Horst Boog and others, *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, vol. 4: *Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart 1987; J. Hoffmann, "The Soviet Union's Offensive Preparations in 1941", in: *From Peace to War*. Providence/Oxford, 1997, pp. 361-380.

33 Boris S. Telpuchowski, *Die sowjetische Geschichte des Großen Vaterländischen Krieges 1941-1945*, Frankfurt a. M. 1961, requested from Walter Sanning, *The Dissolution of the Eastern European Jewry*, Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, CA, 1983, p. 104 (online (German): <http://vho.org/D/da>); cf. Gernar Rudolf and Sibylle Schröder, "Partisanenkrieg und Repressaltötungen", *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung* (hereafter *VffG*), 3(2) (1999), pp. 145-153 (online: <http://vho.org/VffG/1999/2/RudolfSchroeder145-153.html>).

34 On the question of the legality of such reprisals, cf. Karl Siegert, "Reprisals and Orders From Higher Up", E. Gauss (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 29), pp. 529-548 (online: <http://codoh.com/found/fndSiegert.html>) and also F.W. Seidler, *Die Wehrmacht im Partisanenkrieg*, Pour le Mérite, Selent 1998.

Because from the very beginning, Jews in the Soviet Union had played an inordinately large role in the making of the Communist system,³⁵ and also made up a disproportionately large share of the partisans,³⁶ Jewish civilians suffered in the German repression measures to a much greater degree than non-Jewish civilians. That there were even ‘wild’ shootings, which is to say, shootings that were done not as a reaction to attacks by partisans, can hardly be excluded. It is also not disputed that many Jewish-Communist commissars were killed because of Hitler’s 1941 “*Commissar Order*,” which was only reluctantly applied by German officers in the East and which was abrogated in early 1942. In addition, thousands of Jews were killed in pogroms initiated by the native populations following the German invasion. After they had been freed from the Bolshevik yoke, Latvians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and others took revenge on Jews because the Red terror machinery had been led mainly by Jews, and this retribution unfortunately fell also on Jews who had had nothing to do with the Communist crimes.³⁷

The orthodox historians are telling us that the Germans carried out an actual war of extermination against the Jews. The most extensive presentation of this thesis was the book published in 1981 by Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges*,³⁸ which we cannot examine further in a work dedicated solely to the discussion of Hilberg; that will have to wait until a later date. In what follows we will critically examine the arguments Raul Hilberg has made in support of this thesis. First, however, we need to summarize what Hilberg says happened to Soviet Jews in the German-occupied territories.

2. Hilberg’s Version of German Jewish Policy in the Occupied Soviet Territories

Raul Hilberg states that the mass murders of Soviet Jews began in August 1941; he writes:

“At first the kommandos undertook no mass shootings nor made victims of whole families. They had not yet become habituated to routine kill-

35 Of 531 leading personalities in the Soviet Union in 1920, 447 were Jews, cf. Juri K. Begunov, *Tajnye Sily v istorii Rossij*, Isdatelstvo Imeni A.S. Syborina, St. Petersburg 1996.

36 *Die Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* (ed. by Eberhard Jäckel, Peter Longerich and Julius H. Schoeps, Argon Verlag, Berlin 1993) contains this comment: “*The partisan groups [in the USSR] often formed spontaneously. Many units consisted largely of Jewish fighters.*” (p. 1348).

37 All six main architects of the Communist slave camp system were Jews (Alexander Solschenizyn, *Der Archipel Gulag*, Scherz Verlag, Bern 1974, photographic section).

38 Stuttgart 1981.

ing. Because of the influence of centuries-old traditions they did not consider their orders as all-encompassing. They took the word 'Jew' to mean men only. The mass killings started only in August 1941." (p. 307; DEJ, na)

The "Kommandos" belonged to the four *Einsatzgruppen*, which had been formed before the war and were intended to secure German rear areas, meaning they were to fight partisans operating behind the lines. According to Hilberg, they had two further responsibilities. Referring to an affidavit made after the war by Otto Ohlendorf, leader of *Einsatzgruppe D*,³⁹ he writes:

"According to Ohlendorf, the commanders of the *Einsatzgruppen* were briefed by Himmler personally. They were informed that an important part of their task was the elimination (Beseitigung) of Jews—women, men and children—and of Communist functionaries.²⁶" (p. 303; DEJ, p. 290)

Also, Hilberg says, the *Einsatzgruppen* were to comb the POW camps for persons they should shoot. Heydrich had ordered the sorting out of all "professional revolutionaries", Red Army political officers, "fanatical Communists" and "all Jews", and the *Einsatzgruppen* did the major part of this work (p. 351; DEJ, p. 335).

The four *Einsatzgruppen* numbered 3,000 men altogether, including a few noncombatants, such as interpreters and radio operators (pp. 302f.; DEJ, p. 289).

The first "killing sweep", which began in August 1941, lasted until December of the same year, but before it was over a second killing sweep had already begun—in the fall—, whose purpose was the seizure and liquidation of Jews who had been overlooked.

In addition to the *Einsatzgruppen*, *Gestapo* members from Tilsit, *Einsatzkommandos* from the Generalgouvernement and improvised *Kommandos* of the Higher SS and Police Leaders cooperated in the second killing sweep. (p. 312; DEJ, p. 298).

The mass shootings followed the same pattern, apart from minor variations: Jews would be taken from the cities where most of them lived to pits lying on the outskirts of the cities—some of which already existed, the rest of which were dug for the purpose—and murdered there. Frequently there were five or six layers of bodies in the pits before they were covered over with earth. (pp. 333f.; DEJ, p. 318f.).

Because the shootings often caused stressful misgivings for the shooters, Hilberg tells us the Germans instituted the use of gas vans as

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another instrument of murder starting in December 1941, when each *Einsatzgruppe* was allotted two or three of them. Jews were killed in the gas vans with exhaust gas fed inside (pp. 349f.; *DEJ*, na).

Here are the victim counts Hilberg gives for several cities:

- 33,000 victims in Kiev;
- 10,600 victims in Riga (this *Einsatzkommando* numbered only 21 men!);
- 23,600 victims in Kamenets-Podolsk;
- 15,000 victims in Dnepropetrovsk (p. 311; *DEJ*, p. 298);
- 15,000 victims in Rovno (p. 312; *DEJ*, p. 298);
- 10,000 victims in Simferopol (p. 391; *DEJ*, p. 373).

Hilberg charges large-scale massacres of Jews not only to the Germans, but also to the Rumanians, who he claims slaughtered 19,000 Jews in a single day, 23rd October 1941 (p. 321; *DEJ*, p. 306).

Although the second killing sweep allegedly got under way a full three months before the first had ended, Hilberg says that there was an “intermediary stage”, that of ghettoization. Its purposes were twofold. Referring to a (supposed) report of *Einsatzgruppe C*, he writes:

“All Einsatzgruppen commanders, with the possible exception of the relentless Dr. Stahlecker, [the leader of Einsatzgruppe A] realized that the Jews could not be killed in a single sweep. In one report there is even a note of despair over the Jewish refugees who were drifting back into the cities from which they had fled. [...] Whenever the Einsatzgruppe had left a town, it returned to find more Jews than had already been killed there.” (p. 358; *DEJ*, p. 342)

The essence of the ghettos, Hilberg believes, was to:

“prevent the dispersal of the victims and to facilitate their future seizure for shootings.” (p. 366; *DEJ*, p. 349)

The second purpose motivating ghettoization was the economic utilization of Jews:

“Whereas the mobile killing units were interested only in concentrating the Jews to facilitate the second sweep, the military and civilian administrations decided to exploit the situation while it lasted. Hence economic measures, in the form of labor utilization and property confiscations, became an important aspect of the intermediary stage.” (p. 372; *DEJ*, p. 355)

“The army needed Jewish workers in its repair shops and Jewish clerks in its offices.⁶⁰ The armament plants under ‘trusteeship’ continued to be dependent upon Jewish labor.⁶¹ In the Volhynian sector of the Generalkommissariat Volhynia-Podolia, the labor force in armament plants was 90 percent Jewish throughout 1941 and 1942.⁶²” (p. 376; *DEJ*, p. 359)

Although the ghettoization policy as an “*intermediary stage*” occurred between the first killing sweep—completed by December 1941—and the second sweep beginning in September 1941,

*“When the civil administration took over part of the occupied territory in July and August of 1941, the mobile killing units had already completed a large part of the ghettoization process. Einsatzgruppe A prided itself that, upon transfer of jurisdiction, it had already made preparations for the incarceration in ghettos of all Jewish communities (excepting only Vilna).”*⁹ (p. 361; *DEJ*, pp. 344f.)

The ghettos of Riga and Minsk were also designated for the reception of deported German Jews. But since the available space did not suffice for both the local Jews and the German Jews together, in Riga between the 29th November and the 9th December 1941 the National Socialists shot 27,800 Jews in two sweeps (after they had already butchered 10,600 there earlier). “*Space had now been created for transports from Germany inside the ghetto itself.*” (p. 370; *DEJ*, p. 353). Yet the German Jews in the Riga quarter and in the nearby work camps were reduced to a handful of survivors in the months and years following their deportation at the end of 1941, due to the depredations of unchecked epidemics (p. 371; *DEJ*, p. 353). This caused the Germans much harm economically, because:

“In the Riga region, where the German Jews were to be ‘quartered only for a transitory stay (nur vorübergehend hier untergebracht)’, and where many of the deportees were ‘cripples, war invalids, and people over seventy years of age (Krüppel, Kriegsinvaliden und über 70 Jahre alte Leute)’⁶⁵, a widespread demand for Jewish laborers became manifest all the same. On one occasion a Gebietskommissar employee complained that soldiers, shouting in the presence of more than 1,000 Jews, had simply seized the labor in defiance of regulations.⁶⁶ By 1943 the remaining thousands of German and Latvian Jewish laborers were divided among a large number of employers: SS, army, navy, air force, railroads and firms.⁶⁷” (p. 377; *DEJ*, pp. 359f.)

From the transports reaching Minsk from Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, 5,000 Jews were shot on the 25th and 29th November (p. 371; *DEJ*, p. 353).

Around the middle of 1943, Heinrich Himmler decided to liquidate the entire ghetto system; the ghettos would be converted into concentration camps. This conversion was completed smoothly in Latvia, but in Lithuania it was accompanied by extensive killing operations (p. 407; *DEJ*, p. 388). Hilberg reports:

“By August and September 1943, the Vilna ghetto was dissolved. Most of its inmates were sent to Estonia and Latvia, where they were subjected to attrition and shootings, and from where the remainder was subse-

quently routed to the Stutthof concentration camp. Other thousands were transported to the Lublin death camp, and still others were rounded up and shot.” (p. 405; *DEJ*, p. 385)

Jews in the Minsk ghetto were removed to Poland (p. 407; *DEJ*, p. 388).

All told, according to Hilberg, 1.35 million Jews perished in the Soviet territories taken by the Germans. Of these, more than two thirds were murdered by the *Einsatzgruppen*; the rest were killed by troops of the Higher SS and Police Leaders, of the Wehrmacht and the Rumanians, fell in partisan warfare or died due to privations in the camps and ghettos and in the open fields and woods (pp. 409f.; *DEJ*, p. 390). A further 1.5 million Soviet Jews escaped German rule through flight (p. 305; *DEJ*, p. 291). Since, of the five million Jews living in the USSR before 22nd June 1941, four million were inhabitants of zones which at times came under German control, under these conditions over one million Jews must have survived in the area ruled by the Germans (pp. 304f.; *DEJ*, p. 291).

Now, this is Hilberg’s description of what happened to the Jews in the Soviet territories overrun by the Germans. Before we take a look at the sources on which the exalted ‘Holocaust’ historian founds his assertions, let us pursue the question whether the picture he draws appears believable or not, using good common sense.

3. On the Likelihood of Hilberg’s Description

Anyone endowed with the power of logical thought who analyzes Hilberg’s description of German Jewish policy in the occupied Soviet territories as summarized above will inescapably come to the conclusion that it cannot hold up, and consequently it must rest on unreliable sources. Let us list some of the more gross absurdities which spring into view:

a. The Claimed Numbers of Victims of the *Einsatzgruppen*

The claimed numbers of victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* are impossibly large. The largest of the four, *Einsatzgruppe A*, had 990 members. If we subtract from this the 172 vehicle drivers, 3 women employees, 51 interpreters, 3 teletypewriter operators and 8 radio operators, there are about 750 combatants left to use for the mass killings (p. 303; *DEJ*, p. 289). Up to 15th October 1941, *Einsatzgruppe A* supposedly killed 125,000 Jews (p. 309; *DEJ*, p. 289). Considering the fact that the mass murders first began in August (p. 307; *DEJ*, na), the overwhelming majority of the 125,000 victims, let us say 120,000, must have been killed in a period of ten weeks.

Since the Jews certainly cannot have gone to their deaths willingly, they must have been tracked down and driven together in the cities, where there certainly would have been escape attempts and resistance. Also there would have been the difficulty of moving the condemnees to the outskirts of the city, where most of the pits undoubtedly would have had to have been newly dug.

Besides carrying out the massacres, the *Einsatzgruppen* were required to comb the POW camps for commissars, fanatical Communists and Jews. This would have been an immense task, because, up to the end of 1941, no less than 3,350,000 Red Army members had fallen into German hands (p. 351; *DEJ*, p. 334). Even when one considers that only a part of them had been captured by the middle of October, that the *Einsatzgruppen* did not have to do all the work, only “*the major part*” of it, and that there were four *Einsatzgruppen*, under these conditions, during the ten weeks from the beginning of August until the middle of October *Einsatzgruppe A* must have searched through hundreds of thousands of POWs for the persons to be liquidated—in addition to shooting 120,000 Jews and fighting partisans!

One example is sufficient. In view of Hilberg’s strong tendency to exaggerate, we will not go into the astronomical number of victims Hilberg attributes to the other *Einsatzgruppen*.

b. The Refugees Drifting back into the Cities

It is pure flim-flam to say that “*the Jewish refugees [...] were drifting back into the cities from which they had fled*”, which meant that whenever the *Einsatzgruppe* had left a town, it returned to find more Jews than had already been killed there (p. 358; *DEJ*, p. 342). If it is really true that significant numbers of Jews returned to the cities captured by the Germans, is this not an infallible indication that the Germans *did not* massacre the Jews, since word of such a thing would have spread like wildfire. Killing operations of this magnitude are not easy to hide, especially when they supposedly took place near a city, as in the case of Babi Yar.

c. The Purpose and the Course of the Ghettoization

What Hilberg has written on the subject of ghettoization, its time frame and purpose, defies all logic. We recapitulate:

- The ghettoization occurred between the first killing sweep (terminating at the end of December 1941) and the second (beginning in September 1941), which means it must have been carried out in the last four months of 1941.

- In July and August, the *Einsatzgruppen* had already “completed a large part” of the ghettoization process.
- The purpose of the ghettoization was partly to facilitate the later seizure of the Jews to shoot them, since “the Jews could not be killed in a single sweep”.
- The ghettos also allowed Jewish labor forces to be exploited.

This is all a hopeless confusion. *Either* in the East the Germans carried on an extermination policy with respect to the Jews—dictated by ideological fanaticism—*or* they pursued a policy of ghettoization—driven by security considerations as well as economic considerations. The two simply cannot be combined. That ghettoization would not exclude the killing of *certain categories of Jews* (commissars, partisans, hostages and so on) nor would it exclude spontaneous massacres ordered by local commanders, is another question.

Hilberg’s argument which he uses to explain the ghettoization, that so many Jews drifted back into the cities captured by the Germans that they could not be killed in a single sweep, is pure nonsense. Why not, when in the first of two massacres in Riga 10,600 Jews could be murdered by 21 men?

Furthermore, if the ghettoization took place sometime between the fall and the end of 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* can hardly have already “completed a large part” of it as early as July and August!

We move on. In summer 1943, Himmler ordered the conversion of the ghettos to concentration camps (why exactly, when their purpose in the first place had been to facilitate shooting the Jews?). In Latvia this happened smoothly, but in Lithuania it required use of force. Were the Lithuanian Jews shot then? Partially yes, Hilberg believes, but not right where they were found, but rather... *in Latvia and Estonia!* Why not in Lithuania itself? The survivors from Latvia and Estonia were sent to *Sobibór* in East Poland, a place Hilberg says was an ‘extermination camp’ used only for gassing Jews, so that the purpose of sending them there can only have been to kill them.

Why these Lithuanian Jews would not have been killed in Latvia and Estonia, instead of once more having valuable transport space and food thrown away on them, remains a mystery. And how did some of these Lithuanian Jews sent to Latvia and Estonia end up in the camp at *Stutthof*, lying east of Danzig, which Hilberg says was *not* a extermination camp?⁴⁰

Let us move on to the German and Czech Jews, who were removed to Riga und Minsk at the end of 1941.

If, as Hilberg says, the Hitler order for the physical annihilation of Jewry had been given long before, the purpose of these measures can only

have been the killing of the deportees. (We repeat here the question raised before, why the Germans would not have just killed them on the spot, or at least have waited another month until the opening of the first ‘extermination camp’ at Chełmno.) In fact, says Hilberg, 5,000 of the Jews from the Reich and the Protectorate who reached Minsk were killed immediately on arrival. The rest of them were later sent backward *to Poland*, although whether to be killed or to work there, Hilberg does not say. In Riga, many of the unfortunate people died, too, but not by shooting, but because of raging epidemics. This meant a significant economic loss to the Germans, since the survivors performed valuable work for the “SS, army, navy, air force, railway service and manufacturing concerns”. Wouldn’t the Germans had done better, if they had not murdered the 27,800 Latvian Jews who were allegedly shot to make room for the German Jews, not to mention the 10,600 already killed by the 21 men?

“*It was dark and the moon shone brightly as a speeding motor car slowly turned around the straight corner. Within were seated standing people, silently sunk in conversation...*” This is the beginning of a well-known German non-sense nursery rhyme. Hilberg’s rendition of German policy on the Jews in the conquered Soviet territories sounds exactly like it.

4. No Valid Evidence for the Claimed Approximately 1.2 Million Murdered Jews Behind the Eastern Front

In the beginning of 1943 the Germans found a mass grave containing 4,000 victims at Katyn in White Russia. They soon discovered that the victims had been some of the Polish officers and soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Soviets in 1939. A quickly convened international expert commission confirmed this evaluation. The National Socialists used this grisly discovery for an immense and very successful anti-Bolshevist propaganda campaign. In Nuremberg, the Soviets succeeded in putting the guilt on the Germans, but no one in Poland or the West really believed them. It was not until Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990 that Moscow confessed that these Polish fighters had been shot by Stalin’s thugs—along with more than 10,000 others buried in other locations.⁴¹

40 Even today in Poland, it is asserted that there were gassings of persons in Stutthof; the visitor is shown a disinfection chamber opposite the crematory as the crime site. Yet Western historians have mostly kept away from this subject. Hilberg never mentions gassings of persons in Stutthof, which shows that he does not regard that camp as an ‘extermination camp’; cf. on this Jürgen Graf, Carlo Mattogno, *Concentration Camp Stutthof*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Capshaw, AL, 2001.

41 On the Katyn massacre see, for example, Allen Paul, *Katyn, The Untold Story of Stalin’s Polish Massacre*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York²1991.

Raul Hilberg's version is that, of the original 4 million Jews in the German occupied territories of the USSR, approximately 1.35 millions died, and only a small number of them in ghettos, camps or in the partisan war; most of them were murdered. If we take "most of them" to mean an even 1.2 million, this means that the Germans in the USSR killed almost three hundred times as many Jews as the Soviets had killed Polish fighters at Katyn. Undoubtedly, the Communists would not have let slip this unique opportunity to repay their adversary the shame of Katyn with interest and compounded interest! Undoubtedly, as the Germans had done previously, the Soviets would have flown in international expert commissions such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. Undoubtedly, at the Nuremberg trials they would have shown films of the exhumation of hundreds of thousands of murdered Jews!

Nothing of the sort happened. Raul Hilberg explains why:

"In June 1942, Himmler ordered the commander of Sonderkommando 4a, Standartenführer Paul Blobel, 'to erase the traces of Einsatzgruppen executions in the East'. Blobel formed a special Kommando with the code designation 1005. The Kommando had the task of digging up graves and burning bodies. Blobel traveled all over the occupied territories, looking for graves and conferring with Security Police officials. Once he took a visitor from the RSHA [Reichssicherheitshauptamt] (Hartl) for a ride and, like a guide showing historical places to a tourist, pointed to the mass graves near Kiev, where his own men had killed 34,000 Jews.⁹³

From the beginning, however, Blobel had to contend with problems. [...] When the Russians overran the occupied territories, Blobel had fulfilled only part of his task.⁹⁶" (pp. 408f.; DEJ, p. 389)

As his source for these statements, Hilberg gives not a document from the period itself, but instead Blobel's affidavit made for one of the Nuremberg successor trials.⁴²

If Blobel could accomplish "only part" of his task, then the Soviets must have found numerous unopened mass graves. The reason they did not fully exploit this discovery is unclear.

Let us assume that "only part" means that Blobel was able to open and incinerate the corpses in half the graves, i.e., 600,000 corpses. As fuel, we are told, he chose not wood, which would have been easy to come by in those heavily wooded areas, but gasoline! If one were to pour gasoline on a corpse lying in the open and set it on fire, most of the gasoline would seep into the ground. To prevent this one would have to lay the cadaver in a container—such as a metal tub; in this case, one would need about 16 gallons

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per incineration.⁴³ The gasoline loss would also be less if one lay the corpse on a pile of wood.

Under the unrealistic assumption that Blobel and his people were in possession of the equipment necessary to at least partially prevent the costly gasoline from seeping away, for the incineration of 600,000 corpses they would have needed ($600,000 \times 16 =$) 9,600,000 gallons of gasoline—and this at a time when the scarcity of fuel for airplanes, armored vehicles and trucks was causing the Germans severe difficulties!

With open air incineration using gasoline, bones remain behind, and usually not only splinters, but large pieces of shoulder and pelvic bones. Teeth cannot be destroyed this way at all. Also, a corpse leaves behind ashes, amounting to about 5% of body weight.⁴⁴ If, for example, Blobel and his men had wanted to dispose without a trace of the 27,800 Jews Hilberg says were murdered in Riga at the end of 1941, they would have had to do the following:

- They would have had to remove ($27,800 \times 30 =$) 834,000 teeth (we assume that each Jew was missing two teeth, on average).
- They would have had to remove millions of bones.
- They would have had to scatter ($27,800 \times 2.5 =$) 69,500 kilograms of ashes (we assume that each murdered person weighed 50 kg on average, since there would have been many children among them).

With a total of 600,000 corpses to dispose of without a trace, the numbers above increase by a factor of more than twenty. How Blobel and his *Kommando* accomplished this remains a mystery, especially since the murder sites lay in numerous, widely-dispersed localities.

Hilberg never touches on fundamental questions of this kind; he apparently does not even recognize that they pose a problem. As a “*paper historian*,”⁴⁵ who avoided any on-site research and forensic investigations, he lives far from the physical reality of things in his world of records and books.

Along with the mass shootings, the Germans are supposed to have killed people in mobile gas vans. As has already been mentioned in our Introduction, Hilberg does not show a single picture of these gas vans. Even the well-known volume *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Gift-*

43 Arnulf Neumaier, “*The Treblinka Holocaust?*”; in: Ernst Gauss (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 29) p. 489 (online: <http://codoh.com/found/fndtreb.html>).

44 *Schlag nach! Natur*, Bibliographisches Institut Leipzig 1952, p. 512, quoted in Arnulf Neumaier, previous footnote.

45 This fitting expression was coined by Robert Faurisson.

gas, which devotes no less than 64 pages to the gas vans, contains no photograph.⁴⁶ There is a good reason for this: no man has ever laid eyes on one of these legend-shrouded vans.

This is our final result: Hilberg makes no attempt to provide material evidence for the murder of some 1.2 million Jews behind the eastern front.

5. Hilberg's Documentary Evidence

The sources Hilberg cites as proof for murder of the Jews behind the eastern front fall into two broad categories: documents and witness statements (the latter includes also confessions of perpetrators, since the perpetrator is by definition a witness).

We turn first to the documentary evidence. Most of it concerns the so-called “Operational Reports” (*Ereignismeldungen*) of the *Einsatzgruppen*, which fall into the time frame June 1941 through May 1942. These are supposedly daily reports of the *Einsatzgruppe* commanders to Heinrich Himmler. Numerous massacres are described in these reports, sometimes with five digit numbers of victims. The Soviets supposedly found these documents in the offices of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* in Berlin.

The fact that the Germans would let such incriminating material fall into the hands of their enemies must arouse some surprise. If Germans could bring about the incineration without a trace of several millions of corpses in the ‘extermination camps’ and behind the eastern front, they would certainly have been able to incinerate a few stacks of paper! Thus, a suspicion of forgery is justified here, right from the start. There are also more technical grounds to dispute the genuineness of the documents, which the American researcher Prof. Arthur R. Butz summarizes as follows:⁴⁷

“Besides telling of regular anti-partisan activities, the reports tell of individual actions of mass executions of Jews, with numbers of victims usually running in the thousands. It is indicated, in most cases, that many copies, sometimes as many as a hundred, were distributed. [Apparently the Germans were intent on letting the rest of the world know as soon as possible about the butchery behind the eastern front!] They are mimeographed and signatures are most rare and, when they occur, appear on non-incriminating pages. Document NO-3159, for example, has a signature, R.R. Strauch, but only on a covering page giving the locations of various units of the Einsatzgruppen. There is also NO-1128, allegedly from Himmler to Hit-

46 Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, Adalbert Rückerl (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 5). The gas vans are discussed on pages 89 through 146.

47 Arthur Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, Calif. 1976, p. 198.

ler reporting, among other things, the execution of 363,211 Russian Jews in August-November 1942. This claim occurs on page 4 of NO-1128, while initials said to be Himmler's occur on the irrelevant page 1. Moreover, Himmler's initials were easy to forge: three vertical lines with a horizontal line drawn through them."

The case of Babi Yar provides an irrefutable proof of the falseness of these Operational Reports. There, on 29th September 1941, shortly after entry into Kiev, as revenge for the operations of the resistance movement which had taken the lives of many members of the Wehrmacht and civilians, the Germans are supposed to have shot 33,000 Jews. The massacre was reported in Operational Report Nr. 106 of 7th October 1941,⁴⁸ in which the number of killed was given with German precision: There were exactly 33,711. The total number of Jews present in Kiev at the time was given by this report as 300,000.

Many more Jews were killed in Babi Yar in the following weeks and months, according to 'Holocaust' writers.

Researchers such as Udo Walendy⁴⁹ and Herbert Tiedemann⁵⁰ have compiled a long list of inconsistencies which undermine the reality of this supposed mass murder; here are a few of the more important:

- The claimed total numbers of victims diverge wildly and sometimes reach up to 300,000.
- In 1931, approximately 850,000 persons lived in Kiev, of which 140,000 were Jews.⁵¹ After the German invasion of 22nd June 1941, a massive evacuation of the civilian population took place, so that when the Germans arrived, only a little more than 300,000 *Jewish and non-Jewish* inhabitants remained.⁵²
- In view of the potential danger to the Jews in a German occupation, the Jewish share of the evacuation must certainly not have been less than average, so that in September 1941 the German army could hardly have encountered more than 45,000 Jews. In these circumstances, Operational Report 106, which mentions 300,000 Jews, seems to be a gross forgery.

48 R-102.

49 Udo Walendy, "*Babi Jar – die Schlucht 'mit 33.711 ermordeten Juden'?*", in: *Historische Tatsachen*, Verlag für Volkstum und Zeitgeschichtsforschung, Vlotho/Weser, Nr. 51 (1992).

50 Herbert Tiedemann, "*Babi Yar: Critical Questions and Comments*", in: Ernst Gauss (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 29), pp. 497-525 (online: <http://codoh.com/found/fndbabiyar.html>); cf. also cf. Germar Rudolf and Sibylle Schröder, *op. cit.* (note 33).

51 *Brockhaus Encyclopädie*, Wiesbaden 1967, quoted from Tiedemann, *op. cit.* (note 50), p. 521.

52 *Zentralblatt des Reichskommissariats für die Ukraine*, Rovno, 2nd year, no. 2, 9th January 1943, pp. 8-20, quoted from Tiedemann (see previous footnote).

- In addition to shooting, some witnesses state that the method of murder used was drowning in the Dnepr, blowing up with mines, blowing up with hand grenades, burial while still alive, squashing with armored vehicles and other such nonsense; today the orthodox historiography is painfully silent about these other methods of killing.
- The witnesses cannot agree on the exact site of the crime any more than on the method of killing.
- The Soviets have never bothered to perform forensic investigations of traces or to preserve traces.
- After the war, the supposed crime site was used unchanged as a garbage dump (!)—such lack of piety is not to be expected from the Soviets, who have always honored their martyrs.

The definitive proof that the massacre at Babi Yar never took place is given by the German air-reconnaissance photographs of the area, which the specialist John Ball has studied.⁵³ In September 1943, shortly before the Red Army retook Kiev, the Germans supposedly exhumed and incinerated the bodies, finishing on the 29th September. An air-reconnaissance photograph of 26th September shows that the ravine of Babi Yar was free of any human activity at that time. No groups of people, no vehicles, no piles of firewood, no fire and no smoke are evident. Neither the topography nor the vegetation— except for the natural growth of the trees—had changed as compared to 1941.

That unmasks the mass shooting at Babi Yar as a propaganda lie, and the fact that it surfaces in an Operational Report means that any reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* must be considered suspect in advance and subject to a careful expert analysis.

No other claimed German massacre behind the eastern front was exploited to the extent of that at Babi Yar. The main ‘proof’ for this massacre is one of the Operational Reports. How credible, then, are other mass murders, likewise ‘proven’ by Operational Reports?

Of course it is possible—even likely—that genuine reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* fell into the hands of the Soviets. If it did happen, the real reports could have served as examples for forgeries in which either the numbers of victims of real massacres was enlarged or massacres which never happened were invented.

53 John C. Ball, “Air Photo Evidence”; in: E. Gauss (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 29), p. 275f. (online: <http://www.air-photo.com>, <http://codoh.com/found/fndaerial.html>).

A few more words on the gas vans, which Hilberg mentions only briefly (pp. 349f.; *DEJ*, pp. 333f.). The only documentary proof he cites for their existence is the letter supposedly written by SS-Untersturmführer Becker to SS-Obersturmführer Walter Rauff on 16th May 1942.⁵⁴

Ingrid Weckert has pointed out that this document is probably a forgery.⁵⁵ On the basis of a comprehensive study of all the evidence in existence pertaining to this subject, Pierre Marais has demonstrated that goods trucks mentioned therein could not have served as “gas vans”. For one thing, the original specifications of the manufacturer of these goods trucks show that the cargo space was only 1.50 m high (4ft 11in).⁵⁶

The technical ineptness of the gas van story comes from the fact that these murder vehicles were supposed to have been Saurer 5 tonners (p. 349; *DEJ*, na). All Saurer vehicles were powered with Diesel engines, but the exhaust gases of Diesel engines are poorly suited to killing due to their high oxygen and very low CO content. The same Saurer firm which manufactured those vans who are most likely mislabeled as “gas vans,” also produced massive numbers of goods vehicles fueled by generator gas. This gas was generated by burning moist wood and coke with a restricted amount of oxygen. Since this fule replaces gasoline, it was used by the hundreds of thousands in Germany during the Second World War. Generator gas has a CO content of up to 35%, which is quickly fatal. Thus, in contrary to Diesel exhaust gases, these gas generators themselves would have been ideal murder instruments. But there is no report on their use for mass killing.⁵⁷

6. Hilberg’s ‘Affidavits’ and Other Witness Evidence

Many of the charges that have been made against the Third Reich based on witness statements have long since been retracted by the orthodox historians. For example, no one asserts any longer that the Germans have the massacre of Katyn on their conscience, although this charge was made to stick at the Nuremberg Tribunal.⁵⁸ The horror story about soap from human fat⁵⁹—likewise dished out by the Soviets at Nuremberg—is not

54 PS-501.

55 Ingrid Weckert, “*The Gas Vans: A Critical Assessment of the Evidence*”; in: Ernst Gauss (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 29), pp. 217-243 (online: <http://codoh.com/found/fndwagon.html>).

56 Pierre Marais, *Les camions à gaz en question*, Polémiques, Paris 1994, especially pp. 135-141.

57 Friedrich Paul Berg, “*The Diesel Gas Chambers: Ideal for Torture—Absurd for Murder*”; in: E. Gauss (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 29), pp. 435-465 (online: <http://codoh.com/found/fndieselgc.html>). Diesel engines can run both with Diesel fuel and with generator gas.

58 IMT VII, pp. 425-428, 592.

59 IMT VII, pp. 597-600.

taken seriously by any reputable historian; even Hilberg dismisses it as a legend (pp. 1032f.; *DEJ*, p. 967). Other accusations which the Soviet prosecutors made against Germany at Nuremberg have been long forgotten and apparently sprang from more twisted minds than the soap fairy tale.

For example, the Soviets accused the National Socialists of having murdered 840,000 Russian POWs in concentration camp Sachsenhausen by means of pedal-driven skull smashing machines.⁶⁰

The Western Allies did not lag behind the Soviets in their clumsy horror propaganda. Thus at the Nuremberg trial US prosecutor Robert Jackson denounced the Germans to former German armaments minister Albert Speer for having blown up 20,000 Jews with an atom bomb at Auschwitz.⁶¹ The number of dead at Dachau was for years posted on a signboard on the grounds of the former concentration camp as 238,000, while the actual number was approximately 30,000, of which it is now undisputed that at least half died in the last four months of the war when the transport system had collapsed and epidemics spread unchecked.⁶²

Also at Nuremberg the Anglo-Americans paid obeisance to the lies about gas chamber murders in Dachau, Buchenwald and other western camps. For example, British chief prosecutor Sir Hartley Shawcross asserted there that the Germans had “*conducted [murder] like some mass production industry in the gas chambers and the ovens of Auschwitz, Dachau, Treblinka, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Maidanek, and Oranienburg.*”⁶³ These things so embarrass present-day ‘Holocaust’ historians that they prefer not to denounce them as terrible lies, in most cases they do not even dare to mention them.

An interesting collection of nonsense accusations thrown around at the Nuremberg trial has been assembled by Carlos Porter and Vincent Reynouard.⁶⁴

All these invented German atrocities were confirmed by ‘eye-witness reports’ and ‘perpetrator confessions’ whose value is difficult to assess. The same applies to the numerous witness statements about massacres behind the eastern front, a substantial proportion of which were furnished for the Nuremberg trial or its successor trials. One example is the aforementioned affidavit of Paul Blobel on his activities behind the eastern front. Blobel deposed that he and his *Kommando 1005* had exhumed a large part of the

60 IMT VII, pp. 416f.

61 IMT XVI, pp. 579f.

62 Paul Berben, *Dachau. The Official History*, The Norfolk Press, 1975.

63 IMT XIX, p. 434.

64 Carlos Porter and Vincent Reynouard, *Menteur à Nuremberg*, ANEC, BP 21, F-44530, 1998.

mass graves and incinerated the bodies of the murdered victims. At the same time, according to another affidavit, that of an RSHA man named Hartl, “like a guide showing historical places to a tourist, [Blobel] pointed to the mass graves near Kiev, where his own men had killed 34,000 Jews”.⁶⁵ Since this massacre near Kiev (Babi Yar) cannot have taken place, the affidavit is necessarily fraudulent.

The victorious powers did not lack the means to compel such witness testimony. In 1948 a US delegation led by judges Gordon Simpson and Edward van Roden determined that the Americans had regularly resorted to torture to procure confessions.⁶⁶ In other cases the accused were persuaded to incriminate themselves or their fellow accused by promises of acquittal or light punishment. Wilhelm Höttl is a notable example.⁶⁷ If the ‘democratic’ Americans resorted to such methods, it is hardly likely that the Soviets were any more honorable in their methods.

This is the nature of the ‘eye-witness reports’ and ‘perpetrator confessions’ that Raul Hilberg adduces as evidence for the genocide against the Soviet Jews. What follows is a quotation from one such witness statement, which we give as a drastic demonstration of what the world-famous ‘Holocaust’ Giant foists upon his readers. The passage in question is given on pages 347 and 348 (*DEJ*, pages 332 and 333); Hilberg’s source is an article that appeared in the German language US Jewish newspaper *Aufbau* (New York) on 23rd August 1946, which was based on a statement attributed to SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. Hilberg does not tell the reader when and where the confession was supposedly made.

“Once, in mid-August 1941, Himmler himself visited Minsk. He asked Einsatzgruppe B Commander [Arthur] Nebe to shoot a batch of a hundred people, so that he could see what one of these ‘liquidations’ really looked like. Nebe obliged. All except two of the victims were men. Himmler spotted in the group a youth of about twenty who had blue eyes and blond hair. Just before the firing was to begin, Himmler walked up to the doomed man and put a few questions to him.

Are you a Jew?

Yes.

Are both of your parents Jews?

Yes.

Do you have any ancestors who were not Jews?

No.

Then I can’t help you!

65 NO-5384, mentioned by Hilberg on p. 408 (*DEJ*, p. 389).

66 Arthur R. Butz, *op. cit.* (note 47), p. 24.

67 Germar Rudolf, *op. cit.* (note 29), p. 183f.

As the firing started, Himmler was even more nervous. During every volley he looked to the ground. When the two women could not die, Himmler yelled to the police sergeant not to torture them.

When the shooting was over, Himmler and a fellow spectator engaged in conversation. The other witness was Obergruppenführer von dem Bach-Zelewski, the same man who was later delivered to a hospital. Von dem Bach addressed Himmler:

Reichsführer, those were only a hundred.

What do you mean by that?

Look at the eyes of the men in this Kommando, how deeply shaken they are! These men are finished for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages!

Himmler was visibly moved and decided to make a speech to all who were assembled there. He pointed out that the Einsatzgruppe were called upon to fulfill a repulsive (widerliche) duty. He would not like it if Germans did such a thing gladly. But their conscience was in no way impaired, for they were soldiers who had to carry out every order unconditionally. He alone had responsibility before God and Hitler for everything that was happening. [...]

After the speech Himmler, Nebe, von dem Bach, and the chief of Himmler's Personal Staff, [Karl] Wolff, inspected an insane asylum. Himmler ordered Nebe to end the suffering of these people as soon as possible. At the same time, Himmler asked Nebe 'to turn over in his mind' various other killing methods more humane than shooting. Nebe asked for permission to try out dynamite on the mentally ill people. Von dem Bach and Wolff protested that the sick people were not guinea pigs, but Himmler decided in favor of the attempt. Much later, Nebe confided to von dem Bach that the dynamite had been tried on the inmates with woeful results.¹⁷⁹

Who would have ever thought it? *Einsatzgruppe* commander Arthur Nebe, once a chief of criminal police in civilian life, then a technical bungler who wanted to practice mass murder with explosives!

Hilberg treats 'eye-witness reports' and 'perpetrator confessions' such as these as though they had the same evidentiary value as undisputedly authentic documents!

7. Hilberg's Invented 'Shooting of Baltic Camp Inmates'

Concerning the deportation of Jews from the Baltic states to Reich German camps, Hilberg writes that the Baltic camps had been broken up a few months after May 1944:

"From August 1944 to January 1945, several thousand Jews were transported to concentration camps in the Reich. Many thousands of Baltic camp inmates were shot on the spot, just before the arrival of the Red Army."⁹⁰ (p. 408; DEJ, p. 388)

The “*concentration camps in the Reich*” were concentration camp Stutthof (mentioned by Hilberg on p. 405; *DEJ*, p. 385), as well as Kaufering, an outlying camp of Dachau (not mentioned by Hilberg).⁶⁸

Study of the sources for concentration camp Stutthof reveals the following facts:

Between the 12th July and the 14th October 1944 10,458 Jews were transferred to Stutthof from Kaunas (Lithuania) and 14,585 Jews were transferred there from Riga (Latvia); here are the dates and the loading of the respective transports.⁶⁹

DATE	ORIGIN	NUMBER TRANSFERED
12.7.	Kaunas	282
13.7.	Kaunas	3,098
13.7.	Kaunas	233
16.7.	Kaunas	1,172
17.7.	Kaunas	1,208
19.7.	Kaunas	1,097
19.7.	Kaunas	1,072
25.7.	Kaunas	182
25.7.	Kaunas	1,321
4.8.	Kaunas	793
9.8.	Riga	6,382
9.8.	Riga	450
23.8.	Riga	2,079
23.8.	Riga	2,329
1.10.	Riga	3,155
14.10.	Riga	190
TOTAL:		25,043

If Stutthof alone received 25,043 Jews from the Baltic states and additionally a number of Baltic Jews—unknown to us—were sent to the Dachau outlying camp Kaufering, the total number of Jews divided among concentration camps in Reich territory cannot have been merely a “*few thousand*”, as Hilberg states. The reason for this impudent manipulation of numbers is not hard to understand: Hilberg wants to count the ‘missing’ Jews from the Baltic camps as victims of German mass shootings.

68 E. Jäckel, P. Longerich, J.H. Schoeps (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), v. II, p. 806.

69 Archiwum Muzeum Stutthof, I-IIB-8, p. 1.

This trickery is all the more culpable inasmuch as the transfers from Kaunas and Riga to Stutthof had been ably documented by Polish historian Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz in 1967.⁷⁰

There can be little excuse for an academic historian who has set himself the high task of producing a “*definitive*” work on the ‘Holocaust’ who lacks knowledge of the pertinent literature or of the Polish language.

Naturally, as ‘proof’ of the shooting of Baltic-Jewish camp inmates, Hilberg offers no document, only a witness statement; that of a certain Jew Joseph Tenenbaum.

8. What Really Happened to the Jews in the Occupied Soviet Territories?

In view of the catastrophic lack of documentation, under the present circumstances it is an impossible task to give the number of Soviet Jews killed by the Germans even approximately. The question is incomparably more difficult than, for example, the question of the alleged gassings of persons in Auschwitz. The latter supposedly took place in clearly identified structures described in construction drawings and partially still in existence today, whose suitability for the purpose of mass gassing of persons can be technically evaluated. However, with respect to the—real and claimed—mass shootings behind the eastern front in places mostly unknown, it will not be possible to make an examination of the crime scene after a half century. Only archaeological excavations could help us at this point, if only one knew where in the vastness of Russia one should dig.

We believe that the successor states to the USSR are in possession of German documents which would clarify this aspect of the events behind the eastern front, but that the documents in question are not being made available for political reasons. The question of Jewish population losses in the East cannot be settled until they can be examined. It is also possible that previously unknown air-reconnaissance photographs will be discovered that could shed light on the reality or lack of reality of massacres such as claimed for Babi Yar.

Despite the mass shootings of Soviet Jews that did occur behind the eastern front, everything points to the conclusion that the Germans pursued a general policy of a physical concentration of Jews, and that from early on. One indication of this is a report of the commander of the 350th Infantry Regiment on 19th August 1941, containing this statement:⁷¹

70 Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, “Żydowsky Więźniowie KL Stutthof”, in: *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, Warsaw 1967, Nr. 63, p. 10.

“The Jewish question must be solved radically. I propose that all Jews living in the countryside be rounded up and put in guarded collection and labor camps. Suspicious elements should be eliminated.”

It is clear that by “*radical solution*” of the Jewish question, the commander did not mean the extermination of the Jews. The handy trick of accusing the author of the report of using of “*code language*” will not work here, because in that case he would not have written of elimination of “*suspicious elements*” (which unquestionably means ‘kill’). To distinguish between such suspicious elements and the rest of the Jews would have been useless in that case.

The ghettoization policy that Hilberg describes extensively confirms this hypothesis. It responded to both security considerations (Jews concentrated in ghettos can be policed more easily) and economic necessity: Hilberg himself has emphasized how important the Jews housed in the Riga ghetto were to the Germans as for their manufacturing skills.

The deportation of German and Czech Jews to Minsk and Riga was nothing other than an improvised and chaotic attempt to set in motion the “*final solution of the Jewish question*” by removal to the East. This policy could not be pursued later because of military reverses to the Germans after 1943.

The transports of Lithuanian and White Russian Jews to Latvia, Estonia and Poland only make sense if the Jews were taken to where there was housing and employment for them. Otherwise the transports would have had no logical purpose.

That the population losses of the Jews were far less than those that Hilberg postulates follows from a comparison of Jewish population figures for several Soviet cities before and after the German occupation. In his book *The Final Solution*, which was considered the standard work prior to Hilberg, the British-Jewish historian Gerald Reitlinger gives a few numbers for 1946:⁷²

Kiev:	100,000 Jews	Dnepropetrovsk:	50,000 Jews
Odessa:	80,000 Jews	Vinnitsa:	14,000 Jews

Reitlinger’s source for these numbers is an article in the Yiddish language Soviet journal *Ainikeit*, the date of whose publication he does not give. He adds:⁷²

⁷¹ Cited by Hilberg on p. 317. Not given in *DEJ*.

⁷² Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution. The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, Jason Aronson, Northgate, New Jersey 1987, p. 500.

“These figures were recorded at a time when the homeward trek from the deep interior had only begun.”

Based on Soviet enumerations carried out over several different years (between 1923 and 1926), Hilberg gives the following numbers for the pre-war populations of these four cities (pp. 305f.; *DEJ*, p. 292):

Kiev:	140,200 Jews	Dnepropetrovsk:	83,900 Jews
Odessa:	153,200 Jews	Vinnitza:	20,200 Jews

According to Hilberg, 40% of the Jews living in German conquered territories were evacuated or escaped the German armies by flight. If the return *“had just begun”* in 1946, as stated in the Soviet-Jewish journal cited by Reitlinger, a far greater proportion of the Jews of these cities had survived than would be indicated by Hilberg’s statistic (40% dead). We also point out that Hilberg’s figure of 40% evacuated or fled is too low under the circumstances. In his detailed study *The Dissolution of the Eastern European Jewry*, based almost entirely on Jewish and Allied data, Walter N. Sanning arrives at a figure of up to 80%, although it is true that some of his sources are dubious. For example, he quotes David Bergelson, the secretary of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee, who stated in Moscow in 1942:⁷³

“The evacuation saved a decisive majority of Jews of the Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania, and Latvia. According to information from Vitebsk, Riga and other large centers which were conquered by the Fascists, there were few Jews there when the Germans arrived.”

It is quite possible that Bergelson exaggerated the numbers of evacuated persons to put the services of the Soviets in saving the Jews in the best light.⁷⁴ The actual percentage of Jews who fled or were evacuated is probably more than Hilberg’s 40% and less than Sanning’s 80%. Together with the observation that the return movement had just begun in 1946, the pre-war and post-war Jewish population figures for the above four cities contradict the assertion that Soviet Jews in the German occupied territories lost almost two fifths of their population through mass murder, ghettoization and concentration camps. The actual percentage was certainly far lower.

73 Gregor Aronson, *Soviet Russia and The Jews*, New York 1949, p. 18; cited by Walter N. Sanning, *op. cit.* (note 33), p. 94.

74 The Soviet rulers did not reward David Bergelson, since he was later caught up in a Stalinist purge and shot.