

In every age, false witness has been extensive because man is a sinner, but in the modern era it has particularly been developed into a refined science. Humanistic man, from Machiavelli, through Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche, to the present, having no belief in an absolute law, has revived the Platonic doctrine of the right of the state to lie. Especially with the birth of the revolutionary era, lying has become a major instrument of civil polity. The vicious slanders and libels of Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and Napoleon persist in the textbooks to this day. With the two world wars, lying became especially prominent in international politics.

At this point, a distinction must be made. Warfare requires strategic deception, but no false witness concerning the character of the enemy is justifiable. Like Rahab, we are not under obligation to tell the truth to someone seeking to kill a godly man, but we are under obligation to bear true witness concerning our enemy. The false witness made with respect to Germany in World War I was thus clearly evil. The stories of German atrocities were manufactured and were vicious and totally false.

The false witness born during World War II with respect to Germany is especially notable and revealing. The charge is repeatedly made that six million innocent Jews were slain by the Nazis, and the figure—and even larger figures—is now entrenched in the history books. Poncins, in summarizing the studies of the French Socialist, Paul Rassinier, himself a prisoner in Buchenwald, states:

Rassinier reached the conclusion that the number of Jews who died after deportation is approximately 1,200,000 and this figure, he tells us, has finally been accepted as valid by the Centre Mondial de Documentation Juive Contemporaine. Likewise he notes that Raul Hilberg, in his study of the same problem, reached a total of 896,292 victims.¹⁰²⁶

Very many of these people died of epidemics; many were executed. We will return to this matter again.