Air-Photo Evidence

World-War-Two Photos of Alleged Mass-Murder Sites Analyzed

Edited by Germar Rudolf

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The first three editions of this book bore John C. Ball as the author of this work. On Jan. 29, 2015, John requested not to use his name for new editions, but allowed us the use all of the photographic and textual material as we see fit.


The second edition of January 2015 has the same title as the current one and is a marginally corrected reprint of the first edition with a preface similar to the present one plus a number of footnotes added.

Compared to the fifth edition of January 2018, this one has updated bibliographic information plus a changed chapter on Babi Yar.

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Cover illustrations:
Front: top left: Auschwitz Birkenau Camp, May 31, 1944 (see p. 55); top right: Babi Yar Ravine, Fall 1941 (see p. 153); bottom: U.S. bomber B-17 “Flying Fortress” over Germany.
Back: right (from top to bottom): Babi Yar, Sept. 26, 1943 (see p. 156); Belzec Camp area, May 16, 1944 (see p. 143); Sobibor Camp area, May 30, 1944 (see p. 148); Treblinka Camp area, Nov. 1944 (see p. 131); left: Majdanek Camp, Sept. 18, 1944 (see p. 151).
Background: Auschwitz area, June 26, 1944 (see p. 36)
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword, by Germar Rudolf</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the First Edition’s Author and this Book</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 The Development of World War II Aerial Photography</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Firebombing Hamburg Creates Largest Fire in History</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The Katyn Forest 1940 Executions</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Thousands of Typhus Victims Buried by British in Bergen-Belsen</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Auschwitz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 One Million Alleged Gassed and Cremated at Largest Extermination Camp</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 The I.G. Farben Coal Liquefaction Complex</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Auschwitz I – A Camp Surrounded by Roads, Towns, and Houses</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Evidence Shows CIA Auschwitz Report Based on Altered Air Photos</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1 The Fences around the Birkenau Crematoria, by Carlo Mattogno</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Farms Surrounding Birkenau</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Air Photos Show What People Arriving by Train in 1944 Experienced</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 The 1944 War Refugee Board in the Light of Subsequent Research Results</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Crematoria II &amp; III at Birkenau – Eyewitness Accusations</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9 Crematoria IV &amp; V with Alleged Gas Chambers at Birkenau Visible from Outside</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10 The Alleged Mass Cremations Near “Bunker 2” West of the Birkenau Camp</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11 The Bombing of the I.G. Farben Industrial Complex</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12 Cyanide Sampling from Buildings Where Cyanide Gas Was Allegedly Used</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13 Possible Mass Graves Visible on Air Photos</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 800,000 Allegedly Gassed and Cremated in the Treblinka Camp</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 600,000 Allegedly Gassed and Cremated in the Belzec Camp</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 250,000 Allegedly Gassed and Cremated in the Sobibor Camp</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Majdanek – Allegedly 80,000 People Executed and Cremated</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Babi Yar Mass Executions, Exhumations, Cremations – 1941/43</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Conclusions</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Photo Reference Numbers</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In his 1976 book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, Dr. Arthur R. Butz explained in detail that, during the Second World War, the German industrial activities around the infamous Auschwitz Concentration Camp were of great strategic importance to the Allies. Hence he concluded that Allied reconnaissance aircraft must have taken many photos of the area, which to this day could be very revealing regarding the true nature of the Auschwitz Camp, as certain activities claimed by many eyewitnesses would have been so vast that they could not have been missed by Allied intelligence.¹ But no such photos had been released by 1976. That changed three years later, when the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency published a slender brochure containing a few such aerial photos. The authors (Brugioni/Poirier) claimed that these photos do indeed prove the claims made by many witnesses in terms of containing evidence for an ongoing mass murder. At that time, revisionism was not yet well organized in the Anglo-Saxon world, so no thorough refutation of the CIA’s claims was published at that time in English. I know only of reactions by German revisionists who undertook to debunk the CIA’s claims (see Stäglich & Walendy.)

The matter changed in 1992 when John Clive Ball published the first edition of the present book. This book was a game changer. Rather than reacting to what others had claimed, it set a new standard of historical forensics by which all future publications about the Holocaust had to be tested.

Almost every revisionist book that appeared after Ball’s epoch-making study also included analysis of relevant air photos. The most important book in this regard is probably Mattogno’s *Auschwitz: Open-Air Incinerations*. It investigates the claims made by many Auschwitz witnesses that, from May through August 1944, gargantuan cremation pyres in huge pits were burning day and night at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp, upon which the corpses of hundreds of thousands of murdered Hungarian Jews were being turned into ashes. It is claimed that during this time the entire area was blanketed in thick smoke. Of course pictorial evidence of such large undertakings would have been captured on air photos taken by Allied reconnaissance planes. But as the reader of the present study will discover, the extensive photos of the place and time show nothing unusual at all.

It goes without saying that some of the few orthodox historians who dared to confront revisionist research had to deal with these air photos as well (foremost Shermer/Grobman and Zimmerman), although their attempts at papering over the huge cracks in orthodox historiography were swiftly exposed as seriously flawed by leading revisionists.²

A few more air photos of the Auschwitz Camp taken by the Allied and German air forces have been discovered since the first edition of the present study had appeared, but they show much the same thing. A few of them require our attention, though, as they show a column of smoke rising from a small area of the Birkenau Camp. I have added them and a brief discussion of what we see there to Chapter 5.9. Also, the subject of massive open-air incinerations allegedly going on between mid-May and late summer 1944 in an area west of the Birkenau Camp near the so-called “Bunker 2” – a makeshift homicidal gas chamber of legendary proportions – has been dealt with in this new issue with the new Chapter 5.10. It also features two new air photos. None of them show any smoke in this area, though, hence no trace of any incinerations at all…

¹ In the 4th U.S. edition of 2015, see the chapter “Auschwitz of Great Interest to Americans,” pp. 85-89, and “Where are the pictures?”, pp. 202f.
In 1994, a paper by John Ball was published which summarized the present book and added a few more aspects, which the interested reader might want to consult as well. One particularly interesting issue is Ball’s suspicion that the air photos released in 1979 by the CIA have been tampered with, as he describes in the present book (Chapter 5.4). In his 1994 paper he wrote about this:

“After realizing these facts of the matter, I went to the National Archives and requested to see the originals, since the photos given to me as originals had clearly been altered. And in fact I was then given air photos which I was assured were the originals. These were indeed of better quality than the negatives I had been given first: due to the better focus, the work of the forgers was considerably more clearly apparent at the same places on the photos. When I pointed this out to the Archives staff, I was told that these were the negatives which the National Archives had received from the CIA in 1979, and that they had always believed that they were in the precise state in which they had been taken from the reconnaissance planes in 1944. I was told that I was the first member of the public ever to have seen these negatives. Now they would be returned to the archives forever, to be handed out only at the request of government agencies such as the CIA.”

A year later, an Austrian publication attacked Ball for these statements, insinuating that these negatives are available to anyone on request:

“\[Ball\] surrounds this claim [re. the alterations] with a graphic account of his research in the National Archives in Washington, where these photos, he claims, are now locked away for all time because he had proved that they were falsified. He withholds from his readers the fact that these same photos may be viewed in the State Museum of Auschwitz […]”

It is needless to say that there can be only one original negative of each photograph, namely the one that was in the camera when the photo was taken (and which the CIA might have destroyed). All the other negatives are copies, of which in this case many may exist at various locations, each of them of course subject to loss of quality and alteration.

An interesting episode about the question whether or not these air photos have been tampered with occurred in the context of the second Zündel trial. During that time, Dino Brugioni approached Ernst Zündel privately and told him “off the record” that he himself does not believe that the air photos published by him prove the orthodox Holocaust narrative and that he, too, has the suspicion that the photos he was given by his superiors to analyze in 1979 had been tampered with. For me, of course, this is not much more than hearsay, so not much weight can be put onto it.

Fact is, however, that in 1999 Brugioni published a book entitled Photo Fakery which explored “The History and Techniques of Photographic Deception and Manipulation,” according to the subtitle of the book. The book exposes and explains a wide variety of tampered-with photos of political importance. Only one set of photos in the entire book is claimed to be original, untampered and authentic: the Auschwitz air photos Brugioni had published 20 years earlier. Why would Brugioni include those exceptions in a book about forgeries which otherwise doesn’t even remotely touch upon the Holocaust topic?

I leave that to the reader’s imagination.

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4 Here quoted from the English ed., ibid., pp. 278f.

5 Bailer-Galanda/Benz/Neugebauer, p. 25 (translation mine).

6 On that trial see Kulaszka.

7 Ernst Zündel, private communication.

8 See the review by Widmann.
John Ball and I started working on a new edition of his book in late 2003/early 2004, when he started sending me new aerial photos not discussed in the first edition of the present study. At that time we also considered enabling the reader to look at some of the Auschwitz air photos taken in rapid succession with 3D glasses in order to get a three-dimensional impression. The project was delayed, as I was working on other projects, and then, in October 2005, I was actually arrested by the U.S. authorities and deported back to Germany, allegedly for an immigration violation, but really because my revisionist work had made me many powerful enemies (see Rudolf, *Resistance Is Obligatory*). At that time three other leading revisionists were also thrown in jail (Ernst Zündel, Siegfried Verbeke, David Irving). Although that is an entirely different story, fact is that John Ball got scared by this sudden spike in persecution of peaceful dissidents. Around that time, he decided to quit revisionism, hand over all material to others who wanted to continue, move to a different place, start a different business, and change his name. Only in early 2015, after I had published the greatly improved 3rd edition of the present book, did John Ball contact me. Since most of the material in this book is in the public domain for which John could not claim any copyright, and because he still did not want to get re-involved in, or associated with, revisionism, he asked me to remove his name from this new edition and use someone else’s. He also told me that he could not help me with getting the original photo prints used to prepare his first edition, because in 1994 he had given them all to Ernst Zündel on his request, but when Zündel’s home in Toronto was fire-bombed a year later, all the prints went up in flames. Therefore, for this edition, too, we will have to make do with the professionally prepared high-resolution scans of the images reproduced in the first edition. Quality losses are minimal, and the results visible in the present print-on-demand book are good enough for most of us. Those who want to seriously explore this issue in more depth are advised to get prints from the archival resources mentioned, though.

The present study has 168 pages, 48 more than the first edition. This is due not only to the fact that I have included a few more air photos addressing issues not discussed in earlier editions of this work – as mentioned before – but also because all the pertinent material which John Ball had published in his 1993 16-page brochure *The Ball Report* has been integrated. That brochure consisted mainly of Ball’s schematic drawings of the crime scenes investigated plus a brief summary of chemical analyses of wall samples he had taken at Auschwitz in early 1993. I have expanded that subject with a brief introduction into the relevance of analyzing such samples, and by summarizing the analytic results obtained by other authors who preceded Ball with their sampling.

Several sections of Ball’s original work have been extensively edited for this current edition, as they were erroneous to the point where keeping them as they were would have been irresponsible. Writing this, I do not mean to criticize Ball for the mistakes he made back then. In the early 1990s, John Ball was a novice in Holocaust research (as was I at the time). It was therefore to some degree inevitable for him to make a number of mistakes. Some of them he might have avoided, had he communicated with more-experienced researchers in the field prior to publishing the first edition of his book. Other errors, however, became apparent only due to subsequent research published in later years, upon which I could rely for this edition.

One of these issues – whether the black lines around the Birkenau crematoria are due to thick fences or the result of CIA manipulations – is addressed in this edition by Carlo Mattogno. He shows that the Auschwitz camp authorities planned to surround the crematoria with vegetation making them less conspicuous to the inmates, and a post-war photo indicates that at war’s end a makeshift fence of tree branches was indeed present around at least one of the crematoria, or rather its ruins. I doubt, though, that such
a slender fence of twigs and branches could produce the thick dark lines on the air photos, which look more like massive, thick walls. For this reason, I keep Ball’s original suspicion of manipulations as it is.

There have been two noteworthy reactions by experts to Ball’s findings, one by Nevin Bryant, supervisor of Cartographic Applications and Image Processing Applications at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, the other by Carroll Lucas, an expert of air-photo interpretation with 45 years of experience working for the biggest criminal organization in the world, the CIA.

We know of Bryant’s expert opinion only through what other wrote about it,9 which was pretty much limited to identifying several groups of inmates visible on the photos. Of course, in a camp housing many thousands of inmates, and during late spring and early summer 1944 at times perhaps even more than a hundred thousand, you would expect to see many groups of inmates moving about outdoors. That proves nothing. In that context, Shermer and Grobman committed a minor blunder about the so-called “moiré effect” which I address here on p. 63. (I am sure that Bryant would not have endorsed such nonsense.) Interestingly, Shermer and Grobman – and with them probably also Bryant – are completely silent about any outdoor cremations, even though that ought to be the primary focus of any air-photo analysis, as such cremations would be highly visible and would allow gauging the order of magnitude of the claimed events unfolding at Birkenau in 1944.

Lucas’s 23-page report was published in its entirety (Zimmerman, pp. 276-298), but surprisingly he does not reproduce any air photo, and thus offers nothing at all to back up his claims and conclusions. Regarding outdoor cremations, he correctly points out that small smoke plumes are visible on some photos (Zimmerman, p. 290; see several such photos on pp. 97-101 in this study), but he neglects to compare those small fires with the kind of pyres that would have been needed if the claimed daily outdoor cremation of thousands of gassing victims had really happened. As Mattogno has shown,10 Lucas was apparently harassed by Zimmerman to make statements which are not supported by the evidence, like the claim that storage barracks are visible near the so-called Bunker 2 on a photograph of May 31, 1944, when later images clearly show that these storage barracks were built only subsequently (Zimmerman, p. 299; see p. 119 in this study). That leads me to believe that Lucas’s analysis was not an expert report but rather a report of complaisance. At any rate, he, too, failed to find evidence for mass murder.

With this, please enjoy reading this fine pioneer work of Holocaust revisionism in its latest, revised edition.

At this point, I wish to express my gratitude to Jett Rucker for carefully proofing this study, to John Ball for sending me scans of his original hand-drawn maps and schematic drawings, to Hannes Metzner for his constructive criticism,11 and last but not least to Carlo Mattogno for his critical and constructive peer review, in particular for his input regarding potential mass graves near the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp as discussed in Section 5.13, as well as for writing his short essay on the crematoria fences added to this study on pp. 70-74.

Germar Rudolf, March 16, 2017

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9 Shermer/Grobman, pp. 143-153; similar van Pelt, p. 84.
11 http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/2015/02/john-balls-air-photo-evidence-on.html
About the First Edition’s Author and this Book

Air photos:
(1) I selected the 1939 to 1945 air photos of Europe and western Russia during April and May 1992 from the collection at the U.S. National Archives Air Photo Library in Alexandria, Virginia.
(2) The photos were interpreted in Vancouver using a Jena Interpreterscope and a table stereo viewing magnifier, and
(3) I then enlarged selected photos using a Pro-Lab 4 x 5 inch enlarger, and had them scanned for publication at 150 lines per inch.

Acknowledgement:
I wish to thank the staff at the National Archives Air Photo Library for their patient assistance in helping me locate the photographs reproduced in this book.

Irony of using German air photos:
It is ironic that half of the air photos in this book, which are being used to determine the truth about accusations that Germans systematically murdered people in detention camps, are those which were exposed by the German military from 1939 to 1945 when they were taking photos of targets such as railway lines and access roads.

Air photos taken from 1939 to 1945 by the Americans and British are only available for Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen; all of the other 1939 to 1945 photos in this book were exposed by Zeiss Jena cameras in German air force planes.

Caveat
In 1998 John C. Ball started a website called www.air-photo.com. Due to the present book and this website, increasing social and legal pressure was exerted against Ball, who saw his livelihood as a mineral exploration geologist threatened. He therefore decided eventually to move from his old home to a new place, and to change his name. A revisionist friend maintained the website for a number of years, but it is now defunct.

A brief history:
Residence: Residence: I have lived in British Columbia, Canada, almost all my life and now live in Delta, just outside of Vancouver.
Training: In 1981, I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology from the University of British Columbia.
Air photo experience: With my work as a mineral exploration geologist, I have interpreted air photos using stereo magnifying equipment since 1976.

April, 1992: Myself at the National Archives Air Photo Library in Alexandria, Virginia.
LOCATION MAP OF EUROPE

LOCATIONS IN BOOK

AUSCHWITZ
ALLEGED EXTERMINATION CAMPS
DETENTION CAMPS & RAILWAYS
ROADS

POLAND

95 Kilometers
60 Miles

320 Kilometers
200 Miles
Introduction

1. Objective when I started research:
   My objective was to analyze aerial photographs of World War II German controlled detention camps in Poland for evidence to confirm the claims that mass murders, burials, and cremations had been conducted there, and to compare this evidence with information from other locations where mass executions or deaths together with mass burials had occurred.

2. Method:
   I reviewed the books listed in the references and then compared these allegations for each of the alleged mass murder camps with the evidence revealed from studying the air photos. Enlargements were made of important pictures.

3. Chapter arrangement:
   Chapters 2 to 4 review areas like the Katyn Forest where mass burials occurred,
   Chapter 5 reveals air photo evidence about whether mass murders and cremations were being conducted at Auschwitz or Birkenau,
   Chapter 5.4 shows evidence which I believe proves marks were added to 1944 Auschwitz air photos before their public release in 1979, and
   Chapters 6 to 10 show the Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor camps from 1940 to 1944 and the Babi Yar Ravine as it looked in 1943.

4. Nothing is hidden from air photos:
   Looking at the air photos will be just as if we went back in time to World War II to take a series of airplane flights over the different areas.

Photo 1: Myself looking at a few of the 1.2 million German air photo prints in the U.S. National Archives collection from which half the photos in this book are taken.

Photo 2: Using a microscope to inspect one of the thousands of rolls of 23 centimeter (9 inch) negatives taken by the American military from which the other half of the photos are taken.
Chapter 1
The Development of World War II Aerial Photography

During the 1930’s German technicians pioneered the development of aerial photography cameras, high quality lenses, and viewing equipment. From 1939 to 1945 they compiled millions of air photos from flights over Europe and western Russia. Photo interpreters monitored military equipment and troop movements while using stereo viewing magnifiers, which give a 3-dimensional effect by looking at two photos taken one after the other that both photographed the same area on the ground.

Photo 1: A Messerschmitt 110 twin engined air photo plane.

Photo 2: A Lublin, Poland, train station map drawn on an air photo.

Air photos from American library which were taken by Germans are in this book

At the end of the war the American military seized truckloads of German air photo prints and sent them to the U.S. where 1.2 million were released to the public during the 1980s. The German photos in this book were selected from the collection stocked at the National Archives Air Photo library at Alexandria, Virginia, U.S.A.

Photo 3 – After 1945: Americans looking through a German-made stereo viewing magnifier which also allows two people to view at the same time.
Chapter 1

American and British air photo development

U.S.-American and British air photo reconnaissance and interpretation developed from being almost non-existent in 1939 to a well-equipped and top-priority program by 1943. Bombing targets such as communication centers, railway stations, power plants, factories, and city centers were photographed, and the developed 23 centimeter (9 inch) prints were studied at field offices and at the large Medmenham interpretation center near London, England, where the U.S.-Americans and British worked together.

Photo 4: (right) A U.S. Army interpreter writes a report while using a stereo viewing magnifier.

Faster higher aircraft combined with larger focal length cameras by 1943

The twin-engined DeHavilland Mosquito aircraft was modified after 1940 so that it could photograph most areas of Europe after 1941 because:

1. radar could not detect it, as it’s skin was plywood,
2. it flew 600 kilometers (375 miles) per hour at 13 kilometers (8 miles) altitude, and
3. it could fly 1450 kilometers to a target and then return.

The Germans were also aware that after 1943 the Mosquito could fly from Italian airfields to photograph Poland.

By 1943 long-focal-length 90-centimeter (36 inch) cameras were developed.
Chapter 1

Camouflage used to bide important or sensitive possible bombing targets

After 1941 the German military was aware that high altitude aircraft were photographing western Europe, and after 1943 they knew all of former Poland could be reached from Italian airfields. They therefore made extensive use of camouflage to conceal and guard important and sensitive installations from being photographed and bombed.

**Photo 7 – 1942:** (left) Photos taken in Europe before and after a factory was camouflaged using draped coverings and paint.

**Camouflage often not successful against air photos**

**Photo 8:** (below) The results of using camouflage were mixed. A factory or weapons storage site could be made to look like a farmhouse to an observer in a plane, but if photographed the building would probably fail to deceive the camera for its ability to record small details and at the same time give an overall view of the building in relation to its surroundings. Two factories determined by air photo interpreters to be factories are the camouflaged shoe factory at Wasserburg (left) and the agricultural equipment factory at Baumenheim (right).
Chapter 1

Air photo interpretation used to confirm or dismiss stories from spies

By 1942 spies in Europe were channelling rumors, indications, and ‘eyewitness’ accounts of selected areas to England, which were summarized and given to British or U.S. air-photo interpreters who would study the photos for evidence as to whether these spy reports could be confirmed.

Military commanders placed the highest priority on air photo interpretation reports because they gave positive evidence of a selected target as opposed to rumors and alleged ‘eyewitness’ stories. For example, spies may have submitted evidence that a group of farmhouses were being used to produce aircraft parts, but it wouldn’t be until an interpreter received and could study air photos for evidence such as ground scarring from vehicles, smoke, chimney sizes, fuel storage areas, or changes in the building layout from previous months that a decision could be produced as to whether the spy reports could be confirmed or not.

Photo 9: (left) The largest battleship in the world at that time, the Tirpitz, photographed off the Norwegian coast on July 12th, 1944, to confirm spy stories it was in the area. The British sank it with six-ton bombs after determining its exact location and anti-aircraft defences from the air photos.

Photo 10: (above) Low-level photos using a camera positioned in the nose of a plane such as the Mosquito were used to obtain information on important potential bombing targets such as this radar installation in Denmark.

(Photo References: 1, 4 to 10: British Air Ministry, Evidence in Camera; Photo 3, Stanley, Roy, World ... Intelligence.)