

Carlo Mattogno

The “Operation Reinhardt” Camps

Treblinka, Sobibór, Belzec

Black Propaganda,
Archeological Research,
Expected Material Evidence



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Carlo Mattogno:

*The “Operation Reinhardt” Camps Treblinka, Sobibór, Belżec:
Black Propaganda, Archeological Research, Expected Material Evidence*

Translated by Germar Rudolf

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Foreword

By now, the study of the camps of "Operation Reinhardt" by Carlo Mattogno and his colleagues Jürgen Graf and Thomas Kues has a history of its own, which deserves to be explained before delving into the present study.

Strictly speaking, this history started in 1998, when the first German edition of Jürgen Graf's and Carlo Mattogno's monograph on the labor camp at Majdanek appeared, which was a trail-blazing study based primarily on a plethora of original German wartime documents never before systematically analyzed by any historian (Graf/Mattogno).

Although the Majdanek Camp is generally not considered one of the "Operation Reinhardt" Camps, it is nonetheless true that many original German wartime documents clearly indicate that this camp was deeply involved in the activities of the so-called Operation Reinhardt (as was the Auschwitz Camp).

In a narrower sense, only three camps are usually referred to as *the* Operation Reinhardt Camps: Treblinka, Sobibór and Bełżec. All three are said to have served exclusively for the purpose of mass-murdering Jews. They were pure extermination camps, or so the orthodoxy claims.

After several years of research and writing, Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf submitted their text for a book on the first of these camps, Treblinka, to this editor in early June 2002. The book appeared a little more than two months later in German, and in January 2004 also in an English translation (Mattogno/Graf).

When Carlo Mattogno was done writing this book, he turned his attention to another of the three Operation Reinhardt Camps: Bełżec. Since much less primary source material exists about this camp, and because many observations about Treblinka also apply to Bełżec, Mattogno initially only planned to publish a lengthy journal article on that camp, which would have referred to his study on Treblinka many times. However, the project became too lengthy for a mere article after all, so it ended up being a proper, albeit slender book, which refers frequently to the Treblinka book in order to avoid repeating many things the author had already written before. He submitted the Italian typescript of this work in January of 2004. This time, our translator for the English edition was faster than the translator for the German edition, so the English edition already appeared in June of 2004, while the German edition only came out six months later in December (see Mattogno 2016).

During the next several years, Mattogno focused his razor-sharp mind on writing several studies on the Auschwitz Camp. When the focus returned to the Operation Reinhardt Camps in order to tackle the last of the three – Sobibór –

Mattogno was joined by Jürgen Graf and Swedish researcher Thomas Kues. Since there were many more primary sources available on that camp, and also because new insights had been gained in general about all matters concerning the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" as pursued by the Third Reich in general and Operation Reinhardt in particular, we decided to bring all the issues involved up to the current state of knowledge, which meant repeating many of the things already written in the 2002 Treblinka monograph, but then integrating all the new findings into that framework. Handling three authors using three different languages turned out to be a challenge. Eventually, the English edition appeared in May of 2010, followed by the German edition in December of that same year (Graf/Kues/Mattogno).

All three studies of these camps, written more-or-less-independently from each other, had not been planned originally to be parts of a whole, let alone a series, so they inevitably contain duplications. Yet they all ended up as entries to our prestigious series *Holocaust Handbooks* (Vols. 8, 9 and 19).

The three studies eventually became the focus of a major attempt at refutation by mainstream scholars, which in turn triggered a massive response by Mattogno, Kues and Graf with their 1,400-page-work on *The "Extermination Camps" of "Aktion Reinhardt"* – clearly an overkill for most readers, in particular since that two-volume work does not develop its own self-contained story line, but for the most part is a point-by-point response and rebuttal of the attempted mainstream refutation (Mattogno/Kues/Graf). Fully comprehending that rebuttal requires first or concurrently reading the 700-plus-page mainstream "refutation", which is yet another challenge for the reader. Yet still, considering that this massive tome is an astounding demonstration of the full-spectrum dominance of revisionism over its opponents with regard to knowledge and mastery of the source material, that it is a sort of handbook featuring detailed answers to many objections against Holocaust revisionism, and because it contains major updates and upgrades to all three monographs on the Operation Reinhardt Camps, we decided to integrate it into the series *Holocaust Handbooks* anyway (as Vol. 28), albeit with some disquietude.

One advantage of this massive two-volume tome was that it reported about ongoing archeological digging on the grounds of the former Sobibór Camp. However, the book project was wrapped up in 2013, while the research at Sobibór was still going on. In fact, it reached its pinnacle (or climax, if you will), only in 2014 with the (re-)discovery of bricks in the soil alleged to be the remnants of the claimed "gas chambers." The researchers involved in the Sobibór digs kept reporting about their results until 2017, when the project was finally concluded. For Mattogno, this meant that more research needed to be discussed, and more revisions to be made. Would his new book comprise 2,500 pages this time?

Well, the good news is, no. Instead of revising the initial three monographs, which was deemed too much of a challenge, as a revision would mean that they all three had to be closely realigned, and instead of revising the two-vol-

ume-1,400-page doorstep, which has not exactly been any reader's favorite judging by sales figures, Mattogno decided to write a new book which would discuss the current, updated state of knowledge about all three camps, reduced down to the very essentials. This book with its systematically built, self-contained story line, which you are holding in your hands, is now the new Volume 28 of the *Holocaust Handbooks*. The former Volume 28 will be reissued as a slightly revised stand-alone work sometime in the future.

This raises the question: what exactly *is* essential about those three camps? First of all, a general discussion of the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" in general and Operation Reinhardt in particular is not included in this book. This has been covered *ad nauseam* in the books on Treblinka, on Sobibór and in the two-volume doorstep. Furthermore, the present study has its focus only on witness testimony recorded during the war and in the immediate post-war era for two reasons. First, this is when the myth was created, and this is where its true origin can be found. And second, the nature of the human memory dictates that recollections older than several years are simply too unreliable, and when it comes to events that are highly publicized, and where there are strong expectations by the general public as to what has to be remembered – at times even at gunpoint – witness testimony tends to get increasingly contaminated by second-hand "knowledge" as time goes on.

Hence, in the first part of this study – in particular in the chapter about Sobibór and even more-so in the one focusing on Treblinka – the reader will find numerous early witness testimonies about the claimed extermination activities of the Reinhardt Camps, many of which have not been quoted, let alone discussed, in earlier revisionist works on this topic.

The second part of this book brings us all up to speed with the various archeological efforts made by mainstream scholars in their attempt to figure out what exactly happened at those camps – or rather, their attempt to prove that the myth based on wartime and post-war testimonies is true.

The third part compares the findings of the second part with what we ought to expect, and reveals the chasm that exists between archeologically proven facts and mythological requirements.

Some of what the reader will encounter in this book has already been said in one of the earlier four books on these camps. In fact, when I translated the present book from the Italian, I sometimes copied considerable parts from one of the three individual camp monographs, in particular when it comes to witness testimonies, because some of them have been quoted before. We tried to keep repetitions like this to a minimum, but since we all want to read the present book as a self-contained unit without having to constantly grab another book in order to understand, laying out the basics was a must.

I think the present book is a more-accessible replacement for the two-volume doorstep as Volume 28 of our series *Holocaust Handbooks*, and also one that we can easily update in the future, should the need arise.

I hope you can enjoy the read at least as much as I enjoyed the translating and editing of it.

Gerhard Rudolf
Red Lion, June 17, 2021

Introduction

The study of the sources dating back to the period of the Second World War shows unequivocally that the history of the alleged National-Socialist extermination camps, especially regarding the killing system that is said to have been used in them, developed over the years from evidently unfounded rumors through various intermediate stages to the "historical" version currently considered "true," and legally enforced as such in twenty or more countries.

When it comes to the genesis of the regnant historical account about the "gas chambers" purportedly located at the alleged "Operation Reinhardt" extermination camps – Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka –, the same literary process occurred as I have described regarding the creation of the officially authorized account about the alleged "gas chambers" of Auschwitz (see Mattogno 2021). The preconditions are identical, and so is the starting point. This is explicitly recognized by orthodox Holocaust historiography, which nevertheless stubbornly insists on attributing probative value to these fables.

Pierre Vidal-Naquet wrote that "[i]n the flow of information coming from the occupied territories were to be found the true, the less-true, and the false." This less-true and false information consisted of inaccuracies of all kinds as well as of fantasies and myths which, however, "did not exist in isolation, like some creation *suo generis* or 'rumor,' a hoax hatched by a specific milieu, such as the New York Zionists. They existed as the shadow projected by—or prolonging—reality" (Vidal-Naquet, pp. 83f.).

In the specific case, this presupposes that there was actually a well-defined "reality" – here the extermination of Jews in the aforementioned camps perpetrated in gas chambers using exhaust gas of a motor – that could cast "fantasies and myths" like shadows.

But it is a fact that this alleged reality, due to the total lack of documents and material traces, is exclusively based on testimonies, that is to say, precisely on pieces of literature. In practice, therefore, this "reality" consists of nothing other than the choices made by the courts and historians from among the various propaganda versions that circulated during the war. Hence, the judges and the historians decided that the extermination must have occurred in the aforementioned manner rather than by any other means claimed by the wartime sources, for example, by electrocution, steam chambers or chlorine chambers. And this did not happen because it was ascertained after the war on the basis of any kind of irrefutable evidence that this one version had been the reality, and

all the other claims were only “shadows,” precisely because such evidence did not exist. There were no orders to establish extermination camps, original plans of the camps, documents on their construction, administration or operation, aerial photographs taken during their activity, and so on – nothing.

And here the fundamental problem arises: how did the “fantasies and myths” arise? At this point, only two answers seem possible. Either these fantasies and myths were inventions of the Jewish and Polish black propaganda, and for this reason already, they could not, in principle, reflect any kind of “reality”, even if deformed. Or they came from “eyewitnesses”, but if that was so, how is it possible that these testimonies had been twisted into delusional tales?

The problem is even more serious, because each of these (rejected) “fantasies and myths” had their own claimed “eyewitnesses”, meaning direct witnesses of the actual crime – rather than just indirect witnesses. Hence, rejecting the electrocution, steam-chamber, and chlorine-gas-chamber narratives characterizes the corresponding “eyewitnesses” to these myths as premeditated liars – and this not only from the revisionist perspective, but also from that of today’s orthodox Holocaust narrative.

From this it follows that the usual subdivision between direct witnesses, indirect witnesses and perpetrators is a schematic simplification that may be useful for categorizing the various statements, but it absolutely cannot solve the underlying problem.

For eyewitnesses, the conflict mentioned earlier remains intact. Indirect witnesses, since they have not witnessed the crime itself but only some aspects which they “interpreted”, at best could have seen and/or heard mere external aspects from a distance, for example the arrival of transports, mass graves, the stench of corpses, the smoke of fires, etc. But what specifically would turn these camps into extermination camps is not the mere presence of these elements, but their order of magnitude, and no indirect witness, a mere temporary observer from a distance, could establish that these elements concerned hundreds of thousands rather than only hundreds, thousands or even tens of thousands of dead people.

The claimed perpetrators, meaning the SS men and their auxiliaries working at the Reinhardt Camps, testified, if at all, only at a point in time when the literary reality created by courts and historians had already been declared a “self-evident fact” that could no longer be challenged in court. Hence, the fact that many of these alleged perpetrators confirmed this “reality” with their statements *ex post facto* does not make this “reality” less literary in nature.

Considering the flood of claims that have been circulated since 1942, the elements that happen to end up conforming to the eventually agreed-upon version – the killing by gas, with more-or-less-fanciful add-ons – must therefore not be considered as partial truths that were somehow percolated out of the camps. In fact, the claims that eventually “stuck” were nothing but stereotypes which had been lavishly and indiscriminately attributed to anything in sight.

For example, A "toxic gas" was even invoked with regard to the alleged "extermination camp" of Trawniki!

In the reports under discussion, the Polish term "gaz" is extremely generic, somewhat as in English. The gas was also frequently correlated with "cylinders" and "tanks", and we must not forget that even "vapor chambers" were called "gas chambers."¹ Commonly used in the plural, the term did not reveal anything about the nature of the gas –the killing gases alleged also included chlorine, "chloride," ether, and Zyklon B.

It is easily explained where the idea of asphyxiating gases came from. The First World War saw extensive deployment of aggressive chemical weapons on all fronts by all belligerents. Between 1914 and 1918, 250,000 tons were manufactured. 1,000,000 soldiers were affected by this, 78,000 of whom died (Izzo, p. 7). In the summer of 1917, on a front of 10 kilometers between Neuilly and the left bank of the Meuse, more than 400,000 gas projectiles were launched, thousands more in August and October 1917 at Verdun, and in December 1917 along the Russian front (*ibid.*, p. 31). In 1918, the German artillery depots contained 50% gas shells. In the first major offensive of 1918, 200,000 mustard-gas shells were fired by the Germans on a single day (*ibid.*, p. 32).

Unlike the Germans, the French used hydrogen cyanide on the battlefield in the form of Vincennite, a mixture of 50% hydrogen cyanide, 30% arsenic trichloride, 15% tin tetrachloride and 5% chloroform, of which they prepared about 4,000 tons (*ibid.*, p. 66).

In Germany, research for chemical warfare was conducted by the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für physikalische Chemie und Elektrochemie* (Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry), directed by Prof. Fritz Haber, in whose field of research of "combat gases" (*Gaskampfmittel*) the chemist Bruno Tesch worked from October 1915, who later became the owner of the Hamburg Tesch & Stabenow Company (Kalthoff/Werner, p. 11).

British black propaganda famously exploited this theme as well. In 1916, *The Daily Telegraph* published an article headlined "Atrocities in Serbia," allegedly transmitted by its Rome correspondent, which reported that two Italian prisoners of war had escaped from Austria through Serbia and had taken refuge in Romania. They had reported that the Austrians and Bulgarians had killed 700,000 people, claiming that women, children and old men had been locked up in churches and had been stabbed to death with bayonets or "suffocated by means of asphyxiating gas," and in this way 3,000 people had also been murdered in a church in Belgrade. "Serbian refugees," the article continues, "not on oath, have stated that they were present at a distribution of bombs and machines for producing asphyxiating gas to the Bulgarians by the Germans and Austrians, who instructed the former how to utilize these instruments to exter-

¹ See Subchapter 3.4. For example, in the "Tremblinkin" report, published in 1944 by Rabbi Abraham Silberschein, the "steam chambers" were called "gassing installation," and the water vapor was called "gas."

minate the Serbian population. The Bulgarians used this method in Nish, Pirot, Prizrend and Negotin, the inhabitants of which places died of suffocation. Similar means were employed by the Austrians in several parts of Montenegro.”

After the end of the war, although the Geneva Gas Protocol of 1925 forbade the use of aggressive chemicals in warfare, they continued to be studied – especially from a tactical point of view – in all the countries that had been involved in the conflict, giving rise to instructions and government manuals² as well as to a rich technical literature summarizing the studies and experiences made during the war.³

By the beginning of World War II, all belligerents had entire arsenals of chemical weapons.

On April 20, 1942, the British War Cabinet received a detailed report dated April 13 from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs on possible future chemical warfare that was feared, with a precise description of the British chemical arsenal, including 95,000 phosgene-loaded bombs. The report drew attention to the fact that:

*“the Russian may be tempted to accuse the Germans of having used gas against them, without their having done so, in order to bring our counter-measures into play. We shall have no check whether the story is true or false.”*⁴

Such a situation arose when the Polish propaganda explicitly accused the Germans of having used war gases against Russian PoWs, which had happened already half a year earlier, on October 24, 1941, when the Information and Propaganda Office of the *Armia Krajowa* (National Army) of the Polish Government-in-Exile received the following message (“Obóz...”, p. 11):

“At Oświęcim [Auschwitz], in early October, 850 Soviet officers and noncoms (POWs) who had been taken there were killed by gas as a test of a new type of combat gas, which is to be used on the eastern front [jako próbe być użyty na froncie wschodnim].”

As is well-known, subsequently Jews were identified as the primary victims of the use of poison gas.

In several other studies, I have already outlined the storylines invented and spread by the Polish-Jewish black propaganda since 1942 for all three camps of Operation Reinhardt.⁵ Ever since these studies were published, I have acquired a considerable number of additional documents. Since this is a fundamental subject, I deemed it appropriate to devote a specific in-depth study to

² Already in 1937, the British government published the 100-page manual *Air Raid Precautions Handbook No. 1*.

³ In addition to the already cited Izzo, see the works by Sartori, Prentiss as well as Flury/Zernik. Prof. Flury was a researcher at the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut*, and together with Dr. Albrecht Hase he had invented Zyklon A.

⁴ War Cabinet. Chemical Warfare. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Annex 1. Report. TNA, CAB 66-24 (War Cabinet. Memoranda W.P. (42) 171 – W. P. (42) 220, Vol. XXIV, pp. 4-28).

⁵ Mattogno 2016, Chapter II, pp. 35-50; Graf/Kues/Mattogno, Chapter 3, pp. 63-76; Mattogno/Graf, Chapter II, pp. 47-76.

how these propaganda stories emerged and developed, which constitutes Part One of the present study.

Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and I have already dealt with archaeological research and material evidence about these three camps in greater depth in another study (Mattogno/Kues/Graf). However, when this study was published, archaeological investigations at Sobibór and Treblinka were still in progress. Some of their results have been made accessible since then. Together with the additional documents acquired in the meantime, this not only allows me to come to a final conclusion on the matter, but also to revise previous tentative conclusions regarding mass graves and cremations. These issues constitute the subject matter of Parts Two and Three of this study.