

The Hoax of the **Twentieth Century**

The Case
Against the Presumed
Extermination of European Jewry

Arthur R. Butz



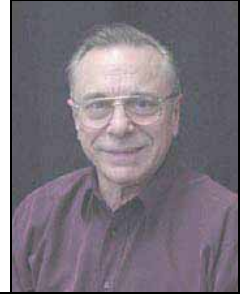
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Foreword to the 2003 Edition

My investigations of the Jewish “Holocaust” commenced in 1972, and twenty seven years have passed since the first publication of this book in 1976 in England as *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*. Twenty six years have passed since the release of the slightly revised second British and first American edition of 1977. This text consists of the last, preceded by a short article I wrote for the student newspaper at Northwestern University in 1991¹ and followed by five supplements representing writings from 1979-1997. There is also an addendum to Appendix E (“The Role of the Vatican”), consisting of the obituary/tribute I wrote on Rev. Robert A. Graham. All were published in the *Journal of Historical Review*. Also Appendix A on Kurt Gerstein, has been revised somewhat.

I am proud that this book remains of interest to anybody a quarter century after publication. Nevertheless, the age of this text, and the great advances that have subsequently occurred in Holocaust revisionism, require some comments on the value of the book to today’s reader. How can a quarter century old text not be obsolete today? What does today’s reader gain from it? Would it not be better to revise this text to take into account more recent developments?

From the perspective of today, the book has defects, and several people, of whom I am one, could now do better. In admitting such defects, I can plead that I was one man working with little help. Except for Wilhelm Stäglich, the correspondents I had before publication in 1976 were not then, and have not subsequently become, significant in revisionist work. The literature of revisionist orientation was scanty. Some of it was rubbish that constituted a minor nuisance. On the positive side were Paul Rassinier, Thies Christophersen, and Wilhelm Stäglich. At that time the writings of Rassinier, a former political prisoner at Buchenwald, were of interest both as a primary source, relating personal experiences, and as historical exposition (today Rassinier is of interest only as a primary source). Christophersen and Stäglich, Germans who had been stationed near Auschwitz, were of value only as primary sources, although Stäglich later wrote a book of historical exposition. Even taking these three into account, the historical complex was not there, as I shall explain below.

A common complaint about this work has been that I am not a trained historian or history professor. It is, however, not unusual for people who are not academic historians to make contributions to history. The great American historian Francis Parkman was no history professor; he had only a brief academic appointment as Professor of Horticulture at Harvard. The late Arnaldo Momigliano urged wariness of academic historians and pointed out that none of the three leading nineteenth century historians of the ancient world was a history professor, e.g. Mommsen was a Professor of Law.²

However, such examples do not satisfactorily illustrate the fact that history has

¹ Rhodes, 347. *Daily Northwestern*, May 13, 1991, correction May 14.

² A. Momigliano, “History in an Age of Ideologies,” *American Scholar*, Autumn 1982, pp. 495-507.

a closer relationship to popular culture than most other academic disciplines. This is easily clarified and proved. In the major book reviews (*New York Times*, *New York Review*, etc.) one can find reviews of, and advertisements for, many works on the leading edge of historical research, *i.e.* works not specifically written for popular readership. No such attention is given to leading edge works in electrical engineering and most other academic disciplines. Many intelligent laymen can read such historical works with comprehension. If many can read them, then some can write them. I could give reasons for this relatively popular status of serious history study, but it would carry us too far afield. In any case, there is no venality on the part of academic historians in approving of such popular promotion of their books.

Such observations show, however, that there is hypocrisy in their common implication, when denouncing Holocaust revisionism, that only people with their kinds of Ph.D. degrees are competent to deal with historical issues.

The style of my book is certainly not elegant. I believe my style has improved much since then but, like most men with a technical education, my style remains at best dry and not elegant. It was, however, good enough to do the job. I have even sometimes wondered if elegance of style might be incompatible with a subject as dreary as the present one.

It is not immodest for me to say that mine is the best book of its type, because it is the only book of its type. To compare my book to others, the approach of mine is horizontal, the others vertical. Subsequent investigators have taken specific subjects and gone more deeply into them than I did. Such vertical approaches should be contrasted with my horizontal. I attempted to cover every reasonably relevant aspect of the problem. The question of the existence of gas chambers was only one of many. I tried to show what did happen as well as what did not. I showed the relevance of the Zionist and related movements. I discussed the Allied policies and the Jewish influences in them. My use of sources (*e.g.* the Nuremberg trials, Red Cross reports, Vatican documents, contemporary newspaper accounts) today seems obvious but it was not then. To aid in comprehending the early war crimes trials, I gave witchcraft trials as a useful precedent.

I claim an additional contribution of this book that may seem ridiculous on its face. I treated the German concentration camps as specific institutions that existed in specific locations, with the alleged events that took place in them taking place, if at all, in real space and real time, together with other events that happened simultaneously in those same camps or in real space. By "real space" I mean a space that we all exist in so that, whatever happened at Auschwitz, it happened at the same time President Roosevelt held meetings in Washington, and I as a child went to school, etc., and in the same space.

That is so obvious that it may seem preposterous for me to present it as an original perspective, but please hear me out. My impression of the extant literature was that the events claimed there may as well be imagined as having taken place on Mars, if at all, so absent was a concern for the broader context. As I reminded readers on page 210:

"There was a war going on during World War II."

Consider my presentation of Auschwitz, the principal alleged “extermination camp”. I started by describing Auschwitz as a camp that performed functions similar to those performed by typical German camps that are not claimed to have been extermination camps; I outlined those functions and I presented a map showing where the German camps were. Then I described Auschwitz in its unique respects and showed, why the Allies would have been interested in events transpiring at Auschwitz. I presented pictures of crematorium ovens at Auschwitz and other camps. I presented a map of the Auschwitz region and a plan of the “Birkenau” section of the Auschwitz camp. That plan and the various maps showed the reader exactly where, in Europe, Poland, and at Auschwitz, the great gas chambers were supposed to have been located. Then I considered one of the specific groups of Jews, the Hungarian Jews, not only from the point of view of allegations of events in German camps but from the point of view of events in Hungary. That is, for me the problem of the Hungarian Jews was as much a problem of what happened in Hungary as what happened at Auschwitz. Even in considering events at Auschwitz, I chose to place my perspective elsewhere, among the Allies who, at the time in question, were very interested in Auschwitz as an industrial bombing target and would have photographed the camp for that purpose.

The photographs were produced almost three years after publication of my book and confirmed my conclusions, but that is not the point that I am now trying to emphasize. My point is that, as unlikely as it may seem, my method of placing Auschwitz in its general historical context was essentially unique in this historical area. True, some of what I said in that respect is to be found in earlier books that purported to relate how the “exterminations” transpired, but in scattered bits and pieces that were usually incidental to those accounts. Even so, much had to be culled from diverse sources. For example, though it seems obvious that any useful discussion of the Auschwitz problem required a map of the Auschwitz region and of the Birkenau camp, the former had to be constructed by me from several sources and the latter had to be lifted, not from one of the standard “Holocaust” books such as those by Hilberg or Reitlinger, but from a book about a German trial of Auschwitz personnel that took place in 1963-5. Hilberg, Reitlinger, and similar authors were very stingy with maps and pictures, except in books specifically devoted to presenting pictures. We can say, with only minor oversimplification, that they would sell you a book of pictures or a book of text, but not one book integrating the two in any useful way.

I believe my analysis provoked investigations of specific problems, even when such influence was not acknowledged. My implied skepticism about the reality of the mysterious “German industrialist” who in 1942, according to the World Jewish Congress, passed along information that a plan to exterminate the Jews had been discussed in Hitler’s headquarters, may have provoked the later investigations attempting to determine his identity. Walter Laqueur and Richard Breitman, in *Breaking the Silence*, 1986, unconvincingly proposed Eduard Schulte. I also stressed the inaction of the Allies with respect to Auschwitz, which Laqueur (*The Terrible Secret*, 1980) and Martin Gilbert (*Auschwitz and the Allies*, 1981) tried without success to explain.

The existence and relevance of the 1944 aerial reconnaissance photos of Auschwitz were, to the best of my knowledge, first argued in my book.³ I also believe that my book provoked, perhaps through some intermediary, the 1979 release of these photos by the CIA, but again such influence is not admitted.

I analyzed the specifics of the alleged extermination process at Auschwitz. I showed that all of the specific material facts required a dual interpretation of relatively mundane facts, e.g. transports, selections, showers, shaving hair, Zyklon B, crematoria, etc., all real and all relatively mundane, had been given a second interpretation. That insight scarcely merits the label today, but it did then. It has been the main paradigm for all subsequent revisionist writing on Auschwitz and other alleged “extermination camps”. It may seem very simple and obvious after one reads this book; it certainly was not when I wrote it. The reader is shown what sorts of questions he should ask if he wants to go further. Those who have studied the development of ideas understand that the right answers are not attainable until the right questions are formulated (yes, questions can be right or wrong). This book, even today, shows how to do that.

I consider my book generally “right” even today in the sense of how the historical parts fit together, and they fit perfectly without major or fundamental mysteries. Contrast the gyrations of the typical historians who have nothing but mysteries. How and when was an order to exterminate given? Was such an order given at all? Why didn’t the Allies recognize what was (allegedly) happening at Auschwitz? Why didn’t the Pope forthrightly condemn physical extermination, even after the German had been driven out of Rome? Why didn’t the Allied press give greater prominence to reports of extermination of Jews, rather than bury them in the back pages of the larger newspapers?

This horizontal analysis remains unique in the revisionist literature. The book presented a historical complex that remains valid today. The book made specialized studies easier because investigators did not have to worry about coherence of the larger picture; they could direct a curious person to my book. I did a good enough job for that, even if not a perfect job. The proof is that, among revisionists, defects of the book are certainly seen, but, unfortunately, there seems to be no great demand for an improved integrated work of comparable scope and no aspiring author in view.

An example. You want to discuss the question of gas chambers at Auschwitz. My old book won’t help if you want to be current, and there would not necessarily be any reason to cite it. There are much more recent and conclusive writings, but I could not imagine a person securely venturing into such a controversy without having a grasp of the general historical complex, as provided in my book. Thus, I cannot imagine contemporary Holocaust revisionism existing without a book such as mine, even if it is never necessary to cite it today.

³ There is an unconfirmed and disputed claim that U.S. Army Capt. Jacob Javits (later U.S. Senator) used the photos, in 1944, to argue for bombing Auschwitz. See letters in the New York Jewish weekly *Forward*, 23 Feb. 2001, p. 10, and 6 April 2001, p. 16. If the claim is true, the photos were forgotten until I argued, in my 1976 book, that they had to exist. I am inclined to think the claim is not true.

It is still the only book of this sort. A better one would be nice but there are two problems that occur to me. First such a book, if written from the point of view of our knowledge today, would not fit into a single volume. This explains why I reject the idea of trying to bring this book up to date. Such a project would quickly run away from “updating”, resulting in an entirely new work. Any attempt to respect the original content and organization of the book would be a handicap in the updating project. The best single volume for bringing the reader up to date on revisionist scholarship is a compilation of papers by many people, not an integrated work.⁴

Second, a paradox: a weakness of the book explains some of its strength. From the present point of view, there seems much in the book that is awkwardly presented. This is because I did not write this book as an expert. The book was written as works of research normally are: I was myself struggling to understand, as would an intelligent and serious reader. Thus, the book expresses a relationship of common perspective, and therefore implicit mutual empathy, between author and reader that could not exist in a new book, written today from a position of expertise and directed at a neophyte reader, which is the only relationship possible today. I believe this explains the occasional overwhelming effect the book has. From this point of view the book is still contemporary, as well as “right”, and ought not undergo major revision.

For these reasons, I have rejected any idea of “updating” this book. Rather, several later writings from 1979 on have been provided here, as specified above.

That this book is still valuable today is due to the distortions and misrepresentations that have continued to issue from the media and academe, resulting in millions of people so uninformed that a viewpoint of 1976 is a great revelation for them in 2003.

I consider this book as successful as could have been judiciously hoped under the circumstances, but it is important to view it as one of the successes in the phenomenon of Holocaust revisionism, for which no single person, or set of specific persons, can take credit. It seems to me to be just something that was timely and had to develop and that I was just a part of this development. I discussed this in my paper reproduced as Supplement 1, but to try to make my point clearer, let me emphasize that the Jews have played a very important role in this development; they must take some of the credit. It was they who chose, in 1977, to spread the news of this obscure book to the most remote corners of the universe. Who could have imagined such massive publicity for a book from an unknown publisher, written by an unknown author, and only barely available in the USA? They have used their powerful positions in the media to keep the subject of “Holocaust” uppermost in the minds of the populace; we get it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The present “Holocaustomania”, which younger readers may believe has been a

⁴ Germar Rudolf (ed.), *Dissecting the Holocaust: The Growing Critique of “Truth” and “Memory”*, 2nd edition, Theses & Dissertations Press, PO Box 257768, Chicago, IL 60625, USA, 2003. Expanded version of the text originally published as *Grundlagen zur Zeitgeschichte: Ein Handbuch über strittige Fragen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, by Ernst Gauss (ed. = Germar Rudolf), Grabert-Verlag, Tübingen, 1994. Probably not available from Grabert now, but available from T&DP.

permanent feature of our public affairs since World War II, can be fairly said to have started with the 1978 NBC-TV “docudrama” *Holocaust*. Only Jewish groups (either formally Jewish or having a largely Jewish membership), on the campus of Northwestern University, have maintained students’ interest in my work on the “Holocaust”. Such mutual dependency only holds for things that had to happen.

When I wrote this book, there were perhaps a half dozen serious Holocaust revisionist researchers (most not known by me). Today there are too many for me to even try to list, and readers of contemporary Holocaust revisionist literature in all languages certainly number in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions.

There are many back-handed compliments to our success. Perhaps the most conspicuous is the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. A February 1992 funds appeal for it, signed by “National Campaign Chairman” Miles Lerman, named “revisionists” as those whom the museum would “counter”. The Museum formally opened in April 1993 with the “Intent on refuting revisionist attempts to diminish the scope of the Holocaust”.⁵ As if that weren’t enough, the 104th Congress passed, without dissent, a resolution making only two points: it “deplores” revisionism and “commends the vital, ongoing work of the [...] Museum.”⁶ That silly Museum is an ironic monument to Holocaust revisionism.⁷

The Museum will not be the last such monument. In 1996, Jewish Senators Barbara Boxer and Arlen Specter handed Jewish movie director Steven Spielberg a check representing a \$1 million federal grant for his “Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation” (a project of videotaping accounts of “survivors” – “Shoah” is the Hebrew word used in place of “Holocaust”). Specter motivated the grant in terms of opposing the considerable success of revisionists.⁸

A more recent example is the projected Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. A July 2001 advertisement, appealing for funds, raised the danger of revisionism.⁹

Revisionist apostasy has been rare. It has been most visible in cases where some public figure who was not actually a revisionist made public remarks supportive of revisionism. A 1996 example was Abbé Pierre, a sort of French Mother Teresa (although more active in public affairs) who, despite his quick recantation of his revisionist remarks, will never be forgiven by his former friends.¹⁰ This epi-

⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, 23 April 1993, sec. 1, p. 18.

⁶ Senate resolution 193 passed 9 Nov. 1995, and House resolution 316 passed 16 April 1996.

⁷ Perhaps the most telling point is that the Museum, after so much promotion and millions spent, has failed to depict a homicidal gas chamber. Robert Faurisson has commented on this and related his humorous encounter with the Museum’s director, Dr. Michael Berenbaum. *Journal of Historical Review*, Jan./Feb. 1994, p. 23; Nov./Dec. 1994, p. 4.

⁸ *Boston Globe*, 24 July 1996, p. A6. Spielberg got into “Shoah business” (from an American expression – “there’s no business like show business”) via his *Schindler’s List* movie, which also failed to depict a gassing or homicidal gas chamber. On the basis of his other movies and other scenes in this one, I could not attribute the failure to squeamishness on Spielberg’s part. He is a good enough showman to have realized that a complete depiction of a gassing via Zyklon B, faithful to the legend and to physical possibility, would have been far too preposterous even for him. The Jewish worker who was shot for exceeding her assigned tasks was routine rubbish, but the gassing would have been too much.

⁹ *NY Times*, 18 July 2001, p. A6.

¹⁰ *NY Times*, 1 May 1996, p. A6. *Boston Globe*, 23 July 1996, p. A5.

sode is one of many that illustrate the handicaps that Holocaust revisionism has labored under.

A final proof, if needed, of our success is the fact of laws passed in recent years, in several European countries, criminalizing the publication of revisionist views on the Holocaust. Such literature circulated freely in Europe until the present revisionist movement started making its impact in the late 70s. In the United States we are still free of state suppression, although there is considerable whining in some quarters about "First Amendment absolutism". Here the repression works largely by extra-legal means of intimidation and reprisal. For example, Fred Leuchter was the leading execution technologist in the USA when he published his famous 1988 report on the alleged Auschwitz gas chambers.¹¹ Since then, his business has been ruined and his marriage destroyed. All such developments are of course back-handed and evil tributes to the success of Holocaust revisionism. Even the most naive reader will see the point: they don't want you to know these things! They are trying to hold back the wind.

We are successful, but we have a long way to go, as the brute strength of the dying monster is considerable.

Evanston, Illinois
June 2003

¹¹ S. Lehman, "A Matter of Engineering," *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1990, pp. 26-29. Also see the letters in the May issue; Fred A. Leuchter, *An Engineering Report on the alleged Execution Gas Chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek, Poland*, Samisdat Publishers Ltd., Toronto 1988; for an update on this issue, see Germar Rudolf, *The Rudolf Report. Expert Report on Chemical and Technical Aspects of the 'Gas Chambers' of Auschwitz*, Theses & Dissertations Press, PO Box 257768, Chicago, IL 60625, USA, 2003.