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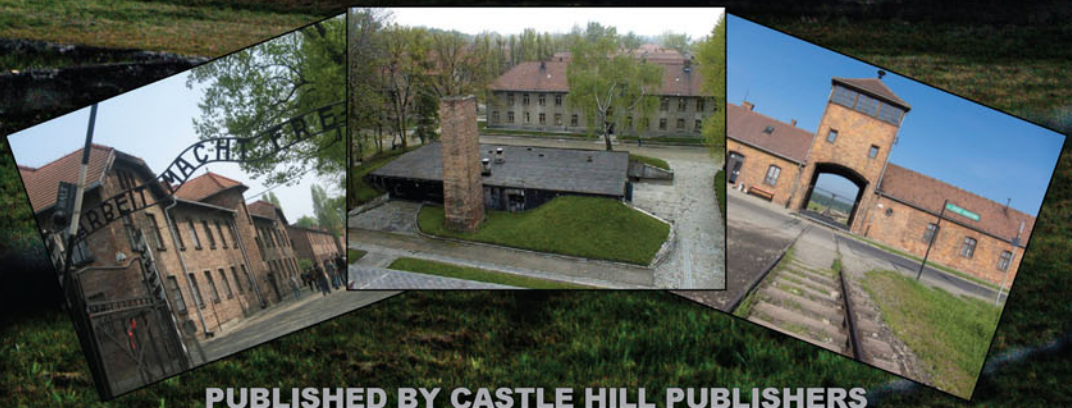
The Real Case for AUSCHWITZ

ROBERT VAN PELT'S EVIDENCE FROM THE IRVING TRIAL CRITICALLY REVIEWED

BY CARLO MATTOGNO



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Carlo Mattogno

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Critically Reviewed

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Cover: background: sunset in Birkenau. The chimneys once heated inmate huts, which were dismantled after the war. Left: the entry gate at the Auschwitz Main Camp. Center: Crematorium I at the Main Camp. Right: the entry gate to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp.

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Editor's Prologue

When faced with demands by Congressman Ron Paul to bring our (the U.S.'s) troops home from the various wars the United States are currently waging, Senator John McCain stated during a *CNN Republican Debate* on Nov. 28, 2007:[1]

> *"I just want to also say that Congressman Paul, I have heard him now in many debates talking about bringing our troops home and about the war in Iraq and how it's failed, and I want to tell you that that kind of isolationism, Sir, is what caused World War II. We allowed Hitler to come to power with that kind of attitude of isolationism and peace."*

Of course, the real reasons for World War II can be found in the way the world ended World War I and how it treated democratic Germany between 1919 and 1933. The war was ended with the promise of free trade, ethnic self-determination, and disarmament for all – U.S. President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points.[2] Yet what followed was a 15 year lasting occupation, subjugation, plundering, humiliation, and forced one-sided disarmament of Germany and Austria only, whose people were denied any attempt at self-determination, frequently by use of force. What the world had been denying peaceful democratic Germany during all those years, it then conceded to National Socialism under Hitler, who had learned that the world would give Germany what was rightfully hers (and later more than that) only under the threat of violence.

That is not the point we want to make here, though. If we look into the war propaganda put forth by the U.S. before and during the wars against Serbia in 1999 and against Iraq in 1991 and 2003, plus when we look into how certain lobby groups have been pushing for a war against Iran over the past three years or so, we can see a pattern: Slobodan Milosevic, in 1999 leader of tiny Serbia, as well as Saddam Hussein and now Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are compared with – Adolf Hitler. Milosevic and Hussein were even accused of committing (or having committed) similar crimes of genocide – against the Kosovo Albanians here or the Kurds there. Hussein is even said to have used poison gas for that

[1] See www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Q9WzCrLuC4&feature=related
[2] See www.famousquotes.me.uk/speeches/Woodrow_Wilson/

purpose. These claims, among others, were used to justify the wars. And there is no better justification for a war than to prevent a new Hitler – or a new threat to exterminate the Jewish people, an accusation currently leveled against Ahmadinejad.

We know today that the claims about weapons of mass destruction raised against Hussein were false. But they served their purpose well, because the world is so conditioned to reacting with automatic, Pavlovian-style reflexes to such claims. One reason why these accusations work so well and why the world is so gullible to believe them, no matter how often they have been revealed to be wrong in the past, is because of that giant boogeyman called Hitler. Once his name is dropped and successfully put into the "right" context, there seems to be no stopping. War is the only solution to stop Hitler, Slobo-Hitler, Saddam-Hitler, Mahmoud-Hitler, or whatever their names may be.

Genocidal hysteria is today used to justify the wars of the U.S. and their allies, Israel being the most belligerent of them. Not that preventing genocide isn't a worthwhile goal. It actually is, and in extreme cases maybe even by military intervention. But today genocide or the (real or fabricated) threat of it is attracting the U.S. government's and military's attention only if it is about either securing the almighty dollar, the free flow of goods (mostly oil), and – well, dare we say it? – the subjectively perceived security of Israel and its interests (which includes an aggressive expansionism into Palestinian lands). Genocide in Somalia, Congo or Darfur? Who cares…

It has come to the point where summoning the evil spirits of Adolf Hitler and "his" über-genocide – the Holocaust – is the trump card needed to start just about any war the Powers That Be want to wage.

Wasn't one of the primary lessons of the world wars supposed to be that wars are evil? And wasn't another lesson that governments use propaganda tricks to drive people into discriminating against minorities, into ethnic cleansing, into genocide, and into wars?

Presentations in today's media frequently give the impression that World War II was fought to prevent or stop the Holocaust, when in fact nothing could be further from the truth. In 1939 there was only one statesman who had proven to be a gargantuan mass murderer: Joseph Stalin. Yet instead of fighting him, the U.S. and Great Britain decided to gang up with Stalin in order to fight Hitler, who in 1939 may have caused the death of several hundred innocent people, but that was an

almost ridiculous amount, if compared to Stalin's peacetime(!) death toll of many millions of innocent souls.

Yet still, today's media, politicians, and even many scholars on the subject agree almost in unison that World War II really was a "good" war, where the good guys – the Allies – beat the bad guys – Hitler, plus the Japs as a collateral. But how can anyone seriously call the Allies "good guys," when Stalin was one of them, who, in addition to his pre-war massacres, was also responsible for innumerable atrocities during the war, for the ethnic cleansing of uncounted millions in Eastern Europe at war's end, and for the subjugating of some 20 nations afterwards?

Hence:

– World War II was NOT a good war!

– The good guys did NOT win that war, as there were no good guys!

– The Holocaust was NOT the reason why it was fought.

And yet, after World War II the Powers That Be have been very successful in driving their people into one war after the other by referring to this "mother-of-all-wars." Pacifists are dumbfounded at how good those warmongers are in using the horrors of this greatest war ever to instigate even more wars. And so have some of us been for the past decade or so.

And then we eventually stumbled over Holocaust revisionism or "Holocaust denial," if you wish, and we suddenly knew why those warmongers are so good at it.

Mainstream media, politicians and academics depict Holocaust revisionists as evil creatures trying to re-establish National Socialism, to prepare for another Holocaust. As a consequence the world wages a constant war on Holocaust revisionists, and this even includes the United Nations, which have passed a resolution against those wicked "deniers," urging all nations to take action against them.[3] Those nations in turn pass laws to outlaw revisionist thoughts, to imprison the revisionists, to burn their books, and to ban their ideas from public fora. Every revisionist a little Hitler.

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[3] See United Nations, "Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on Holocaust denial," A/RES/61/255, 26 January 2007; www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/docs/res61.shtml; cf. United Nations, General Assembly, "General Assembly adopts resolution condemning any denial of holocaust," 26 January 2007; www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2007/ga10569.doc.htm; United Nations, "Ban calls on world to fight Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism and bigotry," 27 January 2009; www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29679

But is that true?

As far as we have found out by now, it is not true. But do you know what? We don't care anymore.[4] Because what we have come to understand is that the Holocaust is the secret weapon of psychological warfare of the Powers That Be, which they use to expand and maintain their militaristic empire, to justify wars and subjugations, to foist their financial, economic and cultural system upon others against their will. Summon the evil ghosts of Hitler and the Holocaust, and the world will blindly and defenselessly follow your war drums.

Against that, revisionism in general *is the key to peace*, where revisionism stands for: Be critical! Don't take for granted what those militant Powers want you to believe in justification of their deeds! Instead, look again (Latin: revidere) into their claims! Review their evidence! Revise your opinion, if needed. This definition of revisionism is the opposite of what those warmongers want you to believe, isn't it? And for a good reason: because they want to prevent with all means that we obtain and entertain a critical mind.

Holocaust revisionism is the most important one of those critical attitudes, as it is the key to understanding that governments have lied, are lying, and will always lie to us. And it is a key to understanding what modern "democratic" governments are willing to do in order to suppress ideas which threaten their nefarious ways.

The continual, annoying resorting to the Holocaust theme as a means to justify war is the reason why we became skeptical and curious. And we have found out that we are not alone with that attitude. Famous British Jewish musician and writer Gilad Atzmon, for instance, had a similar experience, as he has described on March 13, 2010, in an essay which wraps it all up nicely:[5]

> *"When I was young and naïve I regarded history as a serious academic matter. As I understood it, history had something to do with truth seeking, documents, chronology and facts. I was convinced that history aimed to convey a sensible account of the past based on me-*

[4] As far as we know, there are not much more active, publishing Holocaust revistionists in the world than there are fingers on one hand, with little money, little support and hardly any access to the mass media. So what threat can they pose? What's the hubbub all about that even the U.N. feel urged to pass a resolution against them?

[5] G. Atzmon, "Truth, History and Integrity," March 13, 2010; www.gilad.co.uk/writings/truth-history-and-integrity-by-gilad-atzmon.html; similar Daniel McGowan, http://palestinethinktank.com/2009/09/25/daniel-mcgowan-what-does-holocaust-denial-really-mean/

thodical research. […] *When I was young, I didn't think that history was a matter of political decisions or agreements between a rabid Zionist lobby and its favorite holocaust survivor.* […] *When I was young and naive I was also somehow convinced that what they told us about our 'collective' Jewish past really happened.* […]

As it happened, it took me many years to understand that the holocaust, the core belief of the contemporary Jewish faith, was not at all an historical narrative, for historical narratives do not need the protection of the law and politicians. […] *It took me years to accept that the holocaust narrative, in its current form, doesn't make any historical sense.* […]

I think that 65 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must be entitled to start to ask the necessary questions. We should ask for some conclusive historical evidence and arguments rather than follow a religious narrative that is sustained by political pressure and laws. We should strip the holocaust of its Judeo-centric exceptional status and treat it as an historical chapter that belongs to a certain time and place.

[…] *We should also ask, what purpose do the holocaust denial laws serve? What is the holocaust religion there to conceal? As long as we fail to ask questions, we will be subjected to Zionists and their Neocon agents' plots. We will continue killing in the name of Jewish suffering. We will maintain our complicity in Western imperialist crimes against humanity.*

As devastating as it may be, at a certain moment in time, a horrible chapter was given an exceptionally meta-historical status. Its 'factuality' was sealed by draconian laws and its reasoning was secured by social and political settings. The holocaust became the new Western religion. Unfortunately, it is the most sinister religion known to man. It is a license to kill, to flatten, no nuke, to wipe [out], *to rape, to loot and to ethnically cleanse. It made vengeance and revenge into a Western value. However, far more concerning is the fact that it robs humanity of its heritage, it is there to stop us from looking into our past with dignity. Holocaust religion robs humanity of its humanism. For the sake of peace and future generations, the holocaust must be stripped of its exceptional status immediately. It must be subjected to thorough historical scrutiny. Truth and truth seeking is an elementary human experience. It must prevail."*

(In)famous political scientist Norman G. Finkelstein recently agreed to this when he stated in an interview to the 2009 documentary *Defamation* by Israeli documentary filmmaker Yoav Shamir:[6]

> *"The irony is that the Nazi holocaust has now become the main ideological weapon for launching wars of aggression. Every time you want to launch a war of aggression, drag in the Nazi holocaust."*

The most impressive thing about Shamir's documentary, however, is that he lets his audience experience how young Jewish Israelis are being traumatized by holocaust "education," which should better be called brainwashing, and how many Jews in the world, due to that kind of socialization, have become thoroughly paranoid about every single Gentile being a potential anti-Semite and about a new holocaust lurking behind every corner. This way many Jews have become prepared to do just about anything to protect themselves and their interests from both (rarely) real and (often) purely imaginary threats: ostracizing, stigmatizing, abusing, mistreating, harming, even killing Gentiles, if they stand in their way. What is all the suffering of gentiles compared to the holocaust anyway? Nothing. So why bother?

Although the holocaust – even the revisionist version of it, which is still filled with the horrors of persecution suffered by a religious minority – could be employed to worthwhile educational ends by teaching people to be tolerant toward individuals with other ethnic, cultural, religious, political, or philosophical backgrounds, it is actually misused to foster hatred and distrust among Jews against Gentiles in general and Germans (and in extension: Europeans and Christians) as well as Palestinians (and in extension: Arabs and Muslims) in particular. The "holocaust" of the current prevailing notion has created a paranoia among Jews and has thus become a mental ghetto of modern-day Jewry, forcefully separating it from the rest of the world. If Jewry wants to overcome this paranoia, it needs to break out of this ghetto.

Having had similar insights, we figured that the "holocaust" version forced down our throats for obvious political ends might not be kosher at all. Hence we started reading every scholarly book written about "holocaust deniers," and written by them in order to make up our own minds.

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[6] See http://wideeyecinema.com/?p=7208, starting at 1 hr., 15 min., 46 seconds into the movie.

And now we have taken sides, because we think we've found the tools needed to blunt the warmongers' psychological wunder-weapon and to liberate Jewry from its modern ghetto: They are called Truth and Exactitude in writing history.

And we have found ample confirmation for what French mainstream historian Prof. Dr. Michel de Boüard stated in 1986 about the mainstream version of the holocaust (Lebailly 1988):

> *"The record is rotten to the core,"*

which was confirmed fourteen years later by Jean-Claude Pressac, once the darling of the holocaust establishment:

> *"It is too late.* [...] *The current view of the world of the* [National Socialist] *camps, though triumphant, is doomed. What of it can be salvaged? Only little."* (Igounet 2000, pp. 651f.)

Call us whatever you want – "anti-Semites," "neo-Nazis," or for some of us even "self-hating." Such hollow insults don't impress us anymore, after we have seen what revisionist scholars have to endure. Be that as it may. We will remain the pacifists that we have always been, and we will resist warmongers, be they imperialist, colonialist, nationalist, Zionist, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, anti-Revisionist, or what have you.

* * *

This is the second book of the *Holocaust Handbook Series* edited by us, after our predecessor Germar Rudolf was unlawfully arrested by the U.S. government in 2005 and deported to his native Germany, where he was subsequently put on trial and sentenced to a prison term for having edited this very series.[7] What better proof do we need that this series must be important, than that it is obviously considered dangerous by the Powers That Be?

This series can proudly claim to be the *only* one of its kind in the entire world which deserves the attributes "academic," "scholarly," and "scientific," because only such research can claim to be scientific which resists external pressures to come to certain conclusions. In that sense this series does a magnificent job indeed, as it is truly the only series of books on this topic that dares to withstand the massive pressures exerted by the Powers That Be.

Since the end-1990s, Prof. Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt has been the flagship of those Powers in defending the core of their myths, and hence in

[7] Actually, the one volume summarizing the entire series: *Lectures on the Holocaust*.

justifying their imperialistic wars and shoring up their persecution of peaceful dissidents.

To underscore the statements made above, we will now quote Prof. van Pelt himself, the subject of this book. In 1999 van Pelt was preparing himself to confront British historian David Irving in court in an attempt to refute Irving's (partially) revisionist views. Irving himself got involved in revisionism after he had learned about the so-called *Leuchter Report*, which had been prepared in 1988 for a court case in Canada by Fred A. Leuchter Jr., then a specialist in the construction and maintenance of execution equipment. After Leuchter had inspected the respective facilities in Poland, he claimed in his report that the alleged homicidal gas chambers of Auschwitz and Majdanek could not have functioned as such.[8] Needless to say that this didn't exactly go down well with the Powers That Be.

To the rescue of the special interests of these Powers came brave Prof. van Pelt in the late 1990s, after other attempts at staving off revisionism had failed.[9] When interviewed about revisionism in 1999, van Pelt stated the following:[10]

> *"Holocaust denial for me is so revolting, and the way for me not to immediately become sick with having to deal with Leuchter, was by saying, OK, I am going to map his journey."* [00:36:47-00:37:00]

This shows that van Pelt is obviously a person who is emotionally incapable of dealing objectively with dissenting opinions, as they make him sick. That alone is enough to render him unfit to act as an expert. But that wasn't all. Van Pelt continued:

> *"Auschwitz is like the holy of holies. I prepared years to go there and to have a fool* [Leuchter] *come in, come in completely unprepared, it's sacrilege. Somebody who walks into the holy of holies and doesn't give a damn."* [00:40:59-00:41:20]

For van Pelt and persons sharing his views, Auschwitz and the holocaust are thus not items of the real world, which can and ought to be be scrutinized as every other item, but they have a religious, a sacred dimension and may therefore not be challenged. This, too, renders him unfit to pose as an expert in the matters at hand. To this van Pelt added:

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8 On the trial see Kulaszka; on Leuchter see Trombley; on his report see Leuchter et al.

9 Mainly those by J.-C. Pressac; re. his failure see Rudolf 2005.

10 Documentary video by Errol Morris, *Mr Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.*, Fourth Floor Productions, May 12, 1999; online i.a. at http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=6541728l1151939378#; time given in [hr:min:sec]; for a transcript see www.errolmorris.com/film/mrd_transcript.html.

"Crematorium II is the most lethal building of Auschwitz. In the 2,500 square feet of this one room, more people lost their lives than any other place on this planet. 500,000 people were killed. If you would draw a map of human suffering, if you created a geography of atrocity, this would be the absolute center." [00:55:44-00:56:15]

Hence, for van Pelt the holiest of places is at once the one representing the absolute center of evil. What kind of a religion is that which reveres symbols of absolute evil? Yet the pinnacle of van Pelt's insight was yet to come:

"If the holocaust revisionists would be shown to be right, we would lose our sense about the Second World War, we would lose our sense about what democracy was. The Second World War was a moral war; it was a war between good and evil. And so if we take the core of this war, which is in fact Auschwitz, out of the picture, then everything else becomes unintelligible to us. We collectively end up in a madhouse." [01:23:30 of original version[11]]

Here you have it: World War II was a war of good against evil, a moral war; and the holocaust was at the core of that war.

As is intelligible to anyone only somewhat familiar with just a few basic facts about World War II, these statements are dead wrong. But people like van Pelt have made up their minds and their world view, and they even made their mental sanity depend on that myth. No wonder, then, that revisionism drives these people crazy.

How crazy it drives them can be seen from statements of some of the world's leading holocaust peddlers. Haunted by the revisionist demands to show them or draw them a Nazi gas chamber, Elie Wiesel wrote in his memoirs (1994, p. 97):

"The gas chambers should better have stayed locked away from indiscreet gazes. And to the power of imagination."

Claude Lanzmann, who is best known for his film *Shoah*, which is basically a concatenation of unscrutinized anecdotal statements,[12] expressed a similar irrational hostility toward more reliable kinds of evidence like documents or even material evidence:

"In Shoah *there is no time spent on archival material because this is not the way I think and work, and besides, there isn't any such material.* [See! Told you!…] *If I had found a film – a secret film, be-*

[11] From Sundance version (Jan. 27, 1999); the revised VHS/DVD version has this passage excised.

[12] As book see Lanzmann 1985.

> *cause filming was forbidden – shot by the SS, in which it is shown how 3000 Jews – men, women, and children – die together, suffocated in the gas chamber of Crematorium II in Auschwitz, then not only would I not have shown it, I would have even destroyed it. I cannot say why. That happens on its own."* (*Le Monde*, March 3, 1994)

If you think that's insane, then brace yourself for what is yet to come, because Prof. Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt has suggested during an interview with the Toronto newspaper *The Star*, published on Dec. 27, 2009,[13] that the extant material traces of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, the site "where the murders happened," should be left to be "reclaimed by nature." Or in other words: he wants them to disappear. He stated that the material traces of the alleged crimes shouldn't be preserved, because:

> *"To put the holocaust in some separate category and to demand that it be there – to demand that we have more material evidence – is actually us somehow giving in to the holocaust deniers by providing some sort of special evidence."*

As if the demand for material evidence for the alleged biggest slaughter in the history of mankind were unreasonable. Don't we ask for material evidence for every single case of murder or manslaughter? Then why not here? And if the deliberate destruction (or should we say premeditated abandonment?) of evidence of an alleged crime is a crime in itself, then why not here?

But read this statement again, and then ask yourself: Do the revisionists demand *more* material evidence? More than *what*? In this same interview van Pelt himself had to admit the following:

> *"Ninety-nine percent of what we know we do not actually have the physical evidence to prove… it has become part of our inherited knowledge."*

Yet after having read the present book, it will be clear that the remaining one percent, which according to van Pelt is based on material evidence (including wartime documents), does not prove what van Pelt asserts. So it is more accurate to say: 100% of what is claimed about industrialized mass murder in gas chambers at Auschwitz is based on… "inherited knowledge," or in plain English: nothing but hot air – which is, however, *contradicted* and thus *refuted* by all extant material and documentary evidence. Hence there is *no* physical or documentary evi-

[13] www.thestar.com/news/insight/article/742965--a-case-for-letting-nature-take-back-auschwitz

dence at all for van Pelt's claims! There is therefore nothing exceptional about asking for any kind of material evidence for an alleged crime, if nothing has been presented so far. *Not* demanding material evidence would put the holocaust into a "separate category" from all other historical or criminological claims. So the shoe is on the other foot.

However, revisionists are indeed perfectly happy with the existing material and documentary evidence, which points in but one direction, a different one than van Pelt wants it to. The revisionists don't need more evidence, and they don't ask for more. The case is clear for all open-minded persons to see. It is the exterminationists who need more, in fact *any* material and documentary evidence to support their case. It is *they* who ought to ask for more evidence.

* * *

Van Pelt has titled his anti-revisionist book *The Case for Auschwitz*. This implies that revisionists are making a case *against* Auschwitz, which is of course nonsense. But that kind of suggestive insinuation is typical for the obfuscatory, misleading attitude of the exterminationists. The revisionists, too, make a case *for* Auschwitz. It merely is a different Auschwitz than what van Pelt champions. It is an image of Auschwitz based on a consistent, conclusive, rational, judicious, sensible, and indeed sane analysis of the extant evidence. The revisionist case for Auschwitz is a case for sanity.

May this book be a beacon for sanity both in historiography and in society in general – by making the case against not just van Pelt's impending insanity, for we don't want him or anyone else to end up in a madhouse – do we?

May this book also contribute to the demise of the warmongers' pivotal myth, replacing it with *real history* instead.

Germar Rudolf
May 17, 2010

Measurement Conversions

Since the author is European, he uses metric units throughout the book. Since some U.S. readers might find it difficult to imagine lengths, areas, volumes and weights given in metric units, a conversion list of the most common units is given below:

Mass

1 kg = 2.205 pounds
1 centner/Zentner = 50 kg = 110.25 pounds
1 ton = 1,000 kg = 2,205 pounds

Length

1 mm = 0.03937 inch
1 cm = 10 mm = 0.3937 inch
2.54 cm = 1 inch
30.48 cm = 1 ft
1 m = 100 cm = 1.094 yard
1 km = 1,000 m = 0.6214 miles
1.609 km = 1 mile

Area

1 m^2 = 10.76 $sqft/ft^2$

Volume

1 cm^3 = 1 ml(iter) = 0.001 liter = 0.03381 fl oz.
1 liter = 0.001 m^2 = 1.057 quarts = 0.2642 gallons
1 m^3 = 1.308 cyd/yd^3 = 35.31 cft/ft^3

Temperature

Increment: 1 °C = 1.8 °F Conversion: °F = °C×1.8 + 32

Pressure

10 mm of water column = 1 mbar = 0.0145 psi

For more detailed conversions please refer to Internet websites like convert-me.com

Author's Preface

Between January 11 and April 11, 2000, a lawsuit unfolded before the Royal Court of Justice in London as a result of David Irving having sued Deborah Lipstadt and the publishing house Penguin Books Ltd. for libel. It ended with the dismissal of the British historian's claims. Robert Jan van Pelt had been entrusted by the defense team with the preparation of an "expert opinion" which he presented in 1999. It became known as the "The Pelt Report."[14] The author later rewrote it together with his affidavit for the appeal procedure,[15] and in 2002 published it in the form of a book, *The Case for Auschwitz*, which became the new reference work of holocaust historiography in this field.

In doing so, van Pelt succeeded Jean-Claude Pressac who by that time had become an uncontrollable maverick dealing official historiography blow upon blow. Pressac was therefore sent into what might be labeled historiographic purgatory, half-way between the revisionists' hell and the paradise of the holocaust believers. This historiographic interdict weighed upon him until he died on July 23, 2003, in the total silence of the media, which had previously praised him to the skies. The irony of fate would have it that on his death he was eulogized only by his erstwhile opponents.[16]

The post of the world-wide authority on Auschwitz had thus to be filled by a trustworthy person who would promote Pressac's purified theses without the latter's annoying spirit of criticism and bring about a new metaphysical vision of Auschwitz, immutable and definitive this time – van Pelt, in short.

"The Pelt Report" and the book which resulted from it constitute what is essentially a plundering of Pressac's work, but the man himself is never mentioned as the source of the arguments which van Pelt has usurped. The entire work rests upon two main pillars: the *corpus* of "criminal traces" assembled by Pressac and the testimonies of the witnesses, which center, in turn, on the declarations made by Henryk Tauber, a former detainee and member of the so-called *Sonderkommando* (see chapter 10). Van Pelt regards them as having "the highest evidentiary value" and makes Pressac's analysis of these declarations his

[14] The report is available at: www.holocaustdenialontrial.org/en/trial/defense/van
[15] The affidavit is available at: www.holocaust-history.org/irving-david/vanpelt/
[16] Graf 2003, pp. 406-411; Mattogno 2003d, pp. 412-415, Countess, p. 413.

own. Van Pelt, however, has honed Tauber's significance, making him the mainstay of his argumentation, the measure of all sources to the point where he even uses his own documents to bolster the "plausibility" of Tauber's declarations. This is true as well for the other testimonies which gravitate around Tauber's statements for the sole purpose of "confirming" them.

It is easy to see why van Pelt does this. Tauber's testimonies have constituted the seemingly unassailable basis of holocaust historiography as far as cremations and homicidal gassings at Auschwitz are concerned – from 1945 to 1993, from Jan Sehn to Pressac. Pressac's own "criminal traces" rely tacitly or explicitly on Tauber's assertions and merely constitute, as it were, their (fictitious) documentary rendition.

Van Pelt's choice has another, more important motive: he had to deal with technical problems in the field of cremation and crematorium ovens with which he was entirely unfamiliar, and so he blindly followed Tauber's statements. By accepting the absurdities uttered by this witness, however, and by making them the basis of his own reasoning, van Pelt has engendered a chain reaction which leads to the self-destruction of his book.

The radical refutation of van Pelt's argumentation therefore requires three specific approaches: one concerning the "criminal traces," another concerning the cremations and crematorium ovens, and a third concerning Tauber's testimony. They will constitute the first, second, and third part of the present work, respectively.

Compared to Pressac, van Pelt has introduced a new method or rather a new designation for a method, the "convergence of evidence" – a method which Pressac had already utilized without giving it a specific name. It consists in the confrontation of allegedly independent documents and testimonies in an effort to show that everything "converges" on the thesis of an extermination. Part Four examines the practical application of this method by van Pelt and lays bare the serious technical and historical mistakes that flow from it. Part Five finally analyzes in detail the origins of the alleged convergence of testimonies.

In the section "Preface and Acknowledgment" of his book, thanking his supporters, van Pelt says (pp. XIII-XIV):

> *"Writing my rebuttal to Rudolf's affidavit, I was fortunate to have Green, Mazal, Keren, and McCarthy as partners in a daily conversation that quickly also included John Zimmerman, Kern Stern, Peter Maguire, and Stephen Prothero."*

The present study will deal with a number of examples concerning the competence and intellectual honesty of some of these persons. Van Pelt also speaks with much self-assurance of the task he had in the Irving-Lipstadt trial (p. IX):

> *"It was my task, therefore, to help the defense barristers Richard Rampton, Heather Rogers, and Anthony Julius convince the judge that no serious historian who had considered the evidence would have serious cause to doubt that there were gas chambers at Auschwitz."*

This arrogant statement was refuted by Justice Gray himself in his sentence of April 11, 2000. On this subject, he writes in section 13.71:[17]

> *"I have to confess that, in common I suspect with most other people, I had supposed that the evidence of mass extermination of Jews in the gas chambers at Auschwitz was compelling. I have, however, set aside this preconception when assessing the evidence adduced by the parties in these proceedings."*

Unbelievably, this point of view was shared by van Pelt (p. 100):

> *"My first problem was rather straightforward: the evidence for Auschwitz was undoubtedly problematic."*

In section 13.73 he adds:[17]

> *"I recognise the force of many of Irving's comments upon some of those categories. He is right to point out that the contemporaneous documents, such as drawings, plans, correspondence with contractors and the like, yield little clear evidence of the existence of gas chambers designed to kill humans. Such isolated references to the use of gas as are to be found amongst these documents can be explained by the need to fumigate clothes so as to reduce the incidence of diseases such as typhus. The quantities of Zyklon B delivered to the camp may arguably be explained by the need to fumigate clothes and other objects. It is also correct that one of the most compromising documents, namely Muller's* [recte: Bischoff's] *letter of 28 June 1943 setting out the number of cadavers capable of being burnt in the incinerators, has a number of curious features which raise the possibility that it is not authentic. In addition, the photographic evidence for the existence of chimneys protruding through the roof of morgue 1 at crematorium 2 is, I accept, hard to interpret."*

[17] www.holocaustdenialontrial.org/ieindex.html sub "The Judgement," § XIII.

In section 13.74, Gray accepts furthermore the value of several of Irving's arguments:[17]

> *"Similarly Irving had some valid comments to make about the various accounts given by survivors of the camp and by camp officials. Some of those accounts were given in evidence at the post-war trials. The possibility exists that some of these witnesses invented some or even all of the experiences which they describe. Irving suggested the possibility of cross-pollination, by which he meant the possibility that witnesses may have repeated and even embellished the (invented) accounts of other witnesses with the consequence that a corpus of false testimony is built up. Irving pointed out that parts of some of the accounts of some of the witnesses are obviously wrong or (like some of Olère's drawings) clearly exaggerated. He suggested various motives why witnesses might have given false accounts, such as greed and resentment (in the case of survivors) and fear and the wish to ingratiate themselves with their captors (in the case of camp officials). Van Pelt accepted that these possibilities exist. I agree."*

The justice's conviction with respect to the reality of the homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz derived solely from the presumed "convergence of evidence," as he stated in section 13.78:[17]

> *"My conclusion is that the various categories of evidence do 'converge' in the manner suggested by the Defendants."*

This book constitutes the first complete and radical dismantling of the intrinsically false argumentative structure and of the spearhead of mainstream holocaust historiography about Auschwitz by demonstrating, on the one hand, that Pressac's "criminal traces" have no value as evidence and, on the other, by documenting the fact that van Pelt's "convergence of proof" is purely fictitious.

As against this, the present work furnishes a coherent and *actually* converging set of evidentiary elements which show that the holocaust thesis regarding the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz is historically, documentarily and technically unfounded.

Part One: "Criminal Traces" Concerning Homicidal Gas Chambers

A Historical and Critical Discussion of Jean-Claude Pressac's and Robert Jan van Pelt's Theses[18]

Introduction

Jean-Claude Pressac may rightly be called the founder of holocaust historiography on the subject of Auschwitz, which previously had functioned without documentation and without any method. He himself called the "traditional" treatment of the subject "a history based for the most part on testimonies, assembled according to the mood of the moment, truncated to fit an arbitrary truth and sprinkled with a few German documents of uneven value and without any connection with one another." (1989, p. 264)

He applied a new historiographic method which, at least in its intentions, discarded testimony in favor of documentary material. Actually, though, he again relied on testimony to retrace the history of the alleged initial installations for homicidal gassings, which are said to have preceded those of the Birkenau crematoria. His chapters on the gassings in Crematorium I (*ibid.*, pp. 123-159) and in the so-called "bunkers" of Birkenau[19] are, in fact, *exclusively* based on testimony.

The new method was actually applied solely to the Birkenau crematoria. Whereas Pressac should have been able to discover, in the respective documentation preserved at the Auschwitz Museum, proof of the planning, the construction and the use of the alleged homicidal gas chambers in those installations, he found himself confronted by a total absence of any kind of proof. He was merely able to identify some

[18] In his book van Pelt normally designates the Birkenau crematoria by the Arabic numerals 2, 3, 4, 5 instead of using the more common Roman numerals II, III, IV and V. On the other hand, he attributes to the so-called Birkenau bunkers the numerals I and II, whereas common historiographic practice has been to label them 1 and 2.

[19] *Ibid.*, "Bunker 1 or 'The Red House' and its supposed mass graves," pp. 161-170; "Bunker 2 (subsequently renamed Bunker V) or the 'White House' and its undressing huts," pp. 171-182.

"criminal traces" which somehow, thanks to their number and their presumed convergence, had to fill the void.

Later on, in the early 1990s, when he was able to peruse the enormous pile of documents secured by the Soviets at Auschwitz and held in Moscow, Pressac wrote a new book in which he succeeded in adding nothing but a few more circumstantial indicators to his existing collection (Pressac 1993). But at precisely that point Pressac's historiographic fortune started to decline.

Van Pelt's assault began the following year, when his name was inexplicably added to Pressac's in a massively abridged English translation of the above book (Pressac/van Pelt 1994). It continued in 1996, when van Pelt brandished Pressac's "criminal traces" as his own in a book he wrote with Debórah Dwork (Dwork/van Pelt 1996), and culminated in 2000 at the Irving-Lipstadt trial. By 2002 the expropriation was complete. *The Case for Auschwitz* presents a full-fledged rehash of Pressac's "criminal traces," which now constitute the framework of the holocaustic historiography concerning Auschwitz.

Whereas Pressac was an investigator, van Pelt is first and foremost a compiler with a much weaker critical mind and much less gifted for historical and documental analyses. His reassessment of the "criminal traces" represents a simpler way of spreading Pressac's theses and does not take into account their complexity and variety.

Hence, replying directly to van Pelt's recycled arguments makes no sense. Various revisionist scholars have examined Pressac's theses (see in particular Rudolf 2005), but until now there has been no systematic and comprehensive assessment of the value and the significance of the "criminal traces," an analysis which would, at the same time, confer a new character to van Pelt's comments.

One of van Pelt's few merits was to have pointed out the importance of Auschwitz in the plans of the SS for the colonization of the occupied eastern territories. In his book coauthored with Debórah Dwork he asserted (p. 254):

> *"The creation of the camp at Birkenau, which by the end of 1942 had become a major center for the annihilation of Europe's Jews, was directly connected to Himmler's program to transform Auschwitz into a paradigm of German settlement in the East."*

Van Pelt had tried to develop this thesis before (1994), but further research showed that this paradigm was only a part of a much larger plan, the "*Generalplan Ost*" (General Plan East; see Schulte), which in-

volved the camps at Birkenau, Lublin and Stutthof as simple collection centers of forced labor, initially made up by Soviet prisoners of war, but later primarily by Jews. This new historical perspective left no room for the presumed extermination of the Jews, though (see Mattogno 2008).

1. "Criminal Traces"

1.1. Historical Background

In the 1980s Pressac visited Auschwitz frequently. On one such occasion, under the guidance of the then head archivist Tadeusz Iwaszko – who was to come to a tragic end on December 2, 1988 – and while perusing volume 11 of the proceedings of the Höss trial, Pressac hit upon an account written by the engineer Roman Dawidowski. Between May 10, 1945, and September 26, 1946, Dawidowski had worked together with the investigating judge Jan Sehn (Höss trial, vol. 11, pp. 1-57). This account already contains the better part of all of Pressac's "criminal traces," especially in the second section, the translation of which reads (*ibid*., pp. 7-9):

> *"All of these installations constituted the so-called 'Spezialeinrichtungen' (letter of 16.12.1942), 'Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung' (files VIII Upa 2, making up annex 2) for the implementation of the special action / 'Sonderaktion' (garrison order*[20] *no. 31/43), based on 'Sondermassnahme' (letter of 13.1.1943 no. 21242/43) concerning the detainees taken to the Auschwitz camp with special transports 'Sondertransporte' (letter of 10.4.1943 no. 26823/43 and of 12.7.43 no. 32269/43), with a detail of detainees called 'Sonderkommando' (letter of 4.2.1944 no. Bi-Sch./alg/66 b/8/1994/44 Bia/Ha) being engaged as well.*
>
> *In the letters which make up annexes 3 and 4, the crematoria and the rooms equipped with gas-tight doors having a double-glass spyhole and gasket, absolutely necessary for implementing the special action, are referred to as 'zur Durchführung der Sondermassnahme.' According to the work order*[21] *of 3.8.1944, 900 detainees were working that day in the Sonderkommando assigned to the four Birkenau crematoria.*
>
> *In the drawings and in the official correspondence the crematoria were called, in the German terminology, Krematorium (also abbreviated as 'Krema'), Einäscherungsanlage or Einäscherungsofen, depending on their structure and use; the gas chambers, however, were hidden under the designations Leichenhalle (blueprint of*

[20] Standortbefehl Nr. 31/43 of August 6, 1943.
[21] Reference to the series of reports of Arbeitseinsatz.

25.9.1941 no. D. 59042 – photograph no. 18 and work-sheet no. 243 of 27.3.1943[22]*), also Halle (work-sheet no. 323 of 16.4.1943), Leichenkeller 1 (blueprint 932 of 27.1.1942 – photograph no. 23 – and correspondence concerning construction of BW 30, 30a-c*[23]*), also abbreviated as L-Keller 1 (letter of 11.2.1943 no. 22957/43), Keller 1 (work-sheet no. 192 of 13.3.1943) and finally Badeanstalt für Sonderaktion (note for the file of 21.8.1942 no. 12115).*[24]

The rooms for the [gas] *chambers were labeled bath (Bad) or disinfection (Desinfektionsraum), and these designations were written in various languages on large sign-boards on the doors leading to the gas chamber. Crematoria II and III had two half-basements called Leichenkeller 1 and Leichenkeller 2 in the official correspondence. In the letter of 29.1.1943, no. 22250, one of these half-basements is called 'Vergasungskeller' (annex 5), and the other, in the letter of 6.3.1943, 'Auskleidungsraum.' If these letters are compared to the blueprints of photograph no. 23 and to the drawings of photographs no. 24, 25, and 26, then one can see that the designation 'Vergasungskeller' applied to 'Leichenkeller 1.'*

As opposed to 'Leichenkeller 2,' this half-basement had a double array of ventilation channels, the upper one being called 'Belüftung,' the lower one 'Entlüftungskanal' (blueprint of photograph no. 23) fed by a blower (Gebläse),[25] *and it was to be heated by means of a heat shunt duct of one of the chimneys (Warmluftzuführungsanlage – letter of 25.3.1943 no. 25629/43).*

In the letters[26] *no. 103 and 192, the openings of the lower channel, called 'Abluftlöcher,' were protected by wire-mesh grids (Schutzgitter) with a mesh width of 10 mm. The outlets of the upper channels were closed by means of grids of galvanized steel sheets (Zinkblechsiebe).*

Leichenkeller 1 was equipped – like all other gas chambers – with gas-tight doors (annex 15). According to the statements of the witnesses, this chamber had Zyklon feed devices in the form of wire-

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22 Reference to the order by Zentralbauleitung to Schlosserei W.L. no. 243 of March 27, 1943; Leichenhalle = corpse hall = morgue.

23 In the administrative documents, Crematoria II, III, IV and V are designated by the abbreviations BW 30 and 30a-c; Leichenkeller = corpse cellar = underground morgue.

24 In this document, both terms of this designation are in the plural: *Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen*, bathing establishments for special actions. Cf. chapter 7.3.

25 The ventilation of Leichenkeller 2 had two blowers, one in pressure one in suction. Cf. chapter 1.8.

26 Orders by Zentralbauleitung to Schlosserei W.L.

mesh columns. The witness Kula has described the design of this device (annex 16). According to the letter of 11.2.1943 mentioned above, 'Leichenkeller 2' had only a de-aeration system powered by a 7.5 HP blower (Abluftgebläse). The designation 'Gaskammer' appears only in work-sheet no. 459 of 28.5.1943 ('1 Tür mit Rahmen, luftdicht mit Spion für Gaskammer') and in the map for the Groß-Rosen concentration camp. In the latter case, [it applies] *to the designation of the structure located in the immediate vicinity of the building labeled 'Krema' (blueprint no. 4067 of 5.7.1944 signed by Bischoff)."*

As I have pointed out in a specific study (2004h, pp. 9f.), all terms containing the prefix "*Sonder*-" ("special") were taken by the Polish investigators to be "code words" referring to homicidal gassings. For their alleged "deciphering" they started with the assumption of the existence of homicidal gas chambers in the Birkenau crematoria and then inferred the criminal significance of the "*Sonder*-" terms mentioned. Later on official historiography proceeded the other way round: starting out from the assumption that the terms in question had a criminal significance, the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz was inferred. Not even Pressac was able to extricate himself from this sterile circular reasoning when taking over the "criminal traces" listed by Dawidowski. Fact is, though, that the terms "*Sonderbehandlung*" (special treatment), "*Sondermassnahmen*" (special measures), "*Sondertransporte*" (special transports), "*Sonderkommando*" (special detail), "*Sonderaktion*" (special action), "*Sonderkeller*" (special basement), "*Spezialeinrichtungen*" (special installations)," "*Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen*" (baths for special actions) have nothing to do with any alleged homicidal gassings (*ibid*., Part Two, pp. 29-105). As far as the term "*Gaskammer*" (gas chamber) is concerned, the work-sheet no. 459 of May 29, 1943, refers to a chamber for disinfestation with hydrogen cyanide (see chapter 1.5.), and so does blueprint no. 4067 of July 5, 1944.[27] The same is true for the "*Gaskammer*" shown on the blueprints of a disinfestation unit (*Entlausungsanlage*) at Birkenau, later to become *Bauwerke*[28] 5a and 5b (Pressac 1989, pp. 55-57).

[27] According to holocaust historiography, the Groß-Rosen camp never had a homicidal gas chamber ("Eine solche Anlage hat es in Groß-Rosen nicht gegeben"). Sprenger 1996, p. 205.

[28] Bauwerk, BW: building or group of buildings of the same type.

From the account mentioned above, Pressac draws not only the major portion of his "criminal traces," but also other important cues, such as the reference to Michał Kula's description of Zyklon B introduction devices and the fundamental information concerning the ventilation system. Moreover, he presents practically all of the photographic material contained in this source (pages refer to Pressac 1989):

- photograph 3 (ruins of Crematorium II in 1945): photo 93 on p. 261;
- photograph 7 (ruins of Crematorium II in 1945): photo 96 on p. 261;
- photograph 10 (yard of Crematorium III with a wooden box in the foreground): photo 72 on p. 251;
- photograph 11 (fence allegedly used to "hide" the crematoria): photo 46 on p. 501;
- photograph 18 (blueprint D 59042 of Crematorium I): p. 152;
- photograph 19 (blueprint 4287 of Crematorium I): p. 156 and 157;
- photograph 20 (label of a can of Zyklon B): photo 13 on p. 17;
- photograph 21 (label mentioning Zyklon B): photo 12 on p. 18;
- photograph 23 (blueprint 933 of future Crematorium II): p. 282;
- photograph 24 (blueprint 109/16A of Crematorium II): pp. 329;
- photograph 25 (blueprint 109 of Crematorium II): p. 323;
- photograph 26 (blueprint 109/15 of Crematorium II): p. 327;
- photograph 27 (temporary lift for Crematorium II): photo 20 on p. 488;
- photograph 28 (blueprint 1678 of Crematoria IV-V): p. 393;
- photograph 30 (benches allegedly located in the "undressing room" of the crematoria): photo 10 on p. 486;
- photographs 31 and 32 (gas-tight door): photos 29 and 30 on p. 50;
- photograph 33 (open-air cremation): photo 16 on p. 422;
- photograph 34 (women allegedly on their way to the gas chambers): photo 17 on p. 423.

In keeping with the Polish investigations, Pressac made an extensive search of those parts of the archives of the Auschwitz *Zentralbauleitung* (central construction office, thereafter abbreviated as ZBL) which the Soviets had left in the camp, but was able to add only four more items to the list originally compiled by Dawidowski. After 1989 he also viewed the more extensive portion of the archives which the Soviets had taken to Moscow. Although this collection contains some 88,000 pages, Pressac found no proof concerning the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau and managed only to glean anoth-

er four "criminal traces." Before we examine these traces in greater detail, we must first clarify two essential points.

1.2. The Archive of the Auschwitz *Zentralbauleitung*

First of all, if that documentation actually did contain indications which would allow the indirect proof of the reality of homicidal gas chambers, why was it not destroyed by the SS? Secondly, if the documentation is complete, how can we explain that it does not contain any direct proof? In the introduction to his second book on Auschwitz, Pressac answers the first question in the following manner (1993, p. 1):

> *"As opposed to another department of the camp, the Political Department, which burned its files almost totally before evacuating the camp in January 1945, the Bauleitung*[29] *left theirs intact. The reason for this abandonment in an unexpurgated manner could reside within the personality of the second and last head of the Auschwitz Bauleitung, lieutenant Werner Jothann. A civil engineer ('Hochbau'), he had not been personally involved in the homicidal transformation of the crematoria which had been the work of the first head of the department, SS captain Karl Bischoff, between the end of 1942 and early 1943. Being ignorant of the 'explosive' content of the files in this respect, Jothann departed without worrying about this and without taking any measures to have them destroyed."*
>
> This explanation does not explain anything at all.

On October 1, 1943, the beginning of the fifth fiscal year of the war economy, *SS-Sturmbannführer* Karl Bischoff was replaced by *SS-Obersturmführer* Werner Jothann as head of ZBL. Bischoff himself was promoted and became head of the Waffen-SS and Police Inspectorate for Silesia (*Leiter der Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei "Schlesien"*), which reported to *Amt V* of *Amtsgruppe C* within the *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt* (SS-WVHA) and constituted the agency which directly controlled the Auschwitz ZBL. In actual fact, Bischoff remained Jothann's immediate superior within the hierarchy of the SS-WVHA and stayed in permanent contact with him. All new *Bauwerke* had, in fact, to be approved by *Bauinspektion "Schlesien."*[30] Furthermore, on January 5, 1944, Bischoff and Jothann carried out the

[29] Recte: Zentralbauleitung.
[30] For a general treatment of this question cf. Mattogno 2005h.

official hand-over which listed all documentation, including file no. 15 concerning Crematoria II and III with 7 drawings, correspondence, and payment for jobs done.[31] If that documentation really contained anything "explosive," would Bischoff not have told Jothann so? And would Bischoff, his immediate superior, not have ordered him to destroy any such files?

Let us move on to the second point. The organization of the Auschwitz ZBL was very complicated and decentralized. As early as the beginning of 1943, this department was split into 5 *Bauleitungen* (see chapter 2.6.4.). The ZBL itself comprised 14 *Sachgebiete* (technical departments). Each *Bauleitung* and each *Sachgebiet* had its own files, and what we now call "the *Zentralbauleitung* archive" consisted at the time of several dozen archives. Documents concerning the crematoria, like all other documents, were prepared with several copies (the recipients were listed under the heading "*Verteiler*" [distribution]), and each copy was routed to the department concerned, where it was filed.

The original archive comprised many files ("*Ordner*"), each one of which served for the conservation of the documents relating to one or several *Bauwerke*. Upon a simple order given by Bischoff via Jothann, each *Bauleiter* could easily have destroyed his own collection of files or – even more easily – the files containing the documentation regarding the crematoria. This was not done, however, and the documentation survived. It contains the drawings of the crematoria and a wealth of correspondence, but there are also obviously missing portions, for example all the detailed drawings regarding the ovens themselves, the reports on the test firings, or the data on coke consumption in 1944. The documentation has clearly been *filtered* by the people who were the first to use it for show-trial purposes, i.e. the Soviets and judge Jan Sehn. It is indeed hard to imagine that the SS, rather than destroying the whole lot of this allegedly "explosive" documentation, would have taken the time to plough through all the ramifications of the crematoria file with great patience, removing and destroying individual documents they judged to be dangerous, but leaving the rest intact, down to the blueprints of the crematoria themselves! They are then said to have blown up the crematoria to hide the traces of their "crimes" while, at the same time, abandoning to the Soviets thousands of eyewitnesses of those "crimes"!

[31] RGVA, 502-1-48, pp. 42-49.

Van Pelt's explanation for the survival of the archive, on the other hand, is dumbfounding in its carelessness:[32]

> *"When the Germans burned the archives of the camp Kommandantur prior to their evacuation from Auschwitz in January 1945, they overlooked the archive of the building office that had been closed some months earlier, and as a result the materials in this archive were found more or less intact."*

It would not be worthwhile to bother with this, if van Pelt had not added another blunder – the alleged "closing" of the ZBL "months earlier" than January 1945 (which was needed to explain why the SS "overlooked the archive"). Actually, this office continued to function at least through December 29, 1944, the date which appears on a stamp imprint made by the civilian employee Rudolf Jährling in respect of a Topf invoice dated December 2.[33]

The selection carried out within the ZBL archive has created the void surrounding the greater part of the "criminal traces," which nowadays show up in the documentation like so many erratic blocks. And it is their very isolation from their original context which today allows them to be interpreted in a criminal sense. This fact alone hints at the perpetrator of this archival cleansing: Cui bono?

1.3. Methodical Premise

In the chapter "'One proof… one single proof': Thirty-nine criminal traces," (1989, pp. 429-457) Pressac addresses Robert Faurisson's call of February 26, 1979,[34] for even a single piece of evidence of the existence of homicidal gas chambers. The subtitle of the chapter in question is "A complete list of the 'criminal traces' or 'slips' found in the archives of the Auschwitz State Museum and the Warsaw Central Commission concerning the homicidal gas chambers in Birkenau Krematorien II, III, IV and V" (*ibid*. p. 429).

Before we look at these "criminal traces," we must consider the methodical principle employed by Pressac and taken over by his successors. He retraces primarily the events immediately prior to the question and expresses at the same time a negative verdict on the method of holocaust historiography of his era (*ibid*.):

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[32] Van Pelt 2002, p. 207.
[33] RGVA, 502-1-96, p. 33a.
[34] Faurisson 1980, pp. 96-100.

"Faurisson asked for 'one proof… one single proof' of the existence of homicidal gas chambers. The 'traditional' historians provided him with an 'abundance of proofs' which were virtually all based on human testimony, from SS and surviving former prisoners and Sonderkommando men. But human testimony is fallible. It is unreliable, and Faurisson wanted a CONCRETE historical proof, that is proof based on incontestable and irrefutable documents. Four types of historical documents would meet these stringent criteria:

photographs and
films made between 1942 and 1944 in KL Auschwitz.
German letters and documents,
original drawings concerned with the camp."

But there is no film showing an extermination going on at Auschwitz, and the existing photographs "cannot be presented as definitive proof" (*ibid*.). Of the drawings for the crematoria, "NOT ONE explicitly mentions in so many words anything like: Blausäure (prussic acid) Vergasungs- or Gaskammer or -keller [gassing or gas chamber or cellar])," which means that there "remain only the various items of correspondence and official documents of German origin" which, thanks to the "slips" they contain, "form a convincing body of presumptive evidence and clearly indicate the presence in the four Birkenau Krematorien (II, III, IV and V) of gas chambers using a prussic acid disinfestation agent under the name of 'Zyklon B.'" (*ibid*.) Then Pressac goes on to expound his methodical principle (*ibid*.):

"In the absence of any 'direct,' i.e. palpable, indisputable and evident proof (lacking so far as we know at present) such as a photograph of people killed by a toxic gas in an enclosed space that can be perfectly located and identified, or of a label on a Krematorium drawing of a 'Gaskammer um Juden zu vergiften/gas chamber for poisoning Jews,' an 'indirect' proof may suffice and be valid. By 'indirect' proof I mean a German document that does not state in black and white that a gas chamber is for homicidal purposes, but one containing evidence to the effect that, logically, it is impossible for it to be anything else."

Hence, for Pressac an indirect proof is a document which cannot be explained in any manner but homicidal. This is a clear admission that until 1989 there existed *no proof* of the reality of *homicidal* gas cham-

bers at Birkenau,[35] nor later either, for that matter, because an "indirect" proof is not a proof, only a simple indication. And Pressac actually does not pretend to have discovered any "proof," only – and precisely – certain "criminal traces." While maintaining the reservations I have expressed above on the subject of the documentation, I could accept Pressac's methodical principle, but only as long as it is *objectively* impossible to explain the "criminal traces" in a non-homicidal manner. In fact, however, Pressac's proclaimed impossibility of a different, non-homicidal explanation is not *objective* but *subjective*, which means that Pressac decrees such an impossibility only because *he has been unable* to come up with a different explanation. Hence, as I shall demonstrate in the course of this study, if such an impossibility is purely fictitious, the value of the "criminal traces" as an "indirect" proof is completely nil.

With respect to Pressac's method, we must consider another aspect. He is proud, and rightly so, to have discovered that at Auschwitz nothing was permanent and immutable and that, on the contrary, everything – especially the planning – was in a constant state of flux. It often happened – and the history of the Birkenau camp is a very concrete example of this – that a project was reviewed and changed several times before it was finally implemented. This means that, if we want to know the real purpose of some installation, we must retrace the history of its evolution and, specifically, its final stages.

Pressac is very good at applying this principle, for example to the architectural description of the disinfestation and disinfection units or to the history of the development of the Birkenau crematoria. However, when it comes to the discussion of the criminal traces in connection with the crematoria, he drops this methodical principle and, in a fit of metaphysical freezing, considers the installations as fixed and usable only for one unique purpose. But, as he says himself, "plans evolved according to needs" (p. 512), and at Birkenau the needs proceeded at impressive rate. It is therefore not clear why one could not plan the use of particular units for various ends, depending upon the requirements of the moment. This tendency to freeze things induces Pressac to consider as "incompatible" certain installations or devices which actually could have complementary or independent functions.

Pressac's most serious methodical mistake, however, is to base himself on Henryk Tauber's testimony (which he also discovered in file 11

[35] RIP the assertion by George Wellers (1978): "Abondance de preuves."

of the Höss trial papers) as an unassailable position, which he then projects backwards on his "criminal traces." Conversely, for him the "criminal traces" are directed *a priori* toward a final goal – the alleged homicidal gas chambers – which forms the initial hypothesis, not the conclusion, of his interpretations. Not only this: on this fragile array of indications he then weaves a dense tissue of events whose significance he systematically deforms to get them to fit his preconceived "criminal" framework, in which fantasy overflows onto reality and finally submerges it completely.

Van Pelt obediently follows Pressac's method of the impossibility of "all alternative explanations" (2002, p. 406) and adds nothing new himself.

1.4. "39" Criminal Traces

Pressac lists "thirty-nine criminal traces," which I reproduce in his own manner (if no year is given for quotes from Pressac, all page numbers from here on until further notice refer to 1989).

1.4.1.Traces for Crematorium II:

1) "Vergasungskeller/gassing cellar"; (p. 432, photo 1.)
2) "10 Gasprüfer/gas detectors"; (*ibid*. and photo 2 on p. 433)
3) "1 Stck Handgriff für Gastür D 12/handle for gastight door, 12 [mm] diameter"; (p. 432, photo 3 on p. 433.)
4) "Auskleideraum/undressing room"; (*ibid*. and photo 4 on p. 433)
5) "Auskleidekeller," 4 mentions; "Auskleidekeller II," 1 mention / "undressing cellar" (p. 434, photos 5, 6, 7 on p. 434f.);
6) Gastür 100/192 für *Leichenkeller* 1/gas(tight) door 100×192 for underground morgue 1"; (*ibid*. and photo 8 on p. 436)
7) "1 Gasdichtetür/1 gas-tight door"; (p. 436, photos 9 & 10, p. 437)
8) "4 Drahtnetzteinschiebvorrichtung/4 wire mesh introduction devices" (p. 436, photo 3 on p. 438.);
9) "4 Holzblenden/4 wooden covers" (*ibid.*)

1.4.2. Traces for Crematorium III:

10) "Auskleideraum/undressing room"; (p. 438 and photo 4 on p. 433)
11) "Gastür/gas(tight) door 100×192; (*ibid*. and photo 8 on p. 436)

12) "Auskleidekeller/undressing cellar," twice (*ibid*. and photos 12 & 13 on p. 439)
13) "Flacheisen für (1)/5 Stück Gastürbeschläge/flat iron bar for (1)/5 sets of fittings for gas(tight) doors"; (*ibid*., photos 14 & 15, p. 439)
14) "Beschläge für 1 Stück Gastür/fittings for 1 gas(tight) door";[36]
15) "1 Gasdichtetür/1 gas-tight door"; (p. 439 and photos 17 & 18 on p. 438, 441)
16) "14 Brausen/14 (dummy) showers." (*ibid*. and photo 18 on p. 438)

1.4.3. Traces for Crematoria IV and V:

17) "12 Stück gasdichte Türen ca. 30/40 cm 12 gas-tight doors approx. 30×40," 4 mentions; (p. 443 and photo 19 on p. 444)
17a) "12 Stück gasdichte Türen ca. 30/40 cm"; (*ibid*. and photo 20 on p. 444)
17b) "Delivery note for the door fittings of 24th February 1943";[37]
18) "Gas[s]dichte Fenster versetzen/fit gas-tight windows";[38]
19) "betonieren im [*sic*] Gas[s]kammer/[apply] concrete in gas chamber," first mention; (p. 446 and photos 24 and 25 on p. 446)
20) "Gas[s]dichte Fenster versetzen/fit gas-tight windows" (p. 447 and photographs 26, 27, 28 on p. 448-450), mentioned twice;
21) "betonieren im Gas[s]kammer," 2nd mention; (p. 447 and photos 29, 30, p. 450)
22) "4 Gasdichte Türen/4 gas-tight doors"; (*ibid*. and photos 32 & 33, p. 451-452)
23) "Gastüren Verankerungen 210 Stk/210 anchors for gas-tight doors" (p. 448 and photograph 31 on p. 451);
24) "3 dichte Türe (Türme, Türen)/three gas-tight doors (towers, doors)" (p. 452 and photograph 32 p. 451);
25) "drei gasdichte Türe (Türme, Türen)/three gas-tight doors (towers, doors)" (*ibid.*, and photographs 33, 34, 35 on p. 452f.);
26) "Flacheisen für (4)/5 Stück Gastürbeschläge/iron bar for (4)/5 sets of gas(tight) fittings"; (p. 454 and photos 14 and 15 on p. 440)
27) "für 4 gasdichte Türen/for 4 gas-tight doors: WL Schlosserei liefert für 4 gasdichte Türen: Die Beschläge wie bereits schon einmal geliefert/ WL metal workshop to supply for 4 gas-tight doors: fit-

[36] Pressac 1989, p. 439 and photograph 16 on p. 441.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 443 and photograph 21 on p. 443.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 445 and photographs 22 and 23 on p. 445.

tings as already once supplied" (p. 454 and photograph 16 on p. 441)

28) "24 Ankerschrauben für gasdu[i]chte Türen lt. Skizze/24 anchor bolts for gas-tight doors as per sketch"; (p. 454, photo 36 on p. 455)
29) "Gastüren einsetzen/fit gas(tight) doors," (*ibid*., and photo 37, p. 455) twice.

1.4.4. Further Traces (Crematoria II and III)

30) "Der (Leichen)Keller 1 mit der Abluft aus den Räumen der 3 Saugzuganlagen vorgewärmt wird/The (corpse) cellar 1 will be preheated with the exhaust air from the rooms of the 3 forced draft installations"; (p. 454 and photograph 4 on p. 433.)
31) "Die Warmluftzuführungsanlage für Leichenkeller 1/The hot air supply installation for Leichenkeller 1." (*ibid*. and document 39 on p. 230)

1.4.5. Other Traces

32) "Beschläge für gasdichte Tür/fittings for gas-tight doors";[39]
33) "1 Schlüssel für Gaskammer/1 key for gas chamber";[39]
34) "Die Beschläge zu 1 Tür mit Rahmen, luftdicht mit Spion für Gaskammer/The fittings for 1 door with frame, air-tight with peephole for gas chamber."[40]

Taking into account that Pressac counts a few items twice, he arrives at an inflated number of 39 "criminal traces."

1.5. Preliminary Considerations

Pressac considers item 33 to be a real and true example of a dubious indication. He underlines that the order to get in touch with the pharmacist at the SS sick-bay and the reference to a *block* "make the order incomprehensible with our present state of knowledge" and concludes by saying that "the doors to the homicidal gas chambers of the crematoriums were not fitted with locks" (p. 456). Hence, the respective document does not refer to crematoria and is not a criminal trace. Item 34 concerns an order that "has nothing to do with the Birkenau Krematorien, but was destined for one of the disinfestation gas chambers of the

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 456 and photograph 38 on p. 457.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 456 and photograph 39 on p. 457.

main camp, probably the one in block 1," (p. 456) hence this is not a criminal trace either. One fails to understand why Pressac included both items in his list of "criminal traces" in the first place.

Item 10 is identical to item 4, but Pressac counts it once for Crematorium II and again for Crematorium III, because he states that the respective document refers to Crematoria II and III, and therefore the trace in question is applicable to both. This is all the more arbitrary, as Crematorium II was practically finished at the time (March 6, 1943), whereas Crematorium III was still in a very early stage of construction.

Item 32 concerns "metal fittings for gas-tight door" (*Beschläge für gasdichte Tür*) and is dated 17 June, 1943 (p. 457, photograph 38). Pressac comments (p. 456):

> *"This order was issued by the Birkenau Krematorium maintenance service, but does not mention the destination of the fittings. In view of the date, a new door was probably being fitted to replace a faulty or damaged one."*

Actually, "the Birkenau Krematorium maintenance service" does not appear at all on the work-sheet. The order came, in fact, from "*Verwaltung V 4*," i.e. section V4 of the camp administration, the garrison surgeon (*SS-Standortarzt*). The same office appears also on an order dated May 28, 1943, concerning "the metal fittings for 1 door with frame, airtight, with peephole for gas chamber" (*Die Beschläge zu 1 Tür mit Rahmen, luftdicht mit Spion für Gaskammer*) to be installed at "disinfestation chamber, KL Auschwitz" (*Entwesungskammer K.L. Auschwitz*).[41] It is therefore clear that the order of June 17, 1943, concerned a disinfestation chamber as well.

Pressac takes items 8 and 9 to constitute parts of the same device, and it therefore makes no sense to count them separately. To all this, Pressac applies the curious procedure of counting as separate any repeated reference to the same items. Items 13 and 14, on the other hand, are not even two references to the same item, but two instances of the same order taken from two separate registers: "work orders of *Zentralbauleitung"* (*Bestellscheine der Zentralbauleitung*) and the succeeding one (which assembled various orders contained in this register) of the "metal workshop" (*Schlosserei WL*). This is true as well for items 19 and 21, which refer to the same job ("[*apply*] concrete in gas chamber") recorded on two different forms of the firm Riedel & Sohn (see chapter

[41] Excerpt from the register of orders by ZBL to Schlosserei W.L., Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 93.

5.11.). It is only on account of such manipulations that Pressac was able to boost his list up to 39 items.

If we actually eliminate the false items mentioned and group the repetitions under one heading, the "criminal traces" can be reduced to a total of *nine*. The following table gives their designation and the respective place on Pressac's list:

Designation		Item no.
1.	Vergasungskeller	1
2.	Gasprüfer	2
3.	Gastür	3, 6, 11, 13, 14, 23, 26, 29
3a.	Gasdichte Tür	7, 15, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 32
4.	Auskleideraum	4, 10
4a.	Auskleidekeller	5, 12
5.	Drahtnetzeinschiebvorrichtung	8
5a.	Holzblenden	9
6.	Brausen	10
7.	Gasdichte Fenstern	18, 20, 17[42]
8.	Gas[s]kammer	19, 21
9.	Warmluftzuführungsanlage	30, 31

After his search in the Moscow archives, Pressac added another six items:

10. Elimination of the slide for the corpses
11. *Sonderkeller* (special basement)
12. *Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung* (implementation of special treatment)
13. *Sperrgebiet* (off-limits zone)
14. *Holzgebläse* (wooden blower)
15. *Normalgaskammer* (normal gas chamber)

Furthermore, Pressac lists a series of secondary criminal traces which I shall examine in chapter 3.

Van Pelt's own contribution to this collection has been exceedingly small: he has brought in a single new "criminal trace": a document referring to "*Verbrennung mit gleichzeitiger Sonderbehandlung*" (incinceration with simultaneous special treatment) in the *Aktenvermerk* of

[42] The index has 12 gas-tight "doors" 30 by 40 cm; they are obviously windows.

SS-Unterscharführer Heinrich Swoboda dated January 29, 1943,[43] which I shall discuss in chapter 6.3.

1.6. Chronological Sequence of the "Traces" and Its Significance.

As early as 1994 I had noticed oddities in the assembly of "traces" presented by Pressac, which no historian has since looked at more closely. By this I mean the fact that all the "criminal traces" are concentrated in the construction phase of the crematoria. If we arrange them by their dates, the items can be grouped chronologically as listed in Table 1 for the four crematoria.

It is conspicuous that no suspicious reference to Crematorium II is dated later than the hand-over of the building from ZBL to the camp administration (March 31, 1943). If we follow Pressac, this building is said to have served as (p. 183):

> *"a homicidal gas chamber and incineration installation from 15th March 1943, before its officially coming into service on 31st March, to 27th November 1944, annihilating a total of approximate-*

Table 1: Chronology of Alleged "Criminal Traces" at Auschwitz

CREMATORIUM II		CREMATORIUM III		CREMATORIA IV AND V	
*Completion:** Mar. 19, '43		June 24, 1943		V: Mar. 19, '43; IV: Apr. 4, '43	
Item no.	*Date [d/m/y]*	*Item no.*	*Date [d/m/y]*	*Item no.*	*Date [d/m/y]*
1	29/1/1943	10	6/3/1943	17	13/2/1943
2	2/3/1943	11	31/3/1943	17a	13/2/1943
3	6/3/1943	15	31/3/1943	23	15/2/1943
4	6/3/1943	12	14/4/1943	22	18/2/1943
30	6/3/1943	13	16/4/1943	24	19/2/1943
5	8-13/3/1943	16	24/6/1943	17b	24/2/1943
31	25/3/1943	14	16/4/1944	20	28/2/1943
6	31/3/1943			19	2/3/1943
7	31/3/1943			21	2/3/1943
8	31/3/1943			18	28/3/1943
9	31/3/1943			25	31/3/1943
				28	6/4/1943
				26	16/4/1943
				27	16/4/1943
* Date of acceptance transaction				29	17/4/1943

[43] Aktenvermerk by SS-Unterscharführer Swoboda of January 29, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 196.

ly 400,000 people, most of them Jewish women, children and old men."

While it is true that Pressac has later reduced this number drastically, it is also true that van Pelt assigns to this installation 500,000 victims (2002, pp. 68, 458, 469). This means that this alleged gas chamber would have operated for more than 20 months and caused the death of some 500,000 persons without generating even a scrap of a "criminal trace" during its operation!

For Crematorium III no trace is dated later than the hand-over date of this installation either (June 24, 1943). According to Pressac, 350,000 persons were gassed and cremated here (p. 183). The latest trace for Crematoria IV and V is dated only a couple of weeks after the hand-over of the last installation (April 4, 1943). Pressac tells us that 21,000 persons met their death and were cremated in these two crematoria (p. 236). Hence, 771,000 persons are said to have been gassed in these four crematoria over a period of more than 20 months without leaving anything like a "criminal trace" in the archive of ZBL (see chapter 15.5), whereas there is a multitude of documents attesting to the frequent breakdowns occurring in the cremation devices (see chapter 8.8.1.).

To this we must also add the fact that there is not the slightest "criminal trace" for the early alleged homicidal gassings – not only for the first alleged gassing in the basement of block 11 and for the experimental ones in crematorium 1 of the main camp (*Stammlager*), but also for the mass gassings in the so-called "bunkers" of Birkenau which, supposedly and according to van Pelt, went on for some 15 months and led to the annihilation of "over 200,000 Jews" (p. 455).[44]

"Criminal traces" are thus totally absent for both the "testing" and the main phases of the alleged mass gassings. They are limited to the Birkenau crematoria and to their construction period. They could possibly refer to the planning and the construction of homicidal gas chambers, but certainly not to their use. Actually, as will be shown in this book, they refer to normal plans of non-criminal character, were often not implemented, and depended upon the conditions prevailing at various moments. For those reasons they in fact disappear completely from the documentation covering the period after May 1943, i.e. the time when the new project of the "special measures for the improvement of

[44] For that reason I have titled chapter 7 "The Alleged 'Criminal Traces' for the 'Bunkers' of Birkenau." Cf. the respective explanations in chapter 7.1.

the hygienic conditions" at Birkenau was implemented. Actually, the "criminal traces" for Crematorium III have not only no nefarious significance, but were part and parcel of those very measures.

1.7. Fundamental Contradictions

On the basis of his "criminal traces," Pressac proposes a model for the alleged mass gassings which, however, turns out to be historically unfounded. Pressac himself formulates the first objection to be raised (p. 184):

> *"It may appear surprising that the 'industrial' extermination of Jews at Auschwitz-Birkenau was planned and put into practice so late: planned between June and August 1942 and actually implemented between March and June 1943 by the entry into service of the four Krematorien."*

The matter is all the more surprising, as Höss declared explicitly to have been given Himmler's order to exterminate the Jews at Auschwitz in June 1941. Under the date of March 1946 he stated in his own handwriting and signed that:[45]

> *"I personally arranged on orders received from Himmler in May 1941 the gassing of two million persons between June/July 1941 and the end of 1943 during which time I was commandant of Auschwitz."*

But if Himmler had really decided to make Auschwitz the center of the extermination of the Jews as early as May or June 1941, why were the four crematoria later built without any homicidal gas chambers? In his second book Pressac answered this embarrassing question by pushing back Höss's alleged meeting with Himmler in Berlin by one year – which, however, would still have been earlier than the beginning of construction of any of the new crematoria.[46] In doing so, though, he created a long list of historical anachronisms and contradictions, which invalidate this re-dating from the very start.

Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, on the other hand, retain Höss's date while asserting, however, that Himmler did not order the Auschwitz Kommandant to implement the Jewish extermination at that

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[45] NO-1210; PS-3868. Photocopy of the note in: Lord Russell 1954, outside the text between pp. 180f.

[46] The contract with the civilian firm Huta to build the first crematorium in Birkenau (Crematorium II) was signed only on July 29, 1942, as Pressac writes himself (1989, p. 187).

time, but only to prepare extermination installations.[47] But for whom? This is what the two authors have to say about the matter (p. 282):

> *"Hitler had made it clear that, if revolution was attempted during this war as it had been at the close of the last war, the participants and camp inmates were to be killed in extermination installations in the concentration camps."*

Hence, when Himmler ordered Höss to come to Berlin, he allegedly did nothing but anticipate the *Führer's* wishes. I will not dwell on the ramifications of this fanciful hypothesis, which will be discussed further on in this study (chapter 18.4.), and will limit myself to van Pelt's claim that the decision to exterminate the Jews at Auschwitz was made by Himmler sometime in mid-July 1942 and that "the camp architects got the order to design crematoria equipped from the outset with homicidal gas chambers on August 20, 1942." (van Pelt 2002, p. 80) Needless to say that this assertion is entirely gratuitous and lacks any evidence in the sources.

Pressac's main thesis of a subsequent transformation of crematorium 2 in a criminal sense leads to irresolvable contradictions as well, though. He asserts (1993, p. 53f.):

> *"The various steps and meetings which had led to these two days, during which the construction of the four Birkenau crematoria was definitively decided – at the time still without any gas chambers – can be summarized as follows: even though Crematorium II had served as a catalyst in the choice of Auschwitz for the liquidation of the Jews, it is not directly linked to that extermination, but is considered as a useful means that happened to be available. Crematorium III was only a complement to Crematorium II; it was built in the light of the 200,000 (expected) detainees and was 'criminalized' only because of the needs of the SS-bureaucracy. Crematoria IV and V, designed without much fuss, are linked directly to bunkers 1 and 2, and even if their initial layout was not criminal (no gas chambers), their destination was, as they marked the end of a killing process of which they were part."*

Pressac asserts that Crematorium III had a "sanitary vocation" (1993, p. 50), as did Crematorium II, the direct mirror image of which it was. He states moreover that Crematoria II and III were not designed for homicidal gassings (1993, p. 63). On the other hand, Crematoria IV

[47] Dwork/van Pelt, pp. 277-282.

and V were "linked to bunkers 1 and 2" (1993, p. 50), they stood "in connection with bunkers 1 and 2" (1993, p. 54).

Thus, initially Crematoria II and III had a normal sanitary and hygienic function, whereas Crematoria IV and V, although devoid of homicidal gas chambers, had a criminal function, because they incinerated the corpses of the gassed from "bunkers" 1 and 2. Aside from the fact that the so-called "bunkers" never existed as extermination sites – I have demonstrated this elsewhere in a specific study (2004i) – Pressac's thesis leads to the nonsensical conclusion that the ZBL engineers at Auschwitz specified 30 muffles (with an alleged daily capacity of 2,880 corpses) for the normal, sanitary needs of the camp and only 16 muffles (with an alleged daily capacity of 1,536 corpses) for the mass exterminations, and thus allegedly expected the "natural" mortality of the camp to be twice as high as the mortality stemming from mass exterminations!

Another nonsensical consequence is that, although Auschwitz had allegedly been chosen by Himmler to be the center of mass exterminations precisely because of the new crematorium with its alleged capacity of 1,440 corpses per day (1993, p. 41), the ZBL engineers, rather than using this crematorium and its future twin, Crematorium III, as the main tools for this extermination, fell back on two other crematoria with significantly lower capacities.

Furthermore, the crematoria's mode of operation and their equipment are irreconcilable with Pressac's basic tenets. This applies especially to the ventilation system of *Leichenkeller* 1 and 2 of Crematoria II and III, to the transportation system for moving corpses from the morgues in the half-basements to the furnace hall on the ground floor of these buildings, and to the claimed gassing procedure of Crematoria IV and V, which will be discussed in their general context in chapter 4.[48]

1.8. The Ventilation System of Crematories II and III

Pressac states that the initial ventilation system planned for the new crematorium (the future Crematorium II) consisted of

- a ventilator (in pressure) no. 450 for the "B-Keller" (the future *Leichenkeller* 1) with a capacity of 4,800 m³/hr (Pressac 1993, p. 41)
- a ventilator (in suction) no. 450 for the "B-Keller" with a capacity of 4,800 m³/hr

[48] Cf. in this respect Mattogno 1994b, pp. 59-63.

- a ventilator (in suction) no. 550 for the "L-Keller" (the future *Leichenkeller* 2) with a capacity of 10,000 m³/hr.

Pressac goes on to say that the capacity of the blowers was subsequently raised to

- ventilator (in pressure) for "B-Keller": 8,000 m³/hr
- ventilator (in suction) for "B-Keller": 8,000 m³/hr
- ventilator (in suction) for "L-Keller": 13,000 m³/hr.

The purpose is said to have been an increase in the number of air exchanges for the alleged gas chamber over those of the alleged undressing hall. Pressac states that *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematoria II and III was equipped with blowers having a capacity of 8,000 m³/hr (1993, p. 74, 118) and cites as proof invoice no. 729 of May 27, 1943, concerning the ventilation system of Crematorium III (*ibid*., note 184, p. 105). He insinuates that the increase in the ventilation capacity from 4,000 to 8,000 m³/hr was decided on in order to compensate for the arrangement of the ventilation ducts which had been planned and built for an ordinary morgue. In his opinion the arrangement was unsuitable for a homicidal gas chamber, because it had the aeration section near the ceiling and the de-aeration near the floor. With respect to the "*Gasprüfer*" (see chapter 2.6.) he states that "the SS wanted to find out whether the capacity of the ventilation for *Leichenkeller* 1 would have compensated its original arrangement, with the aeration on top and the de-aeration down below, as in a morgue, whereas a gas chamber would have required the reverse, an aeration below and a de-aeration above" (1993, p. 71f.).

These are actually mere conjectures, refuted by the documents. The Topf invoice no. 729 quoted by Pressac, dated May 27, 1943,[49] does in fact provide for the "*B-Raum*," the alleged homicidal gas chamber, one ventilator in suction and one in pressure with capacities of 4,800 m³/hr, and for the "*L-Raum*," the alleged undressing room for the victims, a ventilator in suction with a capacity of 10,000 m³/hr. Identical ventilation capacities are given also in the invoice no. 171 of February 22, 1943, for the ventilation system of Crematorium II.[50]

Two conclusions refuting the thesis of the transformation of these rooms in a criminal sense derive from these facts. The first one concerns the number of air exchanges in the two rooms. *Leichenkeller* 1 measured 30 m in length, 7 m in width and 2.41 m in height, giving it a

[49] RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 16 and 16a. Cf. document 1.
[50] RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 25 and 25a. Cf. document 2.

total surface area of 210 m² and a volume of 506 m³, without taking into account the small volume occupied by the concrete beams and pillars. *Leichenkeller* 2 was 49.49 m long, 7.93 m wide and 2.30 m high, yielding a surface area of 392.5 m² and a volume of 902.7 m³, again without beams and pillars. Hence, for the alleged homicidal gas chamber the ZBL engineers had planned on (4,800÷506 =) 9.48 exchanges of their entire air volume per hour and on (10,000÷902.7 =) 11 changes per hour for the alleged undressing room – which means that the gas chamber would have been less well ventilated than the undressing room.

The second conclusion is that the number of air exchanges was what applied to normal morgues, if not lower. In Heepke's classical work on the design of crematoria it is said that morgues require at least 5 exchanges of air per hour, even 10 in case of intensive use.[51] But Topf themselves had specified on December 9, 1940, for the morgue of Crematorium I, 20 exchanges of air per hour:[52]

> *"For the autopsy room, we have decided on 10 exchanges of air and for the corpse cell on 20 exchanges of air."*

For the disinfestation chambers using hydrogen cyanide in the *Degesch-Kreislauf* system a full 72 air exchanges per hour had been specified.[53]

As I have shown in another book, Richard Green and Jamie McCarthy, advisors to van Pelt, at first tried to prove this demonstration wrong by using a silly trick. They had accused me of having "misrepresented" the capacity of the ventilation system in Crematoria II and III by writing 4,800 instead of 8,000 m³/hr, even though in the book reviewed by them I had reproduced the two originals which give the capacity of the blowers to be 4,800 m³/hr (1994b, pp. 110-113). In the end they had to admit, albeit reluctantly, that the documents showed I was right (see Mattogno 2006a, pp. 73-77).

This, however, has not kept van Pelt from using Green and McCarthy's wrong capacity of the ventilators of 8,000 m³/hr in his effort to

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[51] Heepke 1905b, p. 104 (page reproduced in Mattogno 1994b, p. 114; G. Rudolf 2005, pp. 117-186).

[52] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung at Auschwitz if December 9, 1940 concerning a "Entlüftungsanlage für Leichenzellen und Sezierraum." RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 136.

[53] Degesch (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingsbekämpfung) was the distributor of Zyklon B via two daughter companies, Heli (Heerdt und Lingler) and Testa (Tesch & Stabenow); for their disinfestation device see Peters/Wüstinger, pp. 194f. (pages reproduced in Mattogno 1994b, pp. 115f.).

"demonstrate," on the basis of a table, that the ventilation system could "quickly remove the gas." (2002, p. 365f.)

But the problem is less one of efficiency than one of design: the fact that even after their alleged transformation into something criminal the ventilation system of the two *Leichenkeller* in Crematoria II and III stayed what it had been when planned for two normal morgues and the fact that the alleged undressing hall was ventilated more strongly than the alleged homicidal gas chamber contrast glaringly with such an alleged transformation.

1.9. The Freight Elevators of Crematoria II and III

1.9.1. The History of the Freight Elevators of Crematoria II & III

Within the framework of an assumed mass extermination, the freight elevators of Crematoria II and III would have had a particular significance, as they would have constituted the first bottleneck for such a process (the second one being the cremation capacity of the ovens). According to the initial plans, Crematoria II and III were to be equipped with freight elevators described as follows in the order given to Topf on February 28, 1943, by ZBL:[54]

> *"2 compl. electrical elevator machines incl. electric motors for three-phase 220/380 V, 7.5 HP each, special design, with overload protectors, limit switches, braking devices, platforms 2.10×1.35× 1.80 m with safety device, otherwise as per above mentioned cost estimate at 9,371 RM each = 18,742 RM.*
>
> *1 patented Demag electro lift for 750 kg capacity, single cable, to be raised to 1500 kg capacity by addition of second cable, at 968 RM. This Demag electro lift must be supplied at once, as it will have to be used pending the arrival of the elevators mentioned in item 1."*

Delivery for the first position was to be about seven months. Pressac shows drawing 5037 which was attached to the cost estimate. It had been established by *Gustav Linse Spezialfabrik f. Aufzüge* of Erfurt on January 25, 1943, and has the title "*Lasten-Aufzug bis 750 kg Tragkraft für Zentralbauleitung der Waffen SS, Auschwitz/O.S.*" (freight elevator up to 750 kg capacity for *Zentralbauleitung der Waffen SS, Auschwitz/O.S.*; Pressac 1993, document 25). This freight elevator was installed only in Crematorium III, between May 17 and June 6, 1943, by

[54] Letter from Zentralbauleitung to Topf of February 28, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 69.

the Topf engineer Heinrich Messing (Pressac 1989, p. 371). In Crematorium II, a very crude makeshift elevator was installed which was ordered from *Schlosserei WL* on February 15, 1943. The order reads as follows (Höss trial, vol. 11, pp. 82f.):

> *"February 15, 1943, PoW camp,*[55] *Crematorium I, BW 30. Object 1 flat-plate elevator for min. 300 kg payload incl. installation of respective reel device, cable and motor as well as guide-rail. Order no. 2563/:146:/ of January 26, 1943 from Zentralbauleitung. Order taken over from former detainee metal workshop, terminated March 13, 1943."*

As can be seen from a Polish photograph of 1945 presented by Pressac, this elevator was very primitive (photo 20, p. 488). It had to be repaired right away by Messing on April 12, 1943, who needed 11 hours for the job,[56] but it still worked poorly. On July 23, 1943, Topf wrote a letter to ZBL in which we can read:[57]

> *"In the recent telephone conversation with your site superintendent, Sturmbannführer Bischoff, the latter stated that the elevator in Crematorium II, as well, has been giving rise to permanent problems. We have, however, not built this elevator; rather, it was assembled and installed by your own people. We are, therefore, at a loss to see how you can make us responsible for a device not built by us."*

Nonetheless, this poorly functioning elevator stayed in place until the end. The order for the two definitive freight elevators underwent a number of changes. On May 25, 1943, Topf thanked ZBL for having checked, approved and sent on to Berlin for payment four invoices. One of these was for the *Demag-Elektrozug*, another was "Crematorium II/III. Order no. 43/145/3. [*for*] 2 electrical elevators. RM 9,391."[58]

A Topf *Aufstellung* (list), dated July 2, 1943, referring to the above order, shows a first down-payment of 9,371 RM, half the total amount (18,742 RM) ("1. *Anzahlungs-Hälfte von RM 18,742… RM 9,371*"), but a handwritten entry by Jährling states that the down-payment had only

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[55] KGL – Kriegsgefangenenlager: camp for prisoners of war. Official designation of the Birkenau camp through March 31, 1944, when it was designated "Lager II Birkenau." Kirschneck's note for the file dated March 31, 1944. AGK, NTN, 94, p.60.

[56] "Bauwerk 30 Kr II Fahrstuhl repariert": Arbeits-Bescheinigung Messing for the period 12-18 April 1943. RGVA, 502-1-306, p. 93a. Cfr. Pressac 1989, p. 370.

[57] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 29.

[58] RGVA,502-1327, p. 83.

amounted to 1,876.43 RM.[59] However, the freight-elevators had not yet been supplied and even ran the risk of never being actually delivered. On August 4, 1943, more than five months after the order for these devices, Topf informed ZBL that the manufacturing permit for them had not yet been granted:

> *"We have learned today from our sub-supplier that the Plenipotentiary for machine construction has not yet granted the construction permit. The application has been forwarded to the Reich minister for armaments and munitions* [Albert Speer] *requesting his decision."*

Topf added that the Plenipotentiary for machine construction had voted against the construction of the devices, and Topf therefore asked ZBL to get in touch with the Berlin authorities in order to have the request granted, speaking of serious consequences otherwise:[60]

> *"For your information please note that our sub-supplier has already assembled the better part of the elevators. There is the danger, however, that the order has to be stopped immediately if the Reich minister for armaments and munitions does not give his approval."*

This incident is in stark disagreement with the thesis that the Birkenau crematoria were the instruments for the implementation of Himmler's extermination order: in such a case any opposition on the part of the Plenipotentiary for machinery construction would obviously have been considered sabotage.

On September 9, ZBL sent to *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Prinzl of *Amt* C V of SS-WVHA a copy of the Topf letter of August 4, with the request to get in touch with the Reich minister for armaments and munitions in order "to obtain [the approval for] the realization of the elevators urgently required."[61] On May 12, 1944, ZBL sent Topf an "urgent telegram" saying:[62]

> *"installation of the 2 elevators cannot be done now. Installation will be done later, together with installation of de-aeration equipment in 4 and 5."*

It is not clear, however, whether the two elevators were ever installed at all.

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[59] RGVA, 502-1-327, p. 74.
[60] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 19.
[61] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 78.
[62] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 10.

1.9.2. The Freight Elevators in the Irving-Lipstadt Trial

Van Pelt provides us with a long account of the discussion about the freight elevators in the Irving-Lipstadt trial (2002, p. 468f.):

> *"Irving stayed close to the brief provided by the anonymous architect. The most important discussion concerned the elevator connecting the basement to the main floor of Crematorium 2."* (Emph. added)

The brief in question contained a computation of the time needed to transport 2,000 passengers, "assuming a carrying capacity of 200 kilos." The time was stated to be 4 hours and 48 minutes for live persons, but transporting corpses would obviously have taken twice or three times as long, and the slightest mishap would have blocked the whole sequence of gassings and incinerations (p. 469). Van Pelt then describes his own reactions (*ibid*.):

> *"I had read this reasoning the night before and had found that one of its flaws was the assumption that the elevator could only have carried 200 kilos. In fact, I had a copy of a document from February 1943 stipulating that the carrying capacity of the elevator should be doubled from 750 kilos to 1,500 kilos. Taking the calculation of the anonymous architect as his point of departure, Irving presented the elevator as the crucial bottleneck in the whole operation."* (Emph. added)

Then van Pelt shows an excerpt from the trial records which contains two of his replies (p. 470):

> *"They immediately asked to increase the carrying capacity of that elevator by providing extra cables to 1,500 kilos."*
>
> *"The 750 kilograms was installed by the time the building was finished and immediately they asked to double the capacity."* (Emph. added)

During the trial, van Pelt assumed an average weight of 60 kg per corpse, which means that the elevator could accommodate 25 bodies at a time (p. 470, 472). Van Pelt concluded (p. 470):

> *"Irving did not return to the carrying capacity. It was clear to me that an important assumption on which he planned his attack* [sic] *had been proven wrong."*

Van Pelt's reply is based on a historically false hypothesis. As I have shown in the preceding section, the "*Demag-Elektrozug für 750 kg*

Tragkraft" was not installed in Crematorium II, but only in Crematorium III.

Van Pelt asserts moreover that the SS "immediately asked" for the capacity of the elevators to be doubled to 1,500 kg and then assumes that this was actually done, because he speaks of 25 bodies being moved at one time (p. 472). But the document he mentions says only that the capacity of 750 kg "is being [or will be] brought to a capacity of 1,500 kg by the installation of the second cable," which is an indication of intent at best, but certainly not a specific request – and even less the realization of such an intent. Nothing tells us, in fact, that the capacity of the elevators was ever actually doubled.

The most serious matter, however, is van Pelt's complete silence about the fact that the freight elevator installed in Crematorium II was the "*Plateauaufzug*" (flat-plate elevator) with a capacity of 300 kg. Therefore an extermination of 500,000 people in Crematorium II would have been implemented using this primitive and poorly functioning device. As its capacity was 300 kg or an average of 5 bodies of 60 kg at a time, the elevator would have had to do a total of 200,000 runs, 100,000 up and 100,000 down!

If we assume an average duration of five minutes for one complete operation (loading, upward journey, unloading, downward journey) the transportation of 2,000 bodies from the half-basement to the furnace hall (the hypothesis discussed by Irving, see van Pelt 2002, p. 470) would have taken ([2,000÷5]×5 =) 2,000 minutes or some 33 hours. Such an average duration, which corresponds to 1 minute for the transit time up and down[63] and 4 minutes for the loading and unloading of the bodies (i.e. an average of 24 seconds for loading and another 24 seconds for unloading one corpse), is definitely too short for two reasons:

First of all, the elevator worked poorly, therefore one has to allow for lost time due to breakdowns, blockages, and delays. Secondly, according to the witness Henry Tauber, in Crematorium II (and III) four detainees were assigned to the elevator, two for loading, and two for unloading, they worked in 12-hour shifts (Tauber 1945a, p. 9). Even if we assume, for the time being, an average transit time of 5 minutes per load, these detainees, by mid-shift, i.e. after 6 hours, would have handled and moved ([6×60÷5×300] =) 21,600 kg, and the increasing strain would have reduced their efficiency more and more.

[63] Van Pelt's anonymous engineer assumed a duration of 30 seconds but, surprisingly, considered only the upward journey of the elevator. Van Pelt 2002, p. 469.

It is thus clear that the average transit time for one load was higher, which makes the alleged movement of 500,000 corpses even more grotesque. As the maximum number of days during which Crematorium II was operational was 433, the elevator would have had to perform (500,000÷5÷433=) 231 trips per operating day, each of which would have required on average (1,440÷231=) a little over 6 minutes (i.e. 1 minute for each round trip and 30 seconds each for loading and unloading each corpse), without interruption over 433 days (see chapter 8.8.1.), 24 hours a day – a truly absurd idea!

In conclusion, the freight elevator is in perfect agreement with the *actual* number of cremations, something like 20,000 for Crematorium II, but is absolutely out of proportion when it comes to the gigantic figures of a mass extermination cited by van Pelt.

2. The "Criminal Traces" for Crematorium II

2.1. "*Vergasungskeller*" – Gassing Cellar

2.1.1. The Importance of the Indication

The word "Vergasungskeller" (gassing cellar) occurs only in the letter written by ZBL to *SS-Brigadeführer* Hans Kammler, *Amtsgruppenchef C* of SS-WVHA, dated January 29, 1943, and concerning "*Krematorium II, Bauzustand*" (Crematorium II, state of advancement). Its translation reads as follows:[64]

> *"Crematorium II has been completed, except for minor details, by using all available manpower, in spite of extreme difficulties and severe frost and by running day and night shifts. The ovens were fired up in the presence of senior engineer Prüfer of the contracting firm, Messrs. Topf & Söhne of Erfurt, and function perfectly. The planking of the reinforced concrete ceiling of the corpse cellar could not yet be stripped because of the effect of frost. This is, however, of no importance, because the gassing cellar can be used for this instead.*
>
> *On account of freight restrictions, Topf & Söhne have as yet been unable to supply in time the aeration and de-aeration system as requested by Zentralbauleitung. On arrival of the aeration and de-aeration equipment installation will proceed immediately, and it is expected that the unit will be ready for operation on February 20, 1943.*
>
> *A report by the test engineer of Messrs. Topf & Söhne, Erfurt, is attached."*

It is well known that, even prior to Pressac, holocaust historiography had taken the term "*Vergasungskeller*" appearing in the letter to be an indication, if not an outright proof, of the existence of a homicidal gas chamber in Crematorium II. Pressac himself was opposed to this interpretation and wrote (p. 503):

> *"To affirm, solely on the basis of the letter of January 29, 1943 that the term 'Vergasungskeller' designated a homicidal gas chamber installed in Leichenkeller 1/corpse cellar 1 of Krematorium II,*

[64] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 100. Cf. document 3.

was irresponsible, for though 'gas chamber' was correct, there was no proof that it was 'homicidal'."

and even on the basis of the documents, which allow the *Vergasungskeller* to be identified as *Leichenkeller* 1, the only plausible conclusion is the following (*ibid*.):

"The existence of a gas chamber in the basement of Krematorium II is thus proven, BUT THAT IS ALL." (Pressac's emph.)

In purely logical terms, this document does not even demonstrate the *existence* of a gas chamber, but only a mere *project*, the realization of which depended on the shipment of the ventilation equipment.

2.1.2. The Historical Context

Bischoff's letter of January 29, 1943, is one of the documents around which there is a documental void, as can be seen clearly from the general historical context.

On December 28, 1942, Himmler ordered a lowering of the camp mortalities in the concentration camps to be aimed for with the highest priority. The same day, *SS-Brigadeführer* Richard Glücks, head of *Amtsgruppe D* at SS-WVHA, addressed a letter to the physicians in the concentration camps concerning "Medical activity in the concentration camps."[65] On January 20, 1943, on Himmler's orders, Glücks became active again in this matter, writing to the concentration camp commanders that they should "try to lower the mortality rate in the camp by all available means" and made the camp commanders and the heads of the administration personally responsible "for the exhaustion of any and all means toward the maintenance of the working ability of the detainees" (NO-1523).

Concerning Auschwitz, on January 11, 1943, Kammler realized that it was impossible for the construction of the crematoria to be terminated on schedule[66] and hence ordered Bischoff to keep him informed of the progress by weekly telex reports.[67] The first report was drawn up by Bischoff and sent to Kammler on January 23. With respect to Crematorium II it states:[68]

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[65] AGK, NTN, 94, pp. 142-143.

[66] Crematorium II started up on January 31st, Crematorium III on March 31st, and Crematorium IV on February 28, 1943.

[67] Letter from Kammler to Zentralbauleitung of January 11, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 59.

[68] Bericht Nr. 1 of Zentralbauleitung of January 23, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 54.

"Cellar I. Plastering finished. Aeration and de-aeration channels set into brickwork. Machinery parts from Messrs. Topf not yet arrived."

All later reports have been lost. As can be seen from its *Bezug* (reference), Bischoff's letter of January 29, 1943, was the reply to a telex no. 2648 from Kammler of the day before, which has also been lost. Up until that time, there is not the least reference in the ZBL files to use *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II for any "*Vergasung*," which means that the matter must have been discussed between January 24 and 28. The letter of January 29 signifies, in fact, that Kammler knew the matter well and had either ordered the "*Vergasungskeller*" or approved a proposal by Bischoff. The conclusion is that all documents which could have shed light on the matter, seem to have disappeared, to put it mildly.

2.1.3. The Significance of the Document

In the letter Bischoff states that it had been impossible to remove the planking of the concrete ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 2 because of frost, but that this was of no importance, because "*hierfür*" (for this) the "*Vergasungskeller*" could be used. Practically, the "*Vergasungskeller*" could take over the function of "*Leichenkeller* 2," which could not have been that of an undressing hall for the victims. Because if, in fact, it is assumed that the function of "*Leichenkeller* 2" was that of an undressing hall for the victims and that of "*Vergasungskeller*" a homicidal gas chamber, how could a homicidal gas chamber simultaneously function as an undressing hall? It is, of course, possible to argue that a homicidal gas chamber could well be used as an undressing hall at the same time, but then why did ZBL build – as we have heard from Tauber and Pressac – an alleged barrack in front of the crematorium as an undressing hall for the victims? (See chapter 2.3.)

It is essential to stress that the matter had a strictly limited character and was valid only as long as "*Leichenkeller* 2" was not operational: the "*Vergasungskeller*" could be used "*hierfür*," i.e. as a morgue ("*Leichenkeller*") on January 29, 1943, and on the days immediately following. Yet since during this period, as Bischoff states in the above letter, Topf had not yet shipped the "aeration and de-aeration system" "on account of freight restrictions," the "*Vergasungskeller*" could not have been operational as a homicidal gas chamber. The interpretation of official his-

toriography – the undressing room for the victims is not operational but that is of no importance, because the homicidal gas chamber could be used for this purpose – is thus nonsensical *a fortiori*: if the alleged homicidal gas chamber was not operational, why should it be used as an undressing hall for victims? And victims of what, if the homicidal gas chamber did not work?

In conclusion, we can say that the victims could not undress in "*Leichenkeller* 2" because the room was not operational. While they could undress in the "*Vergasungskeller*," they could not be gassed there, as the ventilation system had not yet arrived. Therefore, the "*Vergasungskeller*" must have had some other function.

2.1.4. The Function of the "*Vergasungskeller*"

When things are considered calmly, it becomes obvious that the explanation of Bischoff's letter is quite different: "*Leichenkeller* 2" could not be used as a morgue and/or an undressing hall for the registered detainees who had died of "natural" causes, because it was not ready for use, but that was of no importance, because the corpses could be placed into the "*Vergasungskeller*." What remains to be clarified is the essential question: why was "*Leichenkeller* 2" called "*Vergasungskeller*"?

The alleged transformations of the half-basement of Crematorium II toward criminal ends is said to have begun at a time when the typhus epidemic that had broken out in July 1942 had not yet been stamped out. The mortality among the detainees had clearly decreased, but still stood at a high level: there were about 8,600 deaths in August, some 4,500 in September, around 4,100 in November, 4,600 in December, and roughly 4,500 in January 1943.[69]

On January 9, 1943, Bischoff wrote Kammler a letter concerning "*Hygienische Einrichtungen im K.L. und K.G.L. Auschwitz"* (hygienic installations at KL and PoW camp Auschwitz) in which he listed all disinfestation and disinfection installations available at the time: five units at KL Auschwitz and four at KGL Birkenau. The letter ends with the following observations:[70]

> *"As can be seen from the foregoing, the hygienic installations are essentially sufficient; in particular, once the barrack for the contin-*

[69] Statistical evaluation of the Auschwitz *Sterbebücher* (death books) by the author.
[70] RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 46-46a.

uous treatment of the civilian workers is ready, a large number of persons can be deloused and disinfested at any time."

However, in the days that followed, the hot-air disinfestation device (*Heißluftapparat*) in *block* 1 of the main camp, built by Topf & Söhne Co., the *Heißluftapparat* in the "men's and women's disinfestation barracks of KGL," i.e. the *Entlausungsbaracken* BW 5a and 5b, built by the Hochheim Co., and also the one of the troop disinfestation unit broke down because of fires. These mishaps occurred at a time, when the typhus epidemic had not yet been brought under control.

On December 17, 1942, Bischoff wrote to "*Wehrmeldeamt Sachgeb. W*" (military registry office, dept. W) at Bielitz:[71]

"In reply to your inquiry of December 8., 1942, Zentralbauleitung informs that it is unlikely the camp quarantine can be lifted over the next three months. While all available means have been mobilized to fight the epidemic efficiently, fresh cases have not been squashed completely."

The same day, Bischoff sent the following letter to the camp commander:[72]

"In accordance with the order issued by the garrison surgeon, the first delousing and/or disinfestation of the civilian workers is to be carried out on Saturday, December 19, 1942. In this connection it is necessary for the disinfestation units in the KL to be made available. This also goes for the individual delousings for the civilian workers scheduled to begin on December 22, 1942. Your approval is requested."

By "*Standortbefehl Nr.1/43*" (local order) of January 8, 1943, the Auschwitz commander informed (Frei et al., p. 208):

"The head of Amt D III[73] *informed by radio message of January 4, 1943, that the camp quarantine for KL Auschwitz will be maintained as before."*

On January 5, 1943, cases of typhus were diagnosed in the police jail of Myslowitz (some 20 km north of Auschwitz), spreading rapidly among the prisoners. The local government representative (*Regierungspräsident*) for the district who had his office at Kattowitz suggested

71 RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 113.
72 RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 47.
73 Sanitätswesen und Lagerhygiene, headed by SS-Obersturmführer Lolling.

to send the patients to Auschwitz. In a letter to the camp commander he wrote:[74]

> *"I am also quite aware of the fact that these new prisoners may introduce new cases of infection into the Auschwitz camp. As, on the other hand, typhus in the Auschwitz camp is far from having died down and large-scale protective measures have been taken there, I find myself prompted to suggest this."*

On January 13 Höss replied that there were only a few isolated cases of typhus ("*einzelne Fleckfieberfälle*") still diagnosed in the camp, but it was no longer an epidemic (*"besteht die Fleckfieberepidemie nicht"*). He refused the proposal of the *Regierungspräsident*, because with the arrival of sick inmates the resurgence of an epidemic would have been a great danger.[75]

The Kattowitz *Polizeipräsident*, however, ordered the corpses of prisoners having died of typhus in the Myslowitz jail to be moved to Auschwitz by hearse to be incinerated there, after having been treated with a disinfestation liquid and placed in a coffin.[76] The hygienic and sanitary situation at Auschwitz was not as reassuring as Höss described it. On January 25, 1943, in the "*Hausverfügung Nr. 86*" (local decree) Bischoff ordered:[77]

> *"On the basis of a disposition by the SS garrison surgeon at KL Auschwitz, all members of the SS, presently housed in the Bauleitung housing barrack, will undergo a 3 week quarantine."*

During January 1943 a resurgence of the typhus epidemic was observed, which reached its peak during the first ten days of February and prompted *SS-Brigadeführer* Glücks to order drastic measures to be taken. (See chapter 2.6.3.)

Let us return to the "*Vergasungskeller*." In the light of what we have just described, the most reasonable scenario is that toward the end of January 1943 the SS authorities, desperate to get the typhus epidemic under control, planned to use *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II temporarily as a gas chamber employing hydrogen cyanide. The name "*Ver-*

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[74] Letter from Regierungspräsident in Kattowitz to commander of KL Auschwitz of January 9, 1943. APK, RK 2903, p. 10.

[75] "weil damit die Gefahr des neuerlichen Auftretens einer Fleckfieberepidemie sehr gross würde," letter from commander of Auschwitz to Polizeipräsident Kattowitz, January 13, 1943. APK, RK 2903, p. 20.

[76] Letter from Polizeipräsident in Kattowitz to Regierungspräsident in Kattowitz of January 21, 1943. APK, RK 2903, p. 22. Cf. chapter 2.6.3.

[77] RGVA, 502-1-17, p. 98.

gasungskeller" (gassing cellar) was obviously taken over from the hydrogen cyanide gas chambers of BW 5a and 5b which were also named "*Vergasungsraum*" (gassing room).[78]

The initiative probably came from *Amtsgruppe C* of SS-WVHA. This is supported by the fact that at the end of January *Amt C/III* (*Technische Fachgebiete*) (technical departments) of *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt* (SS-WVHA) had requested a cost estimate from the Hans Kori Co. of Berlin for a "*Heißluft-Entwesungsanlage*" (hot-air disinfestation unit) for the Auschwitz camp. Kori replied on February 2 by means of a letter addressed to the above authority concerning "*Entlausungsanlage für Konz.-Lager Auschwitz*" (Delousing unit for concentration camp Auschwitz),[79] a "list of steel quantities required for the hot-air delousing unit, Auschwitz concentration camp" for a total weight of 4,152 kg of metal[80] and a "cost estimate for a hot-air delousing unit for the Auschwitz concentration camp" for a total cost of 4,960.40 Reichsmark.[81]

On the same day, February 2, 1943, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Kother, head of *Hauptabteilung C/VI/2* (*Betriebswirtschaft*) (commercial questions) undertook a "*Besichtigung der Entwesungs- und Sauna-Anlagen im KL Auschwitz*" (inspection of disinfestation and sauna units at KL Auschwitz). In the respective report, written by *SS-Standartenführer* Eirenschmalz, head of *Amt C/VI* at SS-WVHA, it is said about the "*Entwesungsanlagen*" that the hot-air equipment (*Heißluftapparate*) had initially been designed for disinfestation with hydrogen cyanide (*Blausäure-Entwesung*), which required a temperature of 30°C, but had been used for a hot-air disinfestation (*Heißluftentwesung*), which required an air temperature of 95°C. Hence those facilities had been subject to excessive heat stress they had not been designed for:[82]

> *"The arrival of many detainees, increasing day by day, results in a greater strain on the units, and the corresponding wear under conditions of continuous operation can only be countered by the installation of suitable coke fired air-heaters.*
>
> *In an effort to counter an expected break-down of the unit, cast-iron air-heaters for the existing units have been proposed to the lo-*

[78] Erläuterungsbericht zum Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S. RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 16.
[79] RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 15-15a.
[80] RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 18
[81] RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 20-21.
[82] RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 37-37a.

cal administration. On checking with the supplier, it was learned that these would be delivered in three weeks' time for the continued fight against the epidemic.

The fires that have occurred were mostly due to overheating and it is therefore urgently necessary to observe closely the technical rules pertaining to the use of such plants."

The idea to use *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II as an emergency disinfestation chamber employing hydrogen cyanide was then extended also to the other crematoria, and the respective documental traces were later interpreted by Pressac as "*bavures*" (slips) which allegedly referred to homicidal gas chambers.

There are at least two indications supporting my thesis in extant documents. The first one is the content of an undated "*Aufstellung*" (list) coming from Topf Co., which sets out the metal requirements for various installations, among them:[83]

"2 Topf disinfestation ovens for Krema II at Auschwitz PoW camp."

The second one stems from a document drawn up by VEDAG Co. (*Vereinigte Dachpappen-Fabriken Aktiengesellschaft*; United Roofing Felt Producers Ltd.) which specifies, among other things, the insulation jobs pertaining to the crematoria. It is an invoice dated July 28, 1943. Its subject is "*Auschwitz-Krematorium*" and concerns "*ausgeführte Abdichtungsarbeiten für die Entwesungsanlage*" (sealing work done for disinfestation unit).[84] It is known with certainty that the two *Entwesungsöfen* supplied by Topf were later installed in the *Zentralsauna*, but this does not prevent them from being referred to Crematorium II in the above document.

The VEDAG invoice as well concerns the hot-air disinfestation units (*Heißluft-Entwesungskammern*) installed in the *Zentralsauna*. This is borne out clearly by a technical review of the invoice done by the person in charge at ZBL, in which it is correctly attributed to "*BW 32 = Entwesungsanlage*," i.e. precisely to the *Zentralsauna*. But then why does the VEDAG invoice refer to "*Auschwitz-Krematorium*"? This heading has an obvious relationship with the Topf list of April 13, 1943, mentioned above, which concerned the "*2 Topf Entwesungsöfen für das Krema II*" ("2 Topf disinfestation ovens for *Krema* II") which were later set up in the *Zentralsauna*. The two documents establish, in any case,

[83] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 47. Cf. document 4.
[84] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 137. Cf. document 5.

a correlation between Crematorium II and disinfestation and represent the idea of a project or at least an intention on the part of ZBL to bring together, in the same building, cremation and disinfestation.

In this connection it is significant that the two hot-air disinfestation units from Topf began to be discussed precisely on January 29, 1943. Taking reference to a prior meeting involving Bischoff, *SS-Unterscharführer* Janisch, and Topf chief engineer Kurt Prüfer, Topf sent to ZBL the cost estimate for the disinfestation unit on February 5,[85] although the construction of the *Zentralsauna* building itself began only on April 30, 1943.[86]

Little more than three months into the project work of ZBL, in early May 1943, Kammler launched his program of "*Sondermassnahmen für die Verbesserung der hygienischen Einrichtungen*" (special measures for the improvement of hygiene installations) in the Birkenau camp. Subsequently all projects related to the use of rooms in the crematoria as emergency disinfestation chambers were thrown out in one swoop, and with them all "criminal traces" which are absent from May 1943 onward.

This definitive disappearance can be explained in the most natural way by the fact that the improvement program for the normal disinfestation and disinfection plants launched in May 1943 made redundant all the projects for the installation of emergency disinfestation units in the crematoria. At the end of July 1943, disinfestation and disinfection plants for a throughput of 54,000 inmates per day existed or were in various stages of progress in the complex of Auschwitz-Birkenau.[87] In view of this, the original project was abandoned in favor of installing emergency showers for the detainees in the crematoria, to be discussed in chapter 4. below.

2.1.5. Objections and Replies

Two major objections have been raised against the explanation that the "*Vergasungskeller*" was an emergency disinfestation unit, which I had proposed in a rudimentary way in 1994 (Mattogno 1994b, p. 64,

[85] Letter from Topf to Zentralbauleitung of February 5, 1943, RGVA, 502-1-336, pp. 89-90, and "Kostenanschlag über eine Entwesungs-Anlage bestehend aus 2 Öfen mit 4 Kammern" of February 5, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-27, pp. 27-30.

[86] Baubericht of the Birkenau camp of October 2, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-320, p. 7.

[87] Aufstellung über die im KL. und KGL. Auschwitz eingebauten Entwesungsanlagen, Bäder und Desinfektionsapparate, prepared by civilian employee Jährling on July 30, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 9f.

69). The first objection concerns the capacity of the suction/pressure blowers of *Leichenkeller* 1, suitable for a normal morgue (about 10 air-exchanges per hour), but much lower than that used in the *Degesch-Kreislauf* hydrogen cyanide (HCN) disinfestation chambers (72 air-exchanges per hour). While such a ventilation capacity is at odds with the hypothesis of a homicidal gas chamber, it is also at odds with a disinfestation chamber. The objection is valid for the homicidal gas chamber because *Leichenkeller* 1 was transformed – according to holocaust theses – into a *typical* gas chamber, losing its original function of a morgue and would therefore have had to be equipped at least in a manner similar to that of a typical gas chamber. According to the hypothesis which I have announced above, on the other hand, *Leichenkeller* 1 remained a typical morgue but was modified in such a way that it could *also* be used as an *emergency* disinfestation chamber.

The second objection refers to the minimal concentrations of residual cyanides found in *Leichenkeller* 1 by Fred Leuchter and by Germar Rudolf as opposed to those in the HCN disinfestation chambers found in BW 5a (see Leuchter et al. and Rudolf 2003b). If *Leichenkeller* 1 was a disinfestation chamber using HCN as well, the cyanide residues found in it walls should be considerably higher. The objection is actually based on a double hypothesis which I cannot accept, namely that 1) *Leichenkeller* 1 was transformed into a disinfestation chamber employing hydrogen cyanide and 2) that it was actually used as such. What I assert is only that ZBL launched the *project* of using *Leichenkeller* 1 as an emergency gas chamber in January 1943 and equipped it accordingly (actually, only a gas-tight door was installed), but nothing tells us that it was later actually used for disinfestation. Rudolf's investigations have shown that the cyanide residues found in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II are of an order of magnitude comparable to those found in the camp's other barracks.[88]

2.1.6. Van Pelt's Comments and Objections

The alleged "slip" regarding the term "*Vergasungskeller*" is explained by van Pelt in the following words (2002, p. 297):

> *"Historiographically, Bischoff's letter is important because it violated the general policy in the architectural office in the main camp*

[88] Rudolf 2003b, pp. 254f. The highest value found in Leichenkeller 1 was 7.2 mg/kg, in the barracks of the camp 2.7 mg/kg; the highest value found in the delousing room of BW 5a was 13,500 mg/kg.

never to use the term 'gas chamber' in documents or blueprints. The letter was drawn up hastily in response to an urgent request from Berlin for information on the progress of construction, and Bischoff did not notice the 'slip.' When the letter was archived in the crematorium dossier of the Auschwitz Zentralbauleitung, however, someone did, and marked the forbidden word 'Vergasungskeller' with a red pencil, writing on the top of the letter the words 'SS-Ustuf (F) Kirschneck!.' It was clear that Kirschneck was responsible for the slip and should be told of it."

This explanation is purely imaginary, and we shall soon see why. The reference mark in the letter is "Bftgb.Nr.: 22250/43/Bi/L.," i.e. "*Brieftagebuch* Nummer: 22250/1943/Bischoff/Lippert" (daily letter registry no. …). The civilian employee Lippert was working at the *Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers* (i.e. the PoW camp at Birkenau). Hence, the letter was dictated by Bischoff and typed by Lippert, whereas the handwritten note "*SS-Ustuf (F) Kirschneck*" merely means that Kirschneck, in his quality of *Bauleiter* of *Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz* (the main camp), was to receive a copy. In fact, Kirschneck appears on the "Verteiler" (distribution list)[89] at bottom left: "*1 SS-Ustuf Janisch u. Kirschneck, 1 Registratur (Akte Krematorium)*," which means one copy to *SS-Unterscharführer* Janisch who was head of *Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers* i.e. the Birkenau camp, one for Kirschneck as head of *Bauleitung* at the Auschwitz camp and one for the *Akte* (file) concerning the crematoria. This is all the more true, as the same handwritten note appears both in the letter written by Bischoff to Höss on February 2, 1943, to which Prüfer's report of January 29, 1943, was attached, as well as in Prüfer's report itself which does not contain the term "*Vergasungskeller*."[90]

Just as fanciful is the atmosphere imagined by van Pelt to make the "slip" believable: the alleged urgency of the request and the alleged haste of the reply. In fact, the letter in question had as a reference a "telex (*Fernschreiben*) from SS-WVHA, no. 2648 dated Jan. 28, 1943" (which has not been preserved), to which Bischoff responded in good time – the day after. The use of the telex machine by SS-WVHA was perfectly normal and does not, by itself, convey any kind of haste.

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89 This is the term used for the distribution of copies of letters to the offices concerned.

90 Letter from Bischoff to Höss of February 2, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 99. Prüfer's report of January 29, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 101. Cf. document 6.

Actually, the general context is the following: on January 11, 1943, department CV (*Zentralbauinspektion*, the central inspection office of the central construction offices) sent a letter to the Auschwitz ZBL, which Bischoff – in a letter to Kammler dated 23 January, 1943, and referring to "Auschwitz PoW camp, completion of the crematoria" (*KGL. Auschwitz. Fertigstellung der Krematorien*) and "1 telex" (*1 Fernschreiben*) – summarizes as follows:[91]

> *"By the above letter, Zentralbauleitung was ordered to send via telex separate weekly reports about the progress of work on the crematoria."*

Bischoff sent Kammler his first such report, on January 23, 1943, by telex, as instructed.

As to van Pelt's remark that "in the copy of the letter preserved in Auschwitz, only the word *Vergasungskeller* is underlined (2002, p. 454)," it apparently never occurred to him that this could have been the work of Dawidowski or judge Sehn who had already tuned their antennas to the term "*Vergasungskeller*" appearing in this letter (see chapter 1.1.). It is to be noted, furthermore, that the document in question is not the original nor a carbon copy thereof, but a retyped duplicate (*Abschrift*) prepared by *SS-Untersturmführer* Josef Pollok, at the time head of *Bauleitung Hauptwirtschaftslager der Waffen-SS und Polizei und Truppenwirtschaftslager Oderberg* (*Bauleitung* of main supply camp of *Waffen-SS* and Police and troop supply camp at Oderberg) whose signature appears on the left below the abbreviation "F.d.R.d.A." (*Für die Richtigkeit der Abschrift*=copy certified correct). There is also a copy of the copy in which the term "*Vergasungskeller*" appears likewise:[92] it also shows the handwritten entry but the only underlined words are "Berlin-Lichterfelde-West" in the address of the recipient.

How can one seriously believe that "the forbidden word" would have mindlessly been written into two separate copies of the letter without anyone noticing the "slip"? And when someone did notice, why was not a fresh duplicate of the letter made without "the forbidden word" and the tell-tale one destroyed? Instead – so van Pelt's claim – somebody even highlighted it by underlining it in red! Whichever way we look at the matter, van Pelt's conjecture comes out unsubstantiated.

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[91] Letter from Bischoff to Kammler dated January 23, 1943, RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 53

[92] APMO, BW 30/27, p. 33.

Arguing polemically against Wilhelm Stäglich, van Pelt brings up two more general objections which he formulates as follows (2002, p. 310):

> *"First of all, the rooms designed for fumigation of clothing and other objects with Zyklon B have never been referred to as Vergasungskeller. They were either called simply gas chambers (Gaskammer), or standard gas chambers (Normalgaskammer), or delousing chambers (Entlausungskammer). The only time the noun Vergasungskeller appears is in the letter of January 29. Furthermore, these delousing gas chambers were always constructed in such a way that they had two doors: one entrance and one exit. The entrance door opened to the unreine (unclean) side, the exit door opened to the reine (clean) side."*

With respect to the first objection, as I have already explained above, in the explanatory memo on the construction of the Birkenau camp, the Zyklon B disinfestation chamber of the "*Entlausungsbaracke*," the future BW 5a and 5b, was called "*Vergasungsraum*," which was thus used as a perfect equivalent of "*Gaskammer*" for disinfestation. In another document, dated January 9, 1943, this gas chamber, with specific reference to BW 5a and 5b, is called "*Kammer für Blausäurevergasung*" (chamber for hydrogen cyanide gasification):[93]

> *"Furthermore, attached to the delousing barrack, there is a chamber for hydrogen cyanide gasification, which has been in operation since autumn of 1942."*

Let me add that at all times when the noun "*Vergasung*" (gassing) or the verb "*vergasen*" (to gas) appears in Auschwitz documents, the texts refer always and exclusively to disinfestation operations. Some significant examples are:

> *"Building no. 54, destined for use by the guard detail was gassed against vermin and diseases."*[94]

> *"Block 14, washing and toilet facilities have been completed, further work could not yet be done as* [block 14] *is completely occupied because of gassing of block 16."*[95]

Kommandantur-Befehl no. 2/42 of January 22, 1942, which prohibited the use of the Auschwitz cinema because cases of typhus had been identified, describes under nine items all the operations related to "*Ver-*

[93] Letter from Bischoff to Kammler of January 9, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 46a.
[94] Tätigkeitsbericht of A. Schlachter of July 12, 1940. RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 97.
[95] Tätigkeitsbericht of A. Schlachter of July 12, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 25.

gasung des Stabsgebäudes" (gassing of staff building).[96] On July 22, 1942, KL Auschwitz received permission from SS-WVHA to pick up "gas for gassing the camp" at Dessau (*Gas zur Vergasung des Lagers*).[97] Even the *Sonderbefehl* (special order) of August 12, 1942, cited by Pressac designates as "*Vergasungen*" the disinfestation gassings (1989, p. 201):

> *"An incident of slight poisoning by hydrogen cyanide noted today has prompted us to remind all personnel involved in gassings, as well as all other SS-personnel, that on opening of the gassed rooms SS-personnel without masks must observe for at least 5 hours a distance of 15 meters from the chamber. The direction of the wind must be taken into account in particular."*

A sentence passed by an SS tribunal on July 24, 1944, mentions the sorting and storage of Jewish personal items "after execution of the gassing" ("*nach Durchführung der Vergasung*") with regard to the *"Effektenkammer des K.L. Auschwitz*" (the storage facilities of the so-called *Kanada I* section).[98] Finally, van Pelt himself brings in another important example of the significance of the term *Vergasung* in connection with the diary of Dr. Johann Paul Kremer. He shows a page of the original text in which, under the date of September 1, 1942, we read:[99]

> *"In the afternoon* [present] *at the gassing of a block with Zyclon* [sic] *against lice."*

In conclusion, the framework of indications which results from the document mentioning the term "*Vergasung*" (or the respective verb) refers exclusively to disinfestations and does not even vaguely sustain the thesis of homicidal gassings. Therefore, the term "*Vergasungskeller*" is *documentarily* compatible only with the hypothesis of disinfestations.

Van Pelt's second objection regarding the number of doors makes sense only with respect to the standard *Degesch-Kreislauf* disinfestation gas chambers. Any emergency chambers could indeed have a single door, such as the one which was located at the western corner of block 1 at Auschwitz.[100] For Crematorium II, as we will see in chapters 2.9.2.

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96 Kommandantur-Befehl Nr. 2/42 of January 22, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-36, p. 4.
97 Kogon et al., p. 223. Cf. chapter 7.5.
98 SS- und Polizeigericht XV, Zweigstelle Kattowitz. Feld-Urteil dated 24 July, 1944. AGK, NTN, 119, p. 200. Cf. Mattogno 2004h., p. 49-50.
99 Van Pelt 2002, p. 282. Van Pelt's translation, on p. 280, reads: "In the afternoon was present at the gassing of a block with Cyclon B against lice."
100 Pressac 1989, pp. 28f.

and 4.4., there was also the possibility of a double arrangement, one side "*unrein*" (unclean) and the other "*rein*" (clean).

2.1.7. "*Gaskeller*"

On February 17, 1943, Topf received a telephone call from the Auschwitz ZBL. The gist of this call was summarized on the same day by an employee of the company in a note entitled "Aeration and de-aeration installation." The most significant part reads as follows:[101]

> *"Herr Schultze called and informed us as follows: The aeration blower no. 450 for the gas cellar* [Gaskeller] *cannot be found there* [i.e. at Auschwitz]*, although it is said to have been shipped by us. Herr Heinemann has meanwhile ascertained that it was indeed shipped on November 18, 1942, which means that it should by now be in store there. As it cannot be found and is urgently needed, however, according to Herr Schultze, we are to ship it again right away and manufacture it expeditiously."*

On the back of this document, under item 3), it says:[101]

> *"Furthermore, the aeration grates for de-aeration installation in the dissecting and the laying-out rooms are missing as well as the nozzles for the piping in the L-Keller. They, too, are to be shipped along instantly* [with the blower]*."*

This document, which is unknown to van Pelt, stems from J.-C. Pressac's estate. He had found it in the archives of the company *EMS/ Erfurter Mälzerei und Speicherbau* of Erfurt, successors to the Topf company, but for some strange reason he never published it.[102] As we will see in chapter 2.8., this blower was destined for *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, which means that this room was called "*Gaskeller*." The significance of this term is analogous to "*Vergasungskeller*" and fits perfectly into the explanation I have given above.

Considered from van Pelt's point of view, however, the use of this term is totally out of place. Little more than two weeks after Kirschneck is claimed to have been reprimanded for his "slip" of January 29, 1943 – i.e. for having written down the prohibited term "*Vergasungskeller*," thus violating the alleged rule never to use the term "gas chamber" – we

[101] The document has been published at: http://codoh.com/library/document/879/.

[102] Cf. "Réponse au livre de Roger Garaudy par un exterminationniste très connu et important. Par un anonyme qui cache mal un certain Jean-Claude Pressac," in: www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/arvs/mieuxfaire/JCPgaraudy.html.

have here, in fact, a member of ZBL spreading not only the term "*Gaskeller*" but doing so toward civilians to boot!

R.I.P. Rule of secrecy of *Zentralbauleitung*.

Besides, the back of the document designates *Leichenkeller 2* precisely by "*L-Keller*," morgue basement, and not by "*Auskleidekeller*," the alleged undressing room which could not be unknown to the Topf employee, if he had known about a sinister kind of "*Gaskeller*," i.e. about an alleged homicidal gas basement.

2.2. "*Gasdichte Tür*," "*Gastür*" – Gas-Tight Door

In the context of the "*Vergasungskeller*" as an emergency disinfestation chamber, discussed in the preceding chapter, the presence of a gas-tight door in *Leichenkeller* 1 was a perfectly normal matter. What is a little disturbing, at first sight, is the presence of a peephole with a protective grid, as one can see it in Pressac's photographs (pp. 50, 232 and 486). The existence of this device has prompted the French historian to state that it "certainly belonged to a homicidal gas chamber in one of the four Birkenau Krematorien" (p. 486).

Actually, there is no proof that the door in question ever belonged to one of the Birkenau crematoria. It was found in the Auschwitz *Bauhof* (materials yard) in which construction materials were stored. The gas-tight doors for *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematoria II and III are described in the letter written by Bischoff to the DAW office on March 31, 1943. It refers to an order dated March 6 concerning a "gas door 100/192 for *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III, BW 30a," which was to be fashioned "exactly like the cellar door of Crematorium II opposite in type and size, with peephole of double 8 mm glass, rubber seal and fixtures" (1989, p. 436). This description does not, in fact, mention the protective grid.

In 1945 a gas-tight door was found in the ruins of Crematorium V and photographed. It is presently preserved in the furnace hall of Crematorium I.[103] Pressac comments on the photograph as follows (1989, photo 26 on p. 425):

> *"An almost intact gas-tight door found in the ruins of the western part of Krematorium V and presented by the man in shirt sleeves from Photo 24 (with the shaved neck). This door has no peephole even though it was used for homicidal gassings."*

[103] I have shown the two photographs in Mattogno 2005e, p. 132.

In this way, Pressac demolishes his own "criminal trace," i.e. the peephole with protective grid.

As far as the door with the metal protection is concerned, Pressac himself presents photographs showing the door of the disinfestation chamber of the so-called "*Kanada* 1" section of the camp (BW28, delousing and storage barracks, pp. 46-49). This door had a round inspection opening with a metal grid on the inside which obviously protected also the glass. Hence, we can see that protection of the peephole on the inside also applied to a normal disinfestation plant.

The fact that the door mentioned above had a protection on the inside does not necessarily mean that it served a homicidal purpose, but may also mean – in the context of a disinfestation plant – that the inside was in greater danger of being damaged. In what way? Here, too, Pressac furnishes us with the cue for the answer. He publishes photographs of hot-air disinfestation units in the *Zentralsauna* which show clearly the metal carts from which were hung the garments to be disinfested (pp. 84f). Similar carts were also used in the gas chambers employing hydrogen cyanide (see document 7), and it is clear that, while they were being pushed in or out, they could strike the inner side of the door and break the glass of the inspection port.[104]

Van Pelt has no explanation for the presence of protective grids (2002, p. 477) or even for the presence of peepholes in the doors mentioned (p. 476), although all the doors of the HCN disinfestation chambers had them (Pressac 1989, photos on pp. 46-50). As I have explained elsewhere (Mattogno 2004m, pp. 150-155), the peepholes were specified in the safety regulations, which strictly prohibited anyone from entering the gas chamber alone; anyone entering had to be permanently observed by a second disinfector – through a peephole – for immediate aid in case of any emergency.

Van Pelt's ignorance changes into the "impossibility" of finding an alternative explanation and thus into a "slip" in favor of the "reality" of homicidal gas chambers.

[104] The doors of the disinfestation gas chambers opened toward the outside; the operators could therefore see the inside of the doors.

2.3. "*Auskleideraum*," "*Auskleidekeller*" and the Barrack in Front of Crematorium II

2.3.1. "*Auskleideraum*" and "*Auskleidekeller*"

In some documents "*Leichenkeller* 2" of Crematoria II and III is referred to as "*Auskleideraum*" (undressing room) or "*Auskleidekeller*" (undressing cellar). For Pressac this designation represents a "criminal trace" pointing to a presumed exterminatory activity of these cremation plants. The term appears for the first time in a letter dated March 6, 1943, sent by Bischoff to Topf, in which he writes in respect of "*Leichenkeller* 2" (Pressac 1989, pp. 432f.):

> *"We also request you to send us a supplementary offer for the changes to the de-aeration system in the undressing room* [*Auskleideraum*]*."*

But did this "*Auskleideraum*" really constitute an undressing room for the intended victims of a gas chamber?

2.3.2. Origin and Function of the "*Auskleideraum*" of Crematorium II

Two documents which were unknown to Pressac and which refer to the decision to set up an "*Auskleideraum*" in the half-basement of Crematorium II allow us to settle this question once and for all. On January 21, 1943, the *SS-Standortarzt* (garrison surgeon) of Auschwitz, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Eduard Wirths, wrote a letter to the camp commander:[105]

> *"1. The SS garrison surgeon at Auschwitz requests to install a partition in the dissecting hall planned for the new crematorium building at Birkenau, dividing the hall into 2 rooms of equal size and to have 1 or 2 wash basins installed in the first of these rooms, because the latter will be needed as an autopsy room, whereas the 2nd room will be needed for anatomical preparations, for the preservation of files and writing materials and books, for the preparation of colored tissue sections and for work with the microscope.*
>
> *2. Furthermore it is requested to provide for an 'undressing room'* [*Auskleideraum*] *in the cellar rooms."*

Highly important conclusions for our topic derive from this letter. Before setting them out, we must outline the implications of the alleged

[105] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 57.

decision to transform "*Leichenkeller* 1" of Crematoria II and III into homicidal gas chambers.

If we follow Pressac, the ZBL decided in November 1942 "to equip the crematoria with homicidal gas chambers" (1993, p. 66). This decision is said to have begun to permeate the crematoria projects such as blueprint no. 2003 of December 19, 1942 (see chapter 2.9). Because a ventilation with aeration and de-aeration had been planned only for "*Leichenkeller* 1," it is clear that this room had to become the homicidal gas chamber. And because it was planned to implement mass exterminations, it is also clear that "*Leichenkeller* 2" had to be turned into the undressing room for the future victims, in keeping with the procedure already tried out – according to Pressac – in Crematorium I. Hence, the decision to transform "*Leichenkeller* 1" into a homicidal gas chamber implied the decision to transform "*Leichenkeller* 2" into an undressing room, and the two decisions were taken at the same time.

This having been said, let us go back to the letter discussed above.

1. The decision to create an "*Auskleideraum*" in the crematorium was taken neither by the *Kommandantur* (the camp commander, i.e. Höss) nor by ZBL (Bischoff) but by the SS garrison surgeon.
2. The garrison surgeon did not specify anything in particular in his request, presenting it as a mere afterthought to the sanitary and hygienic requirements set out for the autopsy room.
3. In hygienic and sanitary matters, as well as in matters relating to forensic medicine, the crematorium was attached to the garrison surgeon who knew the corresponding projects very well and occasionally intervened – as in this case – with ZBL asking for modifications.
4. The letter cited demonstrates that the SS garrison surgeon was completely unaware of the alleged plan to change "*Leichenkeller* 2" into an undressing room for the victims to be gassed: he requested for an "*Auskleideraum*" to be provided, in a very general way, "*in den Kellerräumen*" (in the cellar rooms) without specifically mentioning "*Leichenkeller* 2" or excluding "*Leichenkeller* 1" for this purpose. However, in view of his position, the SS garrison surgeon could not have been unaware of a decision, allegedly taken three months earlier, to create an "*Auskleideraum*" in "*Leichenkeller* 2," because otherwise, considering his position in the camp hierarchy, such a decision could not actually have been arrived at. Yet as results from the above document, the idea of an "*Auskleideraum*" was conceived by

the SS garrison surgeon only in January 1943 and conveyed to the Auschwitz camp commander on January 21st.

On February 15, Janisch replied to the SS garrison surgeon's letter by a handwritten note stating:[106]

"item 1.) has been launched

item 2.) for undressing, a horse-stable barrack has been erected in front of the cellar entrance."

Why should a crematorium have an "*Auskleideraum*"? And why was a barrack built for such a purpose?

2.3.3. The Barrack in Front of Crematorium II

Pressac has noted that a horse-stable type barrack (*Pferdestallbaracke*) in front of the crematorium does indeed appear on the map entitled "*Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers Auschwitz O/S*." and dated March 20, 1943. It is at the location mentioned by Janisch, i.e. "in front of the cellar entrance." Pressac writes (p. 462):

"The drawing confirms the erection of a hut of the stable type in the north yard of Krematorium II in March 1943. We know little about this hut, except that after serving as an undressing room for the first batch of Jews to be gassed in this Krematorium, it was quickly dismantled – only a week later according to the Sonderkommando witness Henryk Tauber. The first mention of an access stairway through Leichenkeller 2 found in the PMO archives, BW 30/40, page 68e, is dated 26/2/43 [Document 7a]. As soon as this entrance was operational, the undressing hut was no longer required."

Pressac treats the matter also elsewhere, but provides a different reasoning (p. 227):

"On Sunday 14th March, Messing continued installing the ventilation of Leichenkeller 2, which he called 'Auskleidekeller II/Undressing Cellar II.' In the evening, about 1,500 Jews from the Cracow ghetto were the first victims to be gassed in Krematorium II. They did not undress in Leichenkeller 2, still cluttered with tools and ventilation components, but in a stable-type hut temporarily erected in the north yard of the Krematorium."

He later comes back to the first interpretation (p. 492):

[106] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 57a.

> *"This Bauleitung source confirms the erection in mid-March 1943 of a hut running south-north in the north yard of Krematorium II, which was used, according to Henryk Tauber, as an undressing room, apparently because the access to the underground undressing room (Leichenkeller 2) was not yet completed."*

Pressac refers to the following statement by Henryk Tauber (1945b, p. 136):

> *"They* [the alleged victims] *were pushed into a barrack which then stood perpendicular to the building of the crematorium on the side of the entrance to the yard of crematorium no. II. The people entered into this barrack through a door located near the entrance and went down* [into the half-basement of the crematorium] *along steps which were to the right of the Mühlverbrennung* [sic] *(garbage incinerator). This barrack was used at the time as an undressing place. But it was used for more or less one week and was then dismantled."*

Pressac publishes map 2216 of March 20, 1943, in its entirety, but with illegible writing (p. 226). However, he points out a detail from another version of this map (corresponding to another negative at the Auschwitz Museum) in which the entries are clearly visible (p. 462). The barrack in front of the crematorium is shown as a light-colored rectangle, a symbol which corresponds neither to a "*fertiggestellt*" (finished) barrack, which would have been a dark rectangle, nor to a barrack "*im Bau*" (under construction), which would have had slanted shading, but to a barrack "*geplant*" (planned). This shows up even more clearly in another detail of this map also published by Pressac (p. 256).

There is, moreover, yet another map of Birkenau, drawn up immediately prior to the one shown by Pressac, in which the barrack in question does not appear at all. It is the *Bebauungsplan für den Auf- u. Ausbau des Konzentrationslager u. Kriegsgefangenenlagers, Plan Nr. 2215* (Overall map for the construction and enlargement of the PoW camp) dated "March 1943."[107] As it has the number 2215, it was prepared immediately before the one numbered 2216 and therefore dates from March 20, 1943, or before.

It is not clear why this barrack appears only on map 2216. Even though it had already been erected in front of Crematorium II on February 15, 1943, it is not indicated on map 1991 of February 17, which

[107] RGVA, 502-1-93, p. 1.

otherwise shows barracks planned, under construction, and terminated (Pressac 1989, p. 220). This is probably due to its being an emergency stop-gap measure. One does not know when the barrack was taken down. What is certain, however, is that the erection of this barrack had nothing to do with the alleged homicidal gassings.

Pressac's first explanation – that the barrack was erected because access to "*Leichenkeller* 2" was not yet ready – does not hold much water. Speaking of Crematorium III, he affirms that work on the entrance to "*Leichenkeller* 2" of Crematorium III began on February 10, 1943, and that for Crematorium II the only reference to the realization of an entrance is dated February 26, which would lead us into an irresolvable paradox (1989, p. 217). In fact, there is no paradox, because Pressac's dates for Crematorium III are in error (see chapter 3.4.). On March 14, 1943, the entrance was perfectly serviceable, and there would therefore have been no need for an undressing barrack.

On March 20, 1943, the day on which map 2216 was being prepared, the SS garrison surgeon at Auschwitz, in a letter to the camp commander, mentioned the removal of the corpses from the detainee hospital to the crematorium (*zum Krematorium*).[108] This makes the matter very clear. The SS garrison surgeon was worried about the poor sanitary and hygienic conditions in which the corpses of the detainees were kept on account of the inadequacy of the then existing morgues. These were simple wooden sheds (*Holzschuppen*) which could not keep rats from feeding on the corpses with the risk of an outbreak of the plague, as he writes clearly in his letter of July 20, 1943,[109] about a situation which must already have existed in January.

The SS garrison surgeon thus intended to have the corpses taken to a safer place, from a sanitary point of view, and the best places were obviously the two *Leichenkeller* of Crematorium II which, at that time, was the farthest advanced. On January 21, 1943, he requested the provision of an "*Auskleideraum*" for these corpses "in the cellar rooms" of Crematorium II. On January 29 Bischoff replied that the corpses of the detainees could not be placed in "*Leichenkeller* 2," but said that this was irrelevant because they could be placed in the "*Vergasungskeller*" instead (see chapter 2.1.).

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[108] Letter from SS-Standortarzt to commander of KL Auschwitz dated March 20, 1943, concerning "Häftlings-Krankenbau– KGL." RGVA, 502-1-261, p. 112. Cf. chapter 12.7.

[109] Letter from SS-Standortarzt to Zentralbauleitung of July 20, 1943 concerning "Hygienische Sofort- Massnahmen im KL." RGVA, 502-1-170, p. 263.

On February 15 Janisch informed the garrison surgeon that "a horse-stable type barrack in front of the cellar entrance" had been erected at Crematorium II as an undressing room for the corpses. This barrack was therefore built between January 21 and February 15 and, for that reason alone, it could not have had a criminal purpose. This is confirmed by the fact that Crematorium II went into operation on February 20, 1943. A report by Kirschneck dated March 29, 1943, states the following about this crematorium:[110]

> *"Brickwork completely finished and started up on February 20, 1943."*

Thus, the crematorium went into operation even before the ventilation had been installed in "*Leichenkeller* 1," which means that it received corpses even before that room could theoretically have been used as a homicidal gas chamber. But why then was an outdoor barrack needed? The answer is simple. On February 11, 1943 – four days before the date of Janisch's reply to SS garrison surgeon – work on the installation of the ventilation equipment in *Leichenkeller* 1 had begun,[111] and therefore this room was no longer available as "*Auskleideraum*." Besides, *Leichenkeller* 2 was not operational either from January 1943 onwards. In "Report no. 1" from Bischoff to Kammler dated January 23 on the subject "*Krematorien Kriegsgefangenenlager. Bauzustand*" (crematoria PoW camp, state of advancement) we can read:[112]

> *"Cellar II. Ferroconcrete ceiling finished, removal of planking subject to weather conditions."*

In his report dated January 29, 1943, Prüfer confirmed:[113]

> *"Ceiling of Leichenkeller 2 cannot yet be freed of planking because of frost."*

On the same day, Kirschneck confirms in a note for the files (*Aktenvermerk*):[114]

> *"Leichenkeller 2 on the whole terminated, except for removal of planking from ceiling, which can only be done on days without frost."*

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[110] Tätigkeitsbericht des SS-Ustuf. (F) Kirschneck, Bauleiter für das Schutzhaftlager und für landwirtschaftliche Bauvorhaben. 1. Jan. 1943 bis 31. März 1943, of March 29, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 59.
[111] APMO, BW 30/31, p. 30.
[112] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 54.
[113] APMO, BW 30/40, p. 101.
[114] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 105.

Finally, as we have already seen, Bischoff informs Kammler in his letter of January 29, 1943:[115]

> *"The ferroconcrete ceiling of the Leichenkeller could not yet be freed of its planking because of frost conditions."*

In the first two weeks of February 1943, there were, at Birkenau, at least 10 days with morning temperatures between -1 and -8°C; minimum temperatures during the night were even lower, whereas the maximum temperatures in the afternoon fluctuated between -3 and +6°C,[116] which makes it highly likely that "*Leichenkeller* 2" remained non-operational for some time longer because of the impossibility to remove the planking boards from the concrete.

On March 8, 1943, Messing, the technician, began to install the *Entlüftungs-Leitung* in "*Leichenkeller* 2" which, in his weekly worksheets, he regularly calls "*Auskleidekeller*."[117] The work was finished on March 31, 1943 ("*Entlüftungsanlagen Auskleidekeller verlegt*" – de-aeration undressing cellar installed).[118] Therefore, already by March 8, ZBL – acting on the request of SS garrison surgeon – had decided to create an "*Auskleideraum*" in the half-basement of Crematorium II, more specifically in "*Leichenkeller* 2." As against this, "*Leichenkeller* 1" became operational from March 13 ("*Be- u. Entlüftungsanlagen Keller I in Betrieb genommen*" – aeration and de-aeration installations of cellar 1 put into service).[117] On March 20, the day of the alleged gassing of 2,191 Greek Jews (Czech 1989, p. 445), the SS garrison surgeon was occupied only with the removal of the corpses of detainees from the camp hospital to Crematorium II without any reference to any alleged gassing victims.

We now have the answers to the two questions raised in the beginning:

1) The "*Auskleideraum*" was used for the corpses of the detainees who had died in the camp. At the Belsen trial, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Josef Kramer, commander of the Auschwitz camp from May 8, 1944, declared in this respect (Phillips, p. 731):

> *"Whoever died during the day was put into a special building called the mortuary, and they were carried to the crematorium every*

[115] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 100.
[116] Tagesberichte of the firm W. Riedel & Sohn, Eisenbeton- und Hochbau, at Bielitz. APMO, BW 30/4/28, pp. 96-112.
[117] Arbeitszeit-Bescheinigung of Topf for the period of March 8-14, 1943. APMO, D-ZBau/2540, p. 26.
[118] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

evening by lorry. They were loaded on the lorry and off the lorry by prisoners. They were stripped by the prisoners of their clothes in the crematorium before being cremated."

2) Initially a barrack set up in front of the crematorium was used as "*Auskleideraum*," because "*Leichenkeller* 2" was not yet operational on January 21, 1943, the day SS garrison surgeon requested an "*Auskleideraum*"; *Leichenkeller* 1 was available from February 11.

The existence of an undressing room in the crematorium is therefore entirely normal, as results moreover from the assignment of rooms in Crematorium I of the main camp: Laying-out room (*Aufbahrungsraum*), corpse washing room (*Waschraum*) and morgue (*Leichenhalle*). As the corpses were cremated without a coffin, the *Aufbahrungsraum* was not a "hall for the placement of the corpse on a stretcher" but a room in which the bodies were undressed before being washed in the room next door and finally placed naked in the morgue.

2.3.4. Van Pelt and the "*Auskleidekeller*"

Van Pelt handles this "criminal trace" in an extremely superficial way. He limits himself to stating that "the work sheets of Topf" mention "an 'Undressing Basement'" (2002, p. 401) and then to repeating in his list of "proofs" (p. 424):

"Timesheet for a fitter from Topf & Sons (manufacturer of crematoria-ovens) working on crematoria 2 and 3, referring to work on the ventilation system of the 'undressing basement'."

And that is all. Surprisingly, van Pelt publishes the original text of the letter of January 21, 1943, written by the Auschwitz SS garrison surgeon to the camp commander which I have mentioned above (to which he ascribes the date of its registration, January 22) but without a translation and without any commentary (p. 447). On the other hand, he reports a passage from the trial proceedings in which counsel Rampton asked Irving (p. 446):

"In January 1942 an SS doctor at Auschwitz wrote an internal memo to the Kommandantur at Auschwitz, on the one hand making requests for the detailed provision for the dissection room in the new crematoria [the request actually concerned only Crematorium II], *and on the other hand requesting that there should be in the keller rooms, cellar rooms, of that edifice an undressing room. Why would*

the SS doctor want an undressing room next to[119] *the dissection room?"*

The answer to this question constitutes a confirmation of the explanation I have given above in the sense that an autopsy room is compatible with an undressing room for corpses, not for live people.

2.4. "*Sonderkeller*" – Special Cellar

Pressac illustrates the significance of this term in the following manner:

> *"Concerning this matter, Wolter informed Bischoff by a note entitled 'De-aeration of the crematoria (II and III),' in which he designated 'cellar for corpses'* [Leichenkeller 1] *of Crematorium II as 'Sonderkeller'."* (1993, p. 60)

This memo, written by *SS-Untersturmführer* Fritz Wolter on November 27, 1942, is said to be part of a plan by ZBL "to move the gassing activities from bunkers 1 and 2 into a room in the crematorium which had a mechanical ventilation" and to constitute "the first evident criminal slip," i.e. the first reference to "an unusual use of the crematoria that cannot be explained other than by a massive treatment of human beings by gas" (Pressac, *ibid*.) The term "*Sonderkeller*" (special cellars), as it appears in this memo, is thus considered to be a code-word for a homicidal gas chamber. Pressac's argument is based solely on the presence of this term, which has, however, a quite different meaning. In the memo in question, Wolter, referring to what Prüfer had told him over the telephone, wrote:[120]

> *"The company would have a fitter available in something like a week's time who is supposed to install the de-aeration unit once the ceilings of the special cellars are ready; also the suction draft for the five 3-muffle ovens."*

If we follow Pressac, as we have seen above, the term "special cellars" designated the "*Leichenkeller* 1" of Crematorium II. However, in this document the terms "the ceilings" and "over the special cellars" are in plural, and we may in any case exclude that they referred *also* to "*Leichenkeller* 1" of Crematorium III, because, although the document is headed "*Entlüftungen für Krematorien*" (de-aerations for crematoria)

[119] It is known that the "dissection room" (Sezierraum) was located on the ground floor of the crematorium whereas the "Auskleideraum" was to be arranged "*in den Kellerräumen*" (in the basement rooms), thus the undressing room was not "*next to* the dissection room."

[120] Note of SS-Untersturmführer Wolter of November 27, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 65.

i.e. for Crematoria II and III, it actually refers only to Crematorium II. Only at this site had construction work advanced far enough by that time to soon allow closing the ceiling of the half-basement. Actually, on January 23, 1943, the ferroconcrete ceiling of the cellars 1 and 2 had already been poured, while in the corresponding rooms of Crematorium III the work was still limited to the insulation of the floors from the groundwater.[121]

Also, the reference to the installation of the "*Saugzuganlage*" (suction draft) makes sense only for Crematorium II, in which both the five triple-muffle ovens, the flue ducts, and the chimney had by then been erected, as opposed to Crematorium III, where the chimney had only been brought up to the level of the crematorium ceiling.[121]

On the other hand, the basements of Crematorium II for which a "de-aeration system" had been planned were two in number, "*Leichenkeller* 1" and "*Leichenkeller* 2." The former also had a "*Belüftungsanlage*" (aeration system), the latter only an "*Entlüftungsanlage*" (de-aeration system), which was installed between March 15 and 21, 1943.[122] It is thus clear that the "*Sonderkeller(s)*" in Wolter's memo were *both* "*Leichenkeller(s)*" of Crematorium II. These half-basement rooms were "*Sonder*-" precisely because, out of the six rooms which made up the half-basement,[123] they were the only two morgues which had an artificial ventilation.

The term "special cellar" also appears in another document, unknown to Pressac. It is the "*Baubericht für Monat Oktober 1942*" (construction report for the month of October, 1942) written by Bischoff on November 4, 1942, in which we can read on the subject of Crematorium II:[124]

> *"Concrete pressure plate placed in special cellar. De-aeration shafts erected in brickwork and start of internal brickwork of cellar."*

The "concrete pressure plate" was the massive concrete floor (*Kellersohle*) of the basements in the crematoria, whose function was to

[121] Bericht Nr. 1 about construction progress at the crematoria written by Bischoff for Kammler on January 23, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-313, pp. 54-55.
[122] Topf, Arbeits-Bescheinigung by Messing for March 15-21, 1943. APMO, BW 30/31, p. 25. Cf. chapter 16.
[123] According to plan 1311 of May 14, 1942, which was still in force on November 27. Cf. Pressac 1989, p. 294.
[124] Baubericht für Monat Oktober 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 86.

contain the ground water pressure (*Grundwasserdruck*).[125] It is possible to argue that the "special cellar" was "*Leichenkeller* 1," but was its "special" use a criminal one?

According to Pressac, at the end of October 1942 the ZBL had decided to move the alleged homicidal gassing activity from the so-called "bunkers" 1 and 2 "into a room of the crematorium having a mechanical ventilation, as had been practiced in December 1941 in the morgue of Crematorium I" (1993, p. 60). Pressac explains how the alleged homicidal gassings were carried out in that crematorium (*ibid*., p. 34):

> *"Three square openings were broken into the ceiling of the morgue* [Leichenhalle] *and arranged in such a way as to permit the Zyklon B to be poured in. It was poured directly into the room, the two doors of which had previously been made gas-tight."*

Therefore, if the "special cellar" of Crematorium II had been destined to become a homicidal gas chamber modeled upon the alleged one of Crematorium I, ZBL would have planned to fit the openings for the introduction of Zyklon B in the ferroconcrete ceiling of "*Leichenkeller* 1" already at the stage when the ceiling was laid. However, the ceiling was realized without such openings.[126] Hence, ZBL, having decided to transform "*Leichenkeller* 1" into a homicidal gas chamber at a time when only the water-proof floor had been poured in this room, had covered it with a ceiling devoid of openings – essential elements for a homicidal gas chamber using Zyklon B – only to allegedly open up later, with hammer and chisel, four openings for Zyklon B in this concrete slab 18 cm thick![127]

Unfortunately for Pressac, the ZBL engineers were not that stupid. In the ferroconcrete ceiling of "*Leichenkeller* 2" they had provided for one round opening for the passage of the de-aeration channels when they poured the concrete (Pressac 1989, p. 365, photos 17 & 18), and they did the same for the hot-air exhausts in the ceiling of the furnace hall (*ibid*., p. 366-367, photos 20-23).

Hence, the term "*Sonderkeller*" (special cellar) can easily be explained by the fact that "*Leichenkeller* 1," being equipped, as it was, with an aeration/de-aeration system, was probably planned – as Pressac himself hypothesizes – "to take corpses several days old, beginning to

[125] Letter from Bischoff to Huta Co. of October 14, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 112.

[126] This can be seen on a photo of the "Kamann" series taken in January 1943 which shows the outside of "Leichenkeller 1" of Crematorium II. APMO, negative no. 20995/506. Cf. Pressac 1989, p. 335.

[127] Measurements by the author in the ruins of Leichenkeller 1 of Crematorium II.

decompose," and therefore the room had to be well ventilated (1989, p. 284).

2.5. "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtung*" and "*Holzblenden*"

2.5.1. The Discovery of the Indications

Pressac notes that the "Krematorium inventories, drawn up when the buildings were completed, also provide an almost incredible *supplementary proof*: mention of the device for introducing Zyklon B into a Leichenkeller." In the inventory for Crematorium II, Pressac did, in fact, read the entries "*4 Drahtnetzeinschiebvorrichtung*" and "*4 Holzblenden*," which he interprets as "wire mesh introduction devices" and "wooden covers" (1989, p. 429).

In the original document, the above entries are handwritten (whereas the remainder of the document is typed). The document, from the Moscow archives on Viborgskaya street, is clearer than the copy kept at the time in the Auschwitz Museum, which Pressac used (see document 8). Pressac's deciphering is correct, except for the omission of a vowel: the word in question is actually spelled "*Drahtnetzeinschieb<u>e</u>vorrichtung*" (see document 9). "*Holzblenden*" is correct.

In the inventory of the half-basement (*Kellergeschoss*) of Crematorium II, however, these devices are assigned to *Leichenkeller* 2 and not to *Leichenkeller* 1. Pressac explains this incongruity as follows (1989, p. 430):

> *"However, drawing 2197 from the 'October Revolution' archives indicates that Leichenkeller 1 had 16 lamps and 3 taps and Leichenkeller 2, 10 lamps and 5 taps,' whereas the inventory gives 5 taps to 'Leichenkeller 1' and 3 taps to 'Leichenkeller 2."*

Pressac correctly comments (*ibid*.):

> *"There has been inversion of the lines on the inventory as from the number of lamps."*

In other words, in the line devoted to the term "*Zapfhähne*" (taps, faucets) there had been a flip in the entries, and hence the two numbers were changed around. But from this he draws the unjustified conclusion that also the lines referring to "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtung*" and "*Holzblenden*" had been inverted and that the items actually were part of "*Leichenkeller* 1." The value of this assertion will be discussed in the following chapter.

2.5.2. Significance of the Terms and Localization of the Devices

The devices in question are mentioned only in this document, and hence their function can be analyzed solely on the basis of their designation. In this light, one has to underline that "Drahtnetz*einschiebe*vorrichtung" cannot designate a device for the *introduction* of Zyklon B, because the verb "*einschieben*" signifies *to push in*. While it is certainly permissible to think of the "can" which, in Tauber's description, moved up and down in this device, controlled by a wire, it was still the can which moved and not the device itself. Furthermore, the function of the alleged device was the introduction of Zyklon B into the gas chamber and not the movement of one of its elements, and the use of the words "wire mesh device for movement or introduction" would not make any sense whatsoever.

Nor is "*Holzblenden*" any clearer. Blende does not mean lid (in German *Deckel*), as Pressac suggests, but a blind, a screen, a hide. In wartime architecture, a "*Blende*" frequently referred to a protective cover of a window against both (shell) fragments and gas. For example, the letter written on August 26, 1944, by *SS-Obersturmführer* Werner Jothann on the "Transformation of the old crematorium for the sake of anti-aircraft protection" ("*Ausbau des alten Krematoriums für Luftschutzzwecke*") explicitly mentions "16 pcs. protective windows screens, gas and [bomb] fragment proof" ("*16 St Fensterblenden Gas und splittersicher"*). But such a screen is incompatible with a cover for the presumed Zyklon B introduction chimneys.

If these devices actually were what holocaust historiography tries to make them to be, they would have been called "*(Drahtnetz)Einwurfvorrichting*" or "*Einführvorrichtung*" and "*Holzdeckel*" (or "*Abdeckung*"). In the documentation surrounding the crematoria, introduction devices have, in fact, similar designations:

- the opening allowing material to be thrown from the outside of the crematorium into the "*Müllverbrennungsraum*" (garbage incinerating room)[128] for refuse to be burned was called, in fact, "*Einwurf*blende"[129] (where "*Blende*" is precisely a screen or a little door);

[128] The shed for the oven in which the garbage was burnt.
[129] Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 84 (list of orders from Zentralbauleitung to Schlosserei concerning the crematoria, prepared by Jan Sehn).

- the window allowing coal to be supplied from the outside to the coal storage rooms of Crematoria IV and V was called "Kohlen*einwurf*fenster."[130]

In terms of localization, the devices in the inventory of the half-basement of Crematorium II are assigned to *Leichenkeller* 2 and not *Leichenkeller* 1. It is true, as Pressac points out, that the figures in the column "*Zapfhähne*" are inverted, i.e. the faucets of *Leichenkeller* 2 are accidentally assigned to *Leichenkeller* 1 and *vice versa*, but this does not apply to the columns listing the lights; here the assignments are correct (16 lights for *Leichenkeller* 1 and 10 for *Leichenkeller* 2). Therefore, nothing demonstrates that the columns "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtung*" and "*Holzblenden*" have, in fact, been inverted and that the devices must hence be assigned to *Leichenkeller* 1. Pressac claims, though, that the proof of their presence in that very room would be furnished by an aerial photograph (1989, p. 430):

> *"The aerial photograph of August 24* [recte: 25]*, 1944 taken by the Americans shows that the 4 introduction devices were indeed installed in Leichenkeller 1/gas chamber 1 of Krematorium II, and not in Leichenkeller 2/undressing room."*

In chapter 13.3.3. we will examine the value of this proof.

2.5.3. Michał Kula's Testimony

In his interpretation of the four "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen*," Pressac relies in particular on M. Kula, former detainee no. 2718. In his questioning of June 11, 1945, he declared having fashioned the devices himself, and he provided a detailed description down to their dimensions: they were wire-mesh columns having a height of 3 meters and a square cross-section with sides 70 cm long (Höss trial, vol. 2, pp. 99f.). Kula belonged to the metal workshop of ZBL (*Häftlings-Schlosserei*) working as a turner (*Dreher*). His ID number appears in a document stamped with the date of February 8, 1943, headed "*Häftlings-Schlosserei. List of detainees*," in which the ID numbers of the 192 detainees working in this shop are given.[131]

The *Häftlings-Schlosserei* was a *Kommando* of the *Werkstätten* (workshops) of ZBL – specialized shops for the various building trades, employing *Kommandos* of detainees, most of them tradesmen in a par-

[130] Tagesbericht of Riedel & Sohn of March 11 an 12, 1943. APMO, BW 30/4/28, pp. 36f.
[131] RGVA, 502-1-295, p. 63.

ticular area. The *Kommandos* of the *Werkstätten* could be assigned to any *Bauwerke* (sites), including the crematoria. In 1942 the practice was that the *Bauleiter* (site supervisor) or *Bauführer* (foreman) who needed a certain service first of all made an application to the supply store (*Anforderung an die Materialverwaltung*) on a numbered sheet. If the request was approved (*genehmigt*), then the *Werkstättenleiter* (head of workshops) passed the order (*Auftrag*) to the appropriate *Kommando* by means of a numbered form specifying the type of work to be performed. The *Kommando* doing the work then wrote out a job card (*Arbeitskarte*) which listed the number of the order, the *Kommando*, the destination, the beginning, and the end of the work; on the reverse side, under the heading *Materialverbrauch*, were listed the materials consumed, the cost of materials, and time spent.

The *Häftlings-Schlosserei* had a different form listing the work sections (*Kolonne*), the object (*Gegenstand*), the source (*Antragsteller*), the beginning (*Angefangen*), and the end (*Beendet*) of the job, the names, qualifications, and the time spent by the detainees who carried out the work; the reverse side was the same as for the other shops.

The *Kommandos* were split up into *Kolonnen* (sections) working under the supervision of a *Kolonnenführer* (section head) or of an *Obercapo*. If the job concerned an object to be fashioned, the receiver countersigned a numbered *Empfangsschein* (receipt) on delivery.

On February 8, 1943, the 192 detainees of *Häftlings-Schlosserei*, who reported to *SS-Unterscharführer* Walter Kywitz, were taken over by D.A.W. (*Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke*), and the new shop was given the name of *D.A.W. WL* (= *Werkstättenleitung* [shop management] *Schlosserei*). From the next day on, the orders received by the shop were noted in a ledger labeled *WL-Schlosserei*, which had the following columns: reception date of the order (*Eingegangen am…*), job number at D.A.W. (*Lauf. Nr. D.A.W.*), reference (*Betrifft*), name of piece (*Gegenstand*), time spent (*Arbeitsstunden*), beginning (*Angefangen*) and end *(Beendet*) of the work. The respective data were copied from the *Arbeitskarten*. The ledger also listed the number and the date of the order copied from the respective forms. ZBL supplied the shops with the necessary materials, accompanied by a delivery slip (*Lieferschein*). After execution of the job, D.A.W. would send their respective invoice to ZBL (see Mattogno 2005h, pp. 49f). The numbered form specifying the kind of work to be done (*Auftrag*) normally showed a sketch giving the shape and dimensions of the piece to be fashioned and listed the neces-

sary materials, as for example *Auftrag* no. 67 of March 6, 1943.[132] This "*Auftrag*" appears in the ledger of "*WL-Schlosserei*" in the following way (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 86):

> *"8.3.43. No. 165, PoW camp incineration plant BW. 30b and c. Piece: 64 pcs. stone screws from steel bar 5/8" diam. according to sketch. Delivery: urgent! Bauleitung order no. 67 dated 6.3.43. Terminated: 2.4.43."*

Now, if Kula actually did produce the device described above, it would have been recorded in a specific order from ZBL, complete with a sketch showing the structure and the dimensions of the various parts of the device. Furthermore, if this were so, this order would have to show up in the ledger of *WL-Schlosserei*. On July 25, 1945 – a few months after having heard the witnesses Tauber and Kula – judge Sehn drew up a paper in which he summarized all the orders related to the crematoria which were found in the ledger mentioned (*ibid*., p. 82):

> *"In the book, there are i.a. the following entries which refer to the jobs done by ślusarna (= metalworking shop) for the erection and the maintenance of the crematoria:* […]*"*

He then lists all the jobs ordered by ZBL for the crematoria. However, in this long list of 85 entries, the piece described by Kula does not appear at all. The first entry is an order (*Bestellschein*) from ZBL dated October 28, 1942, (*ibid.*) therefore the absence of Kula's device cannot be attributed to reasons of chronology. It does not depend on alleged reasons of *secrecy*, either, because the ledger has a number of entries for gas-tight doors (*gasdichte Türen*) for the alleged gas chambers in the crematoria.[133] On the other hand, the ledger even has an entry for a job – the only one mentioned in the entire list – done personally by Kula. At the end of his list, Sehn, in fact, writes (*ibid*., p. 97):

> *"Moreover, under the number 433 of the book we have an entry dated May 20,1943 concerning: 'X-ray station in women's camp. Piece: 2 pcs. unions for rubber hose, delivery: urgent. Hand over to Prof. Schumann. Assigned: Kula. Terminated 21 May 43.' Compare minutes of interrogation of witness Michał Kula of June 11, 1945."*

Hence, judge Sehn knew perfectly well that Kula's assertion concerning the introduction columns for Zyklon B was not backed up by the documents and thus false. But when Kula testified as a witness in

[132] APMO, BW 1/31/162, pp. 328-328a.

[133] Auftrag 323 of April 16, 1943, Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 92. Other references on p. 84 ("4 dichte Türen") and p. 90 ("Gasduchte [sic] Türen"),

the session of March 15, 1947, of the Höss trial and furnished again the description of the columns mentioned,[134] no one objected saying that the respective entry did not appear in the ledger of *WL-Schlosserei*. It is easy to see why. Furthermore, and this is even more surprising, in the interrogation of June 11, 1945, Kula explicitly speaks of the work done for Dr. Schumann mentioned above and even gives the exact job number in the *WL-Schlosserei* ledger (Höss trial, vol. 2, p. 83.):

> *"From the book of the ślusarna (= Schlosserei) one can clearly see that at the time I had to repair the pump, job number 433."*

He therefore already knew this ledger, but then why is there no "job number" for the columns in question? In this case, too, the answer is quite simple. The conclusion is that Kula never built the alleged Zyklon B introduction devices and therefore the four "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen*" could not be those devices.

It should be noted, however, that there exists documentation for other, strikingly similar, but at once distinctly different devices, which were made specifically for the Crematoria II and III, yet by the inmate Dyntar Mirek of the metal workshop, see chapter 2.9.2.

2.5.4. What the "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen*" Were Not

I have explained above that at the present time there are no other documents in this respect, therefore the only thing one can do about the matter is to state what the devices *were not*. The only established facts are as follows:

1. In the inventory attached to the acceptance protocol of Crematorium II dated March 31, 1943, the respective devices are assigned to the alleged undressing room and not to the alleged gas chamber.
2. In the inventory attached to the acceptance protocol of Crematorium III dated June 24, 1943,[135] there is not the slightest trace of either any *Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen* nor of any *Holzblenden*: how, then, were the gassings carried out in the alleged gas chamber of that crematorium?
3. Devices with features as described by Kula were never fashioned in the *Schlosserei* of ZBL, therefore they never existed.

---

[134] AGK, NTN, 107, p. 467-523; in this deposition, Kula stated that the columns were 2.5 meters high, because he believed that the ceiling of Leichenkeller 1 was at a level of 2 meters; *ibid.*, p. 498.

[135] RGVA, 502-2-54, pp. 77-78. Cf. document 10.

4. The openings for the introduction of Zyklon B never existed. This question will be treated in chapter 13.

2.5.5. Van Pelt's Comments

As usual, van Pelt distinguishes himself by his sloppiness and his lack of scientific rigor. He mentions the "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen*" in the following context (2002, p. 401):

> *"We reviewed a collection of written construction documents, including the work sheets of Topf that referred to work done on an 'Undressing Basement' in Crematorium 2 and the inventory of Crematorium 2 that mentioned not only the presence of 4 'wire mesh introduction devices' in Morgue 1 of Crematorium 2 – the gas columns constructed by Kula – but also 4 'wooden covers,' which obviously referred to the covers for the four chimneys that capped the wire-mesh columns."*

Then, arguing polemically against Germar Rudolf, he repeats (p. 503):

> *"Furthermore, he ignored important evidence that does support the existence of these columns, such as an inventory of Crematorium 2 that mentions in Morgue 1 four instruments identified as Drahtnetzeinschiebvorrichtung*[en]*, which translates as wire mesh introduction device*[s]*."*

In chapter 2.5.2. I have demonstrated that the devices, in the inventory of Crematorium II, are assigned to *Leichenkeller* 2 and not to *Leichenkeller* 1, hence van Pelt's assertion is false. Furthermore, he hides the certainly not irrelevant fact that the inventory of the half-basement of Crematorium III does not speak at all of such devices. He also keeps quiet about the fact that Tauber speaks of "concrete covers" (p. 193), not of "wooden covers." This is all the more obscure and the substitution of the alleged "covers" all the more improbable, as the "wooden covers" show up in the acceptance protocol of March 31, 1943, whereas Tauber stayed in Crematorium II only until mid-April 1943, which would mean that the "covers" would have been changed within a mere two weeks.

Van Pelt quotes Kula's testimony according to which "these columns were around 3 meters high, and they were 70 centimeters square in plan," (p. 206) but he obviously keeps quiet about the fact which I have documented in chapter 2.5.3., *viz.* that the ledger of *WL-*

Schlosserei does not contain any trace of those alleged "wire-mesh columns."

He presents furthermore a drawing allegedly "based on the testimony of Tauber and Kula," (p. 208) but which actually contains two contradictory elements. First of all, a reduction in the cross-section of the columns at the height of the ceiling in such a way that the length of the sides tapers off from 70 cm inside *Leichenkeller* 1 to 48 cm within the ceiling and at the outside. The aim of this trick is easy to see: in the paper "A Report on Some Findings Concerning the Gas Chamber of Krematorium II in Auschwitz-Birkenau," which van Pelt mentions at the end of his book (p. 495), Daniel Keren, Jamie McCarthy and Harry W. Mazal assert to have found three openings of 50×50 cm in the concrete ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II (see chapter 13.2.). But the alleged columns with their square cross-section of 70×70 cm and their height of 3 meters had to pass through the ceiling and stick out 41 cm, which would have been impossible with a cross-section of 70×70 centimeters. To resolve the problem, all that needed to be done was to invent a reduced size at the level of the ceiling from 70×70 down to 48×48 centimeters!

The drawing furthermore presents an inner device (for the Zyklon B) which ran down almost to the floor and was controlled by a rope. This description corresponds to Tauber's statement, but not to Kula's, according to whom the inside was an empty column made of galvanized steel which had an opening like a funnel and which was placed into the upper part of the column, as Pressac shows in his drawing (1989, p. 487). A comparison of this drawing and of that presented by van Pelt shows better than anything else the divergence of the two statements; for his part, van Pelt ignores it and creates a new entirely fictitious "convergence."

And this is how van Pelt justifies the absence of any columns for the introduction of Zyklon B in the drawings of the crematoria (2002, pp. 369ff.):

> *"In November and December 1942, when I believe the wire mesh columns were designed, Crematoria 2 and 3 were under construction, and at that time working drawings were the major tool of communication between architect and contractor. Changes would have been made in the working drawings. The archive of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum contains a list with sixteen working drawings for Crematorium 2 which all carry general number 7015/IV.*

One of these drawings concerns 'Reinforcement for the ceiling over morgue 1.' It was drawn on October 22, 1942, and it was given the number 7015/IV-109/6. It is likely that this working drawing was the instrument to make modifications that introduced the holes and possibly the gas columns. It is important to note that shortly before the liquidation of the camp, the Auschwitz Zentralbauleitung requested Huta to send all working drawings back, both originals and copies. The only possible explanation is that architects wanted to remove incriminating evidence. The working drawing of the roof of Morgue 1, which most likely would have contained the change involving the wire-mesh column, drawing 7015/IV-109/6, was returned, but it did not survive."

This explanation is historically and documentarily inconsistent. First of all, if the alleged columns for the introduction of Zyklon B were designed "in November and December of 1942," then one cannot see why a blueprint drawn on October 22 could be "the instrument to make modifications that introduced the holes and possibly the gas columns" and could already contain such a modification. This would be even more nonsensical, because the concrete ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 was poured *without* openings, as I have explained in chapter 2.4. This means that the holes were planned and drawn into the blueprint of October 22, 1942, then completely forgotten during the work on the ceiling of the room, only to be manually broken through later on with a hammer and chisel, grinding through a slab of reinforced concrete 18 cm thick!

The caption on blueprint 7015/IV-109/6 is "*Bew. der Decke über Keller I*," where "*Bew.*" stands for "*Bewehrung*," reinforcement. The blueprints 7015/IV-109-5, and 109-7, drawn on October 20 and November 6, 1942, respectively, concern the rebars (reinforcing bars) of the ceilings in "Keller II" and "Keller III," respectively.[136] That the blueprint 7015/IV-109-6 should contain "most likely" the drawing for the openings and the Zyklon B columns is an unfounded conjecture on the part of van Pelt.

The return of the 15 drawings from Huta Co. to ZBL is borne out by a letter dated December 19, 1944 (Pressac 1989, p. 318), but "the only possible explanation" proposed by van Pelt makes no sense at all. The real reason is contained in *Hausverfügung* (internal regulation) No. 108

[136] Undated list entitled "Waffen SS Auschwitz Nr 7015." APMO, BW30/25, p. 27.

of May 5, 1943, which Zimmermann quotes as follows (2000, pp. 377f.):

> *"As is stated in this decree, SS-Lieutenant Colonel Dejaco* [137] *is personally responsible that all in- and outgoing plans are registered in an orderly fashion in a specific book. All outgoing plans have to be signed by the person receiving them. Furthermore, all this work is related to econo-military tasks that must be kept secret. Specifically, the plans for the crematoria must be strictly controlled* [strengstens zu beaufsichtigen]. *No plans are to be passed to the work brigade of others. During the construction work they are to be kept under lock and key.* […] *In particular attention should be paid to the regulations of D.V. 91 (secret matters/documents).* [Verschluss–Sachen]*."*

A letter from the *SS-Neubauleitung* of Dachau of September 30, 1940, mentions the fact that "according to the order of Reichsführer-SS, all blueprints of buildings in concentration camps are to be considered as secret blueprints."[138] It is therefore obvious that Huta had to return to ZBL the blueprints received from it. Furthermore, we should stress here the fact that the return to ZBL of those 15 drawings on December 19, 1944, at the explicit request of the latter, is in glaring contradiction with van Pelt's assertion that the SS, in January 1945, "overlooked the archive of the building office that had been closed some months earlier," with the result that this archive remained "more or less intact" (see chapter 1.2.).

All we have to do now is to draw our conclusions. Van Pelt claims without proof that "the wire-mesh columns were totally dismantled after the cessation of gassing and before the demolition of the crematoria," in order to explain why "no remains were found" of these devices (2002, p. 207). This is all the more extraordinary, as the Soviets found various items of the "extermination machinery" at Auschwitz: two gas-tight doors allegedly belonging to the presumed homicidal gas chambers of the crematoria at Birkenau, the wooden benches of the "undressing rooms" of Crematoria II and III, the temporary freight elevator of Crematorium II, various gas-tight covers of the presumed homicidal gas

[137] Actually, Dejaco was SS-Untersturmführer (second lieutenant) at the time. Another example of the crass ignorance of Zimmerman and his group of translators.

[138] RGVA, 502-1-280, p. 187: "laut Befehl des Reichsführer-SS sämtliche Pläne über Bauten in Konzentrationslagern als Geheimpläne zu betrachten sind." The letter was written because at the time of his transfer to Auschwitz, SS-Obersturmführer Fritsch was pursuing various plans for Dachau.

chambers of Crematoria IV and V, and the ductwork of the ventilation system of *Leichenkeller* 2 of Crematoria II and III. Yet no trace was found of the eight alleged introduction devices for Zyklon B.

Therefore we have no trace of these ghostly columns, neither in the planning stage, nor in the construction phase, nor when they were dismantled, nor did they leave any scrap behind – there is no trace whatsoever to show that they ever existed. And this includes the total lack of any traces in the concrete of both ceiling and floor of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, to which those devices would inevitably have to have been bolted. And of the testimonies, Kula's most fundamental statement is refuted by the ledger of the "*WL-Schlosserei*."

2.6. "*Gasprüfer*" and "*Anzeigegeräte für Blausäure-Reste*"

2.6.1. Pressac's Interpretation

In his book *Les crématoires d'Auschwitz* Pressac writes (1993, pp. 71f.):

> *"As soon as Messing's erection work was sufficiently advanced, Bauleitung sent Topf a telegram on February 26* [1943] *requesting the immediate dispatch of 10 gas testers already specified for BW 30 (Crematorium II). The SS wanted to check whether the new ventilation capacity in Leichenkeller 1 had compensated the original layout of an aeration close to the ceiling and a de-aeration near the floor, typical for a morgue, but which should have been inverted for a gas chamber requiring rather a de-aeration above and an aeration below.*
>
> *On March 2, Sander and Prüfer answered as follows:* […]*"*

He then gives the French translation of the letter;[139] here we will quote the English translation provided by van Pelt (2002, p. 312):

> *"Re: Crematorium, Gas detectors.*
>
> *We acknowledge receipt of your telegram specifying: 'Immediately send ten gas detectors as agreed, price quote to follow.'*
>
> *We hereby inform you that two weeks ago we inquired, of five different companies, concerning the residual prussic acid detection devices sought by you. We have received negative responses from three companies and two have not yet answered. When we receive infor-*

[139] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 44.

mation on this matter, we shall immediately contact you, in order to put you in touch with a company that makes these devices."

Then Pressac goes on to say (1993, p. 72):

"Bauleitung received this letter on March 5. This document is the definitive proof for the existence of a homicidal gas chamber in Crematorium II."

Actually, this document proves neither the existence of a *homicidal* gas chamber nor even the existence of *any sort of gas chamber* in Crematorium II. Replaced into its historical context – as we shall see – it even loses the purely *indicative* character it appears to have at first sight.

The conclusion of the matter, according to Pressac, was as follows (1993, p. 84):

"On March 10, Schultze and Messing tested the aeration/de-aeration of the gas chamber in Crematorium II over a period of 16 hours. Apparently, the unit did not yet work satisfactorily, because Messing worked on it for another 11 hours on the 11th and for 15 hours on the 13th. Tests were made with prior introduction of Zyklon B. Measurement of residual hydrogen cyanide was apparently done by means of a chemical method and not with the gas testers, as these had been ordered too late to be shipped in time."

In the discussion below my aim is to show on the one hand that Pressac's interpretation is historically unfounded and technically nonsensical, and on the other hand to furnish an alternative explanation which is in keeping with the historical and technical context of the documental framework.

2.6.2. The Destination of the "*Gasprüfer*"

Pressac's explanation is technically wrong and historically unfounded. The idea that a de-aeration from below would be unsuitable for a gas chamber using hydrogen cyanide has no valid technical reason. In fact, in the lay-out of disinfestation chambers operating according to the Degesch system using hydrogen cyanide in circulation (*Entlausungskammern mit DEGESCH-Kreislaufanordnung*) the exhaust intake (*Ansaugöffnung*) could be located indiscriminately high or low in the gas chamber.[140] What determined a good performance was only the capacity of the blowers (in pressure and in suction).

[140] For the second case cf. for example the layout that appears in Peters/Wüstinger, p. 193.

Pressac's explanation that "measurement of residual hydrogen cyanide was apparently done by means of a chemical method and not with the gas testers" is likewise unfounded both historically and technically. Actually, for one thing, *no document* ever mentioned any "measurement of residual hydrogen cyanide" in *Leichenkeller* 1, and secondly, such a test (*Gasrestprobe*) for residual HCN can *only* be done in a *chemical* way, namely by Pertusi and Gastaldi's method, which was later perfected by Sieverts and Hermsdorf (Sieverts/Hermsdorf; Puntigam et al., p. 21 and 111). If we accept Pressac's claim that the tests were done "by means of a chemical method" instead of by means of *Gasprüfer*, the latter *cannot* have involved a chemical process, which means that they *could not* have been used for the "*Gasrestprobe*." With this "slip," Pressac inadvertently demolishes his whole argument. Actually, the technical designation for the HCN residue testing equipment was neither *Gasprüfer* nor "*Anzeigegerät für Blausäure-Reste*," but *Gasrestnachweisgerät für Zyklon* (residual gas indicating equipment for Zyklon [B]).[141] This apparatus was not an instrument, but a box containing various chemical products.[142] An official *Waffen-SS* booklet gives detailed guidance in this respect (Mrugowski, pp. 124f.):

"Test for residual gas.

The test will be carried out by the person responsible for the gassing operation or by a person designated by him, using the approved residual gas testing equipment (according to Pertusi and Gastaldi).

It contains:

1 light-colored glass bottle with solution I (2.86 g of copper acetate in 1 liter of water)

1 brown bottle with solution II (475 cm³ of a [aqueous] *solution saturated at room temperature with benzidine acetate and diluted with water to 1 liter)*

1 tube of calcium cyanide with cork stopper (testing tube)

3 tubes with cork stopper for moistened paper strips

1 light-colored tube with powder for ½ liter of solution I

1 brown tube with powder for ½ liter of solution II

1 officially stamped color plate

Filter paper strips no. 597 from Schleicher-Schüll, Düren

[141] Letter from Tesch & Stabenow toVerwaltung of KGL Lublin dated July 29, 1942. APMM, sygn. I d 2, vol. 1, p. 107. I have reproduced the document in: Mattogno 1994b, p. 123.

[142] Cf. the photograph of a "Gasrestnachweisgerät" found by the Soviets at Auschwitz in Mattogno 1994b, p. 124.

Directions for use of residual gas indicating equipment.

Fill mixing vessel with equal parts of solutions I and II, place stopper and shake. Dip several strips of filter paper half-way into mixture. By dipping into testing tube with calcium cyanide solution verify that mixture reacts with hydrogen cyanide (blue coloration!).

If there is blue coloration, the previously aerated room must be tested with other moistened strips of filter paper. This operation must be done using a gas mask. If, after 10 seconds, there is no coloration stronger than the lowest (weakest) color on the color plate, the room can be definitively accepted for normal use. If not, ventilation is to be continued and a new test has to be made.

Preparation of solutions I and II is done as follows: the contents of 1 brown tube (for solution I) and 1 light-colored tube (for solution II) will be diluted in half a liter of distilled water each and the solution filtered. Solutions showing a sediment are unsuitable and must be discarded. Mixing of solutions I and II must be done only immediately prior to the test.

The color plates must be renewed every five years. Access may be authorized only if after careful execution of the test [in the open space of the room, transl.] *there is also no trace of hydrogen cyanide between two superimposed objects* [i.e. garments, transl.]*; otherwise ventilation must be continued and the test repeated."*

2.6.3. The Historical Context

The telegram of ZBL was sent at a time when there was a renewed wave of typhus (*Fleckfieber*), an epidemic which had sprung up at Auschwitz in early July 1942. On February 8, 1943, the camp commander, *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Rudolf Höss, promulgated *Standortbefehl Nr. 2/43* which informed all of his subordinates of the following:[143]

"By order of Amtsgruppenchef D, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Glücks, a complete closure of KL Auschwitz is again in force. The order by Amtsgruppenchef, received by telex, specifies i.a. the following:

'Because of a renewed incidence of typhus among members of SS, the previously practiced easing in approving leave must be cancelled again.'"

[143] APMO, Standort-Befehl, D-AuI-1, p. 46.

On February 12, Bischoff sent Kammler a letter concerning "increase of typhus cases" to inform him of Glücks' order. Bischoff wrote:[144]

> *"As a consequence of a strong increase in typhus cases among the guard personnel, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Glücks has ordered the complete closure of KL Auschwitz on February 9, 1943. In this connection, disinfestation of all detainees has been implemented since February 11, 1943, and* [the detainees] *may not leave the camp. As a consequence, work on sites to which detainees had temporarily been assigned had to be stopped. Zentralbauleitung will report on resumption of work."*

On the same day, *SS-Unterscharführer* Franz Weislav, who worked in the administration (*Verwaltung*) of ZBL, drew up a note for the file (*Aktenvermerk*) describing the idleness of the detainee details (*Häftlingskommandos*) on February 11 and 12:[145]

> *"As a consequence of the implementation of delousing of all details, still continuing in part, the details requested by this office could not leave* [the camp], *either partly or not at all."*

After having mentioned the vital *Kommandos* that had gone out to work and that the *Kommando* assigned to the offices and the one working in ZBL had been fully employed after delousing (*nach erfolgter Entlausung*), Weislav continues:

> *"The detainee Kommandos at KGL and FKL have moved out in full force on the days mentioned. Delousing in these camps will be carried out at a later date."*

On February 13, Bischoff returned to the letter of the day before and informed the head of *Hauptabteilung C/VI* at SS-WVHA, *SS-Standartenführer* Eirenschmalz, that

> *"there are more and more cases of civilian workers coming down with typhus, too. Normally, civilian workers who are housed together with those ill are put on 3 weeks quarantine by the garrison surgeon."*[146]

In *Standortbefehl Nr.3/43* of February 14, Höss defined precisely the limits of the *Sperrgebiet* (off-limits zone) and informed about the measures taken by *SS-Standortarzt* (the garrison surgeon):[147]

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[144] RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 108.
[145] RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 37.
[146] RGVA, 502-1-28, p. 221.
[147] APMO, Standort-Befehl, D-AuI-1, pp. 48-49.

"Delousings will be implemented in direct coordination with the garrison surgeon. […] *The instructions of the garrison surgeon with respect to the disinfestation of the guard detail accompanying transports must be strictly adhered to."*

On February 18, Bischoff, following up on the letter of the 12th, informed Kammler that "the disinfestation of the detainees has been done and work has resumed on February 16, 1943."[148] On February 20 Crematorium II went into operation, albeit at a reduced rate.[149] On February 25 the Auschwitz garrison surgeon summed up the situation in the camp in a letter to the head of department D III of SS-WVHA:[150]

"As has been reported previously, the typhus epidemic that had practically been brought under control at KL Auschwitz in the months of November and December has again flared up among both the detainees of KL Auschwitz and members of the SS on account of the transports arriving from the east. In spite of immediate countermeasures taken, it has not been possible, as of today, to arrive at a complete subsidence of the typhus cases."

The SS garrison surgeon intended to stamp out the epidemic once and for all by taking drastic measures, the most important one being a general disinfestation:

"Except for a few vital Kommandos (food sections, agricultural laborers in the animal husbandry section and office personnel) all work in the major camps of KL Auschwitz, viz. Main Camp, MKL [men's camp] *and FKL* [women's camp] *at Birkenau, as well as PoW Phase 2 would have to be stopped for a duration of 3 weeks. During this time, a thorough delousing and disinfestation would be conducted twice throughout these camps in such a way that at the end of the 3-week quarantine the lice problem in the camp will have ceased to exist and the risk of new cases of typhus will have been eliminated."*

On the following day, February 26, 1943, ZBL sent Topf the well-known cable:[151]

"Immediately send ten gas detectors as agreed, submit cost estimate later."

[148] RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 106.
[149] RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 61.
[150] RGVA, 502-1-68, pp. 115-116.
[151] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 48.

If these *Gasprüfer* had really been "residual prussic acid detection devices" (*Anzeigegeräte für Blausäure-Reste*), the request of ZBL would rather fit into the *very real* historical context of an typhus epidemic being fought throughout the camp by means of hydrogen cyanide (Zyklon B) than into the purely hypothetical context of the installation of a homicidal gas chamber in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II. I am speaking of a purely hypothetical context, because the Topf letter of March 2, 1943, as such does not prove anything: as I have stressed elsewhere (1996, p. 34), Pressac presents at this point a classical example of a *petitio principii*: the *Gasprüfer* have a criminal function because there is a homicidal gas chamber in Crematorium II and, *vice versa*, there is a homicidal gas chamber in Crematorium II because the *Gasprüfer* have a criminal function!

The historical context by itself would suffice to sustain Robert Faurisson's interpretation according to which the "detection devices" – merely alleged, in my opinion – were used for normal disinfestations of the crematorium.[152] In support of this interpretation one might add that, in keeping with the dispositions of the SS garrison surgeon, the 200 detainees who worked in Crematorium II at the end of February 1943[153] would have been able to return to work only after a personal disinfestation and, obviously, a disinfestation of their workplace, i.e. Crematorium II.

Disinfestation of the two morgues in the half-basement of Crematorium II was normally practiced when corpses of detainees having died from typhus were placed there. Confirmation of this fact can be found in the following dispositions of the police president at Kattowitz (*der Polizeipräsident in Kattowitz*) concerning the inmates of the provisional police jail at Myslowitz where typhus had broken out in January 1943:[154]

> *"The bodies of persons who have died of typhus are to be treated with a disinfecting agent and an anti-lice solution and placed in coffins as soon as possible. The coffin must be closed at once and*

[152] Faurisson 1994, p. 49; "Reply to Jean-Claude Pressac…," in: Rudolf 2005, pp. 85-86.

[153] Letter from Zentralbauleitung an die Kommandantur – Abteilung IIIa (Häftlingseinsatz) of February 20, 1943: "At Crematorium II, the Kommando was only 40 strong instead of 200 on February 18, 1943, and 80 strong instead of 200 on February 19, 1943." ["Bei Krematorium II war das Kommando am 18.2.43 statt 200 Häftlinge nur 40 Häftlinge stark, und am 19.2.43 statt 200 nur 80 Häftlinge stark"]. APMO, BW 30/34, p.74.

[154] Letter from Polizeipräsident to Regierungspräsident at Kattowitz, Jan. 21, 1943. APK, RK 2903, p. 22.

moved to a special hall. For incineration, the corpses will be transferred to Auschwitz by hearse."

The project of using *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II temporarily as an emergency disinfestation chamber employing hydrogen cyanide, as discussed above, must be viewed against the background of a strong flare-up of typhus which occurred at that time.

In conclusion, even if Pressac's assumptions were true, his conclusions would be historically unsustainable and the historical context would lend support to the revisionists' interpretation. One could, therefore, conclude that the order of the mysterious "gas detectors" had the perfectly innocent purpose of checking the usability of *Leichenkeller* 1 as a disinfestation chamber and let it go at that.

But is Pressac's interpretation correct? Before we can answer that question, we must look at the bureaucratic context of the documents.

2.6.4. The Bureaucratic Context

In January 1943 ZBL had reached the zenith of its life as an organization and consisted of 14 sections (*Abteilungen*) and 5 *Bauleitungen*. The sections were the following:

1. Sachgebiet Hochbau (buildings)
2. Sachgebiet Tiefbau (civil engineering)
3. Sachgebiet Bewässerung (irrigation)
4. Sachgebiet Meliorationen und Vermessung (soil improvement and surveying)
5. Sachgebiet Planung (projects)
6. Rohstoffstelle und Einkauf (raw materials and purchasing)
7. Verwaltung (administration)
8. Fahrbereitschaft (motor pool)
9. Technische Abteilung (technical department)
10. Arbeitseinsatz (work force management)
11. Werkstätten (workshops)
12. Zimmereibetrieb und Dachdeckerbetrieb (carpentry and roofing)
13. Gartengestaltung (gardening)
14. Sachgebiet Statistik (statistics).

The 5 *Bauleitungen* were

I: Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz. K.L. Auschwitz und Landwirtschaft Auschwitz (KL and farm Auschwitz);

II: Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers (PoW camp);

III: Bauleitung Industriegelände Auschwitz (Auschwitz industrial area);
IV: Bauleitung Hauptwirtschaftslager der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz und Truppenwirtschaftslager Oderberg (Oderberg materials storage);
V: Bauleitung Werk und Gut Freudenthal und Gut Partschendorf (Freudenthal factory and farm and Partschendorf farm; see Mattogno 2005h, pp. 18-24, 144f.).

ZBL was exclusively concerned with construction projects and was therefore attached to *Amtsgruppe C (Bauwesen*; construction) at SS-WVHA, headed by *SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS* Hans Kammler. Financial questions – among them payment of invoices and of private firms – were handled by *Amt V/2a* (*Haushalt und Rechnungslegung*; budget and accounting).

As opposed to this, sanitary and medical tasks – among them purchasing and use of hydrogen cyanide (Zyklon B) and auxiliary equipment – were the exclusive domain of the *SS-Standortarzt* (garrison surgeon) who reported to *Amtsgruppe D III* of SS-WVHA, headed by *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Dr. Lolling. In February 1943 the SS garrison surgeon at Auschwitz was *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Eduard Wirths, his deputy was *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Eduard Krebsbach. The SS garrison surgeon had at his orders the *Truppenarzt* (troop surgeon) who took care of medical questions regarding the military, the *Lagerärzte* (camp surgeons) who took care of the detainees, and the *Sanitätsdienstgrade* (*SDG*) (paramedics), auxiliary personnel consisting of *SS-Unterführer* or *SS-Männer* specifically trained for such tasks. Each camp (*Lager*) and each camp section (*Lagerabschnitt*) had a *Lagerarzt* (camp surgeon). *Lagerarzt* at *KGL-Birkenau* was *SS-Obersturmführer* Helmut Vetter.

One of the foremost tasks of the SS garrison surgeon was the prevention of and the fight against the recurring epidemics of typhus by all means available for this purpose, including disinfestations with Zyklon B. He was directly responsible both for the disinfestation and disinfection units in the camp and for the disinfestation of individual buildings or entire construction sections (*Bauabschnitte*) of the camp. The latter activity was carried out by a group of paramedics, the *Desinfektionskommando* (disinfestation detail) headed by *SS-Oberscharführer* Joseph Klehr.

The Zyklon B used by the *Desinfektoren* (disinfectors) was procured in the following manner: the SS garrison surgeon filed a written request

with the head of the administration (*Leiter der Verwaltung*) stating the reason; the request was then passed on to *Amt D IV* of SS-WVHA. Once the approval from that office had been received, *SS-Sturmbannführer* Willi Burger, the head of administration, sent the order to the firm Tesch & Stabenow[155] together with the *Wehrmacht-Frachtbriefe* (military freight papers) needed for the shipment of the goods. The supplies could also be picked up by the administration directly at Dessau, once *Dessauer Werke für Zucker und chemische Industrie*, manufacturer of the Zyklon B (together with *Kaliwerke A.G. Kolin*), had cabled that the Zyklon B was "*abholbereit*" (ready for pick-up).[156]

Payment of the invoices from Tesch & Stabenow was done by *Amt D IV/1* at SS-WVHA. Along this route, the disinfectors at Auschwitz obtained not only Zyklon B itself, but also the various paraphernalia needed for the disinfestations, which were also supplied by Tesch & Stabenow, i.e. tools for opening the cans of Zyklon B (*Schlageisen*), rubber lids (*Gummikappen*) for the open cans, gas masks (*Gasmasken*), special mask filters "J" (*Atemeinsätze J*) and the test equipment for residual gas (*Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*). The SS garrison surgeon or, by delegation, the *Lagerarzt* was responsible for the storage, the use and the handling of all of these goods.

It is important to note here that this bureaucratic path would also have applied in the case of a criminal use of Zyklon B. At Auschwitz the practice was such that it was impossible to use Zyklon B without the approval of the SS garrison surgeon – or behind his back.

2.6.5 Problems Not Solved by Jean-Claude Pressac

From what has just been stated one can clearly see that the two documents about the *Gasprüfer*, from Pressac's point of view, presented serious problems of interpretation, on which the French historian preferred to close his eyes. In his first book, Pressac – who had already taken the meaning of the term *Gasprüfer* in the telegram from ZBL of February 26, 1943, to be gas detectors *for hydrogen cyanide* – raised in this regard a highly significant problem (p. 218, 223):

> *"Since Topf's production consisted essentially of brewery equipment (cauldrons, vats, etc.), metal conduits and containers (ventilation ducting, grain silos, etc.), together with the associated compo-*

[155] Auschwitz was located in the Zyklon B sales area that had been assigned to Tesch & Stabenow.

[156] APMM, sygn. I d 2, vol. 1; Graf/Mattogno 2003b, pp. 194f.

nents (fans, valves and cocks) and, of course, incineration furnaces, they did not manufacture gas detectors, objects associated with systems totally foreign to their spheres of activity, so they must necessarily have had to order them from another civilian firm. Why did the SS use Topf as an intermediary instead of directly approaching a specialist supplier? The answer must be that, in this way, they avoided awkward questions or the putting of two and two together that might have occurred if some civilian firm not knowing the 'special activity' of the Auschwitz camp had received such an order. On the other hand there were no such worries in dealing with Prüfer, who was after all technical advisor for the Krematorien."

This interpretation is disarmingly superficial. By February 1943 the two disinfestation chambers using hydrogen cyanide (*Kammer für Blausäurevergasung*) of the disinfestation installations at BW 5a & 5b had already been in operation for several months.[157] The two chambers had floor areas of some 108 m² (10.9×9.9 m). The gas was removed by means of two blowers set in the wall opposite to the two entrance doors (Pressac 1989, p. 55, 59). Such an arrangement required the normal procedures for residual gas testing to be applied before the gas chambers could be entered. The instructions must have been similar to those in force at the disinfestation chamber of Gusen, set out on February 26, 1942, by *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Krebsbach, at that time SS garrison surgeon at Mauthausen, who in 1943 – as we have seen above– was the deputy of the SS garrison surgeon at Auschwitz. The disinfestation chamber at Gusen had a volume of some 100 m³ and was equipped with an exhaust blower and windows. These instructions specified, under item 13:[158]

"1½ hours later, at the earliest, the residual gas test must be carried out at a window from the outside. If the residual gas test is still positive, de-aeration must be continued. In any case, the residual gas test must be carried out with a gas mask being worn."

[157] Letter from head of Zentralbauleitung to head of Amtsgruppe C of SS-WVHA of January 9, 1943 concerning: "Hygienic installations at KL and KGL Auschwitz." RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 46a.

[158] Dienstanweisung für die Bedienung der Blausäure-Entwesungskammer im K.L.M. Unterkunft Gusen (Instructions for the operation of the hydrogen cyanide disinfestation chamber at K.L.M. subcamp at Gusen), drawn up by SS-Standortarzt of KL Mauthausen, SS-Hauptsturmführer Eduard Kressbach on 25 February, 1942. ÖDMM, M 9a/1. Cf. in this respect Mattogno 2004m.

The SS garrison surgeon was responsible for the functioning of the gas chamber, for the use of Zyklon B, and for the proper storage of all items needed for the disinfestations. The safety regulations applied likewise to the disinfestation gas chambers of BW 5a and 5b which, as far as aspects of hygiene and sanitation were concerned, fell under the competence of the SS garrison surgeon at Auschwitz. These installations required conspicuous quantities of Zyklon B every day (see chapter 14.2.) as well as supplies for the residual gas tests, so why should a possible order for such items with "some civilian firm" have raised any "awkward questions"?

Thus, Pressac's interpretation does not explain anything and leaves open all kinds of questions which are far more numerous and far more serious than what he thought. They can be summarized in the following way:

As the residual gas testing equipment

i) fell within the competence of the SS garrison surgeon,
ii) was supplied by the Tesch & Stabenow company,
iii) was called *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon* and not *Gasprüfer*,
iv) was available at Auschwitz in February 1943,

then why was it

a) ordered by ZBL and not by the SS garrison surgeon,
b) with the Topf company and not with Tesch & Stabenow,
c) under the designation *Gasprüfer* instead of *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*,
d) even though it was available within the Auschwitz camp?

Let us look separately at each of these objections.

a) The ZBL had no authority to order test equipment for residual gas, just as it had no authority to order Zyklon B. If it had actually ordered such items, it would not have been able to emit payment vouchers, because they did not come within the competence of *Amt V/2* of SS-WVHA. In other words, an invoice could not have been paid – and anyone familiar with the operation of ZBL knows how important these bureaucratic procedures were – unless Bischoff would have wanted to pay for these *Gasprüfer* out of his own pocket!

Pressac has also overlooked another fundamental problem: a possible check on the suitability of the ventilation system of *Leichenkeller* 1

in Crematorium II for its use in connection with homicidal gassings would inevitably have involved the following supplies:

1) Zyklon B
2) gas masks
3) special filters "J" type (*Atemeinsätze "J"*)
4) opening tools for the cans of Zyklon B (*Schlageisen*)
5) the *Gasrestnachweisgerät für Zyklon.*

Then why would ZBL have ordered only the *Gasprüfer*? Obviously because it did not need the rest, but it is also obvious that they did not need the rest because they would have been able to get all they needed from the SS garrison surgeon. In this way, however, they would also have been in a position to obtain *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*, but then why would they have to go to Topf for something like that?

In this context, Pressac's assertion that "tests were made with prior introduction of Zyklon B" raises further problems: if this had been so, where did ZBL obtain the Zyklon B? From Topf – or from the SS garrison surgeon who, in matters of hygiene and sanitation, ruled also over all crematoria? This question, though, is a purely hypothetical one, because Pressac's assertion not only has no foundation in documents, it is also in disagreement with the accounts of Topf's fitter Messing and even with Pressac's own comments. Messing did the following work:

- March 10 and 11, 1943: "*Be- u. Entlüftungs-Anlagen für L.Keller I versuchsweise einprobiert*" (de-aeration and aeration units for *L.Keller 1* set up tentatively): 16 and 11 hours of work respectively.
- March 12, 1943: "*Entlüftungs-Anlagen Auskleidekeller gearbeitet*" (worked on de-aeration units undressing cellar): 11 hours of work.
- March 13, 1943: "*Be- u. Entlüftungsanlagen Keller I in Betrieb genommen*" (start-up of de-aeration and aeration units in *Keller 1*): 15 hours of work.[159]

  Pressac comments (1993, p. 73):

  > *"Apparently, the unit did not yet work satisfactorily, because Messing worked on it for another 11 hours on the 11th and for 15 hours on the 13th."*

Hence, on March 10, 11, and 13 Messing did only test the mechanical ventilation system. But then, when were those "tests" with Zyklon B actually done, if the first homicidal gassing is said to have taken place "during the night of February 13 to 14"? (Pressac, *ibid*.) And why did

[159] Messing's Arbeitszeit-Bescheinigung for the week of March 8-14, 1943. APMO, BW 30/41, p. 28.

Messing never mention this? The matter is all the more puzzling as Messing, if we follow Pressac, wanted to reveal the "truth" at least partly by writing "*Auskleidekeller*" instead of "*Leichenkeller*" (*ibid*., pp. 74f.).

Let us now look at item b): assuming, for the sake of the argument, that the SS garrison surgeon was temporarily out of *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*, why would ZBL have had to order them with Topf – a company that neither manufactured nor sold such things – rather than with Tesch & Stabenow who certainly sold them? Pressac's explanation in this regard is decidedly childish: according to their letter of March 2, 1943, Topf had not acted as an "intermediary" to cover the alleged nefarious secrets of Auschwitz – as he says – but had simply brought ZBL in touch with possible suppliers of such equipment:

> *"When we receive information on this matter, we shall immediately contact you, in order to put you in touch with a company that makes these devices."*

In other words, Topf would have had to inquire with Tesch & Stabenow about the *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon* and, if they were available there, Topf would have put ZBL in touch with them! This round-about procedure would have had quite the opposite effect of what Pressac tries to tell us: receiving an order for *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon* from ZBL rather than from the camp administration, their usual customer, would really have been a reason for Tesch & Stabenow to become curious!

Let us go on to item c). If we accept Pressac's interpretation, we find ourselves confronted by another point which the French historian has not considered: a possible test on the ventilation system of *Leichenkeller* 1 for homicidal gassings with Zyklon B would have involved the SS garrison surgeon and would thus have been planned and carried out by the *Desinfektoren*; Messing, for his part, would have taken care of his specific area, the mechanical ventilation. Now, if ZBL could do the test only with the help of the disinfection group who knew the terminology of their trade very well, how can one explain the request for *Gasprüfer* as opposed to *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*?

We have thus arrived at the last item. The hypothesis I have proffered under point b), namely that the SS garrison surgeon had temporarily run out of *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*, is not applicable because the test for residual gas was not only in accordance with the rules but also prescribed by law (Mattogno 2004m, pp. 150-155). As the test

was necessary and indispensable in cases of work with hydrogen cyanide, one may infer with certainty from the activity of the gas disinfestation chambers in BW 5a and 5b and from the use of hydrogen cyanide for the disinfestation of the camp in February 1943 that *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon* were indeed available.[160] But then, why would they have to be ordered from Topf?

2.6.6. What Were the "*Gasprüfer*"?

Now that Pressac's interpretation has been demonstrated to be unfounded, even absurd, we can furnish an alternative explanation which will resolve, at the same time, all the other problems already touched and left aside by the French historian.

To begin with, let me state that the word *Gasprüfer* was, indeed, a technical term designating an instrument used in the analysis of combustion gases (*Rauchgasanalyse*) by physical methods.[161] In the early 1940s various instruments were used in connection with combustion gases, from equipment for the analysis of spent gases (*Rauchgasanalyse-Anlagen*), transmitters for $\%CO_2$, to indicators for $\%CO_2$ and for $\%CO+H_2$ (*Anzeiger für % CO_2* and *für % $CO+H_2$*).[162] Crematorium ovens were usually equipped with one such instrument. Engineer Richard Kessler, one of the foremost German experts in the cremation field in the 1920s and 30s, recommended as "*unbedingt notwendig*" (indispensable) for the proper operation of crematorium ovens the installation of a series of controls, among them "a high-quality CO- and CO_2-meter, in order to achieve an efficient combustion while observing smoke development at the same time" (Kessler 1927, pp. 137f.). As late as the early 1970s, Hans Kraupner advised (p. 4):

> *"It is important that for the control of smoke development measuring instruments are placed directly behind the oven, advising the operator of an incipient smoke development by a suitable signal."* (Emph. in original)

The most reasonable hypothesis would thus be that ZBL had ordered the *Gasprüfer* for the Birkenau crematoria. Let us see whether this hypothesis resolves all the problems referred to above.

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[160] The Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon were available even in January 1945: The Soviets found several in the Aufnahmebaracke mit Entlausung (BW 28) and photographed them. Cf. Mattogno 2004m, photo III.4 on p. 144.

[161] "Hütte" 1931, vol. I, pp. 1010-1013. Mattogno 2004m, document III.5 on p. 145.

[162] *Ibid.*, photo III.6 on p. 148.

The telegram of February 26, 1943, has the following typed indication of the sender: "*Zentralbauleitung Auschwitz gez. Pollock SS-Untersturmführer*"; it shows, moreover, three handwritten entries: at top right the abbreviation "BW30" (*Bauwerk 30* = Crematorium II), at bottom right the abbreviation "*Jäh*" i.e. the initials of civilian employee Jährling, finally at bottom left, next to the date and time of the dispatch of the telegram the name of Kirschneck, preceded by his rank "Ustuf." (= *Untersturmführer*).[163]

Topf's letter of March 2, 1943,[164] has the incoming stamp of *Registratur* (mail service) of March 5 as well as two handwritten entries: Jährling (on the left) followed by the date of March 8, 1943, and Janisch (on the right) preceded by the date of March 6. Let us see who these persons were and what duties they had within ZBL.

SS-Untersturmführer Josef Pollock was *Bauleiter*[165] at *Bauleitung Hauptwirtschaftslager der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz und Truppenwirtschaftslager Oderberg*; *SS-Untersturmführer* Hans Kirschneck was *Bauleiter* at *Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz. K.L. Auschwitz und Landwirtschaft Auschwitz*; *SS-Untersturmführer* Josef Janisch was *Bauleiter* at *Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers*; the civilian employee Rudolf Jährling finally, a professional *Heizungs-Techniker* (specialist in [central] heating), belonged to *Technische Abteilung* of ZBL.

The telegram of February 26 was written by *SS-Untersturmführer* Josef Pollock because his competence – in view of his training as an architectural engineer in general as well as his responsibilities in various areas related to buildings such as financial or safety matters, construction permits, or materials allocation – also included the *Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers*, i.e. the Birkenau camp.[166] *SS-Untersturmführer* Kirschneck, on the other hand, had no competence as far as the *Kriegsgefangenenlager* at Birkenau was concerned and was merely kept informed. His handwritten name, as it appears on this document, was not his signature.

The most important person mentioned in the cable was actually Jährling who, in view of his specialty as a heating engineer, took care of all heating and combustion units in the camp, the largest of which was the

[163] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 48. Cf. document 11.
[164] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 44. Cf. document 12.
[165] Head of a Bauleitung.
[166] RGVA, 502-1-57, p. 306 (notes on the personalities of some members of Zentralbauleitung written by Bischoff in January 1943).

district heating plant (*Fernheizwerk*) which had a daily consumption of 45 to 50 tons of coal.[167] Jährling was also in charge of thermal questions relating to the crematoria ovens; it was he, for example, who wrote the note for the file (*Aktenvermerk*) of March 17, 1943, concerning the evaluation of the coke consumption in the Birkenau crematoria.[168] In 1944 Jährling was the head of heating technology section (*Heiztechnische Abteilung*) of ZBL. The fact that Jährling was involved in the order of the *Gasprüfer* is thus another confirmation of the fact that these pieces were simply instruments for the analysis of the combustion gases in the ovens of the crematoria. This interpretation is furthermore in good agreement with the historical context: On January 29, 1943, Prüfer inspected the worksites of the crematoria and wrote a report in which he noted, for Crematorium II:[169]

> *"The 5 pcs. triple-muffle incineration ovens have been completed and are now being dried by heating."*

In his work report of March 29, 1943, Kirschneck wrote about Crematorium II:[170]

> *"Brickwork completely finished and started up on February 20, 1943."*

It is thus clear that ZBL, when it ordered flue gas analyzers, wanted to make sure of an efficient operation of the crematorium ovens. It is also clear why ZBL, for the procurement of these heat technology instruments, turned to Topf which was a "*Maschinenfabrik und feuerungstechnisches Baugeschäft*" (manufacturer of machines and construction company for combustion technology).[171]

The urgency of Bischoff's request must be seen in the light of the difficulties of supplying power to Crematoria II and III which had arisen in January 1943. The note for the file (*Aktenvermerk*) written by *SS-Unterscharführer* Heinrich Swoboda, head of the technical section (*Technische Abteilung*) at ZBL on January 29, 1943, deals with a meeting he had that day with engineer Tomitschek of the local office of AEG at Auschwitz. Because of supply problems, it was not possible to

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[167] Letter from F. Boos Co. to Zentralbauleitung of June 27, 1942 concerning: "Heizwerk K.L. Auschwitz." RGVA, 502-1-138, p. 513.

[168] APMO, BW 30/7/34, p. 54. Cf. chapter 8.8.3.

[169] Prüfbericht des Ing. Prüfer of January 29, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 101.

[170] RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 61.

[171] In the field of heat technology, the business of Topf was divided into four departments (Abteilungen): D I – Kesselhaus- u. Feuerungsbau (Boiler plants and hearths), D II – Topf-Rost Bau (Topf-Grids), D III – Industrieschornsteinbau (Industrial chimneys), D IV – Ofenbau (Ovens). SE, 5/411 A 174, List without heading. Cf. appendix.

complete the electrical power connection to Crematorium II (and it was impossible to ensure the hook-up for Crematorium III) and therefore this unit could not go into operation before February 15, 1943. In this connection, Swoboda noted:[172]

> *"This start-up must, however, be limited to a reduced operation of the existing machines (an incineration with simultaneous special treatment is assured), as the cable leading to the crematorium is rated too low for the latter's requirements."*

This document will be analyzed in detail in chapter 6.3. What is important here is that the "existing machines" which consumed so much energy were the three *Saugzug-Anlagen* (forced draft suction equipment) in the three ducts of the chimney and the five blowers (*Druckluft-Anlagen*) of the crematorium ovens. As we have already seen, Crematorium II went into operation on February 20, but at a reduced rate[173] – for the very reason that the power line allowed only "a reduced operation of the existing machines." Because of this, the *Gasprüfer* were needed in order to check whether the reduced operation of the forced draft equipment and of the blowers still allowed an efficient combustion.

What remains to be elucidated is a question Pressac avoided and which further confirms the explanation given above: why did the ZBL request concern precisely 10 *Gasprüfer*? The answer is simple: they were to go into the 10 flue ducts (*Rauchkanäle*) of Crematoria II and III.[174]

Summarizing, if the *Gasprüfer* were normal instruments for the control of the combustion gases, it is easy to see

a) why the order came from ZBL and not from the SS garrison surgeon;

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[172] Aktenvermerk of SS-Unterscharführer Swoboda of January 29, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 196.

[173] The crematorium went into operation at full load after March 5, the date of the arrival at Auschwitz of detainee August Brück, former Kapo of the crematorium at Buchenwald (equipped with 2 triple-muffle ovens of a type identical to those at crema II and III at Birkenau), who became Kapo of Crematorium II.

[174] The flue ducts (Rauchkanäle) were accessible through appropriate manholes (Fuchsein-steigeschächte). The chimneys of Crematoria II-V had a total of 10 flue ducts (Schorn-steinröhren), but only the chimneys of Crematoria II and III were equipped with cleaning traps (Reinigungstüren). Therefore, the "Gasprüfer" were certainly intended for the flue ducts. The reference"BW 30" in the telegram of February 26, 1943, does not necessarily mean that the "Gasprüfer" were destined for Crematorium II; as in other cases, it could also mean that the administrative competence for the purchase lay with Registratur of BW 30. For example, Bischoff's report of January 23, 1943, was registered in the Registratur of BW 30, even though it concerned all four crematoria. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 53.

b) why the order went to Topf and not to Tesch & Stabenow;
c) why they were ordered under the name of *Gasprüfer* and not as *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*;
d) what their function was;
e) why exactly10 were ordered;
f) why, aside from the *Gasprüfer*, there was no order for either Zyklon B, gas masks, gas mask filters, or opening tools for Zyklon B cans.

Let us consider finally the Topf letter dated March 2, 1943. As already noted, it bears the marks of Janisch, *Bauleiter* at *Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers* and of Jährling, which fits perfectly with the explanation given above. As far as the text of the letter is concerned, one notes first of all that the request for information on the part of Topf "*bereits vor 2 Wochen*" (already two weeks ago) preceded by at least 10 days the cable from ZBL, which referred to a prior discussion ("*wie besprochen*," as discussed) of which there is, however, no trace. The text of the telegram – "*absendet sofort 10 Gasprüfer wie besprochen*" (immediately send ten gas detectors as agreed) – indicates that Topf already had such *Gasprüfer* and was ready to ship them.

The reference, further on, to a *Kostenangebot* (lit.: cost offer) and Topf's answer raise another problem: normal bureaucratic practice was that upon the request of ZBL Topf, like all other suppliers, would submit an offer (*Angebot*) in the form of a cost estimate (*Kostenanschlag*); if the offer was accepted, ZBL gave an order, possibly orally, which was always confirmed in writing (*Auftragserteilung*). In this context, the term *Kostenangebot* was rare and designates certainly the cost estimate (*Kostenanschlag*). In the documents in question, the normal procedure thus seems to have been turned on its head: the order from ZBL preceded the offer and the cost estimate by the supplier. Basically, ZBL, on the one hand, could not order any merchandise without having received an offer and a cost estimate from the supplier, and, on the other hand, Topf could not present an offer and a cost estimate for merchandise which it neither produced nor handled commercially.

Secondly, as *Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon* were normally distributed by Tesch & Stabenow, Heerdt & Lingler, and Degesch, which was known at least to the SS garrison surgeon, it is difficult to see why Topf ran into problems finding out who produced them.

Thirdly, one does not understand either why ZBL would have asked Topf for such information which could easily have come from the SS garrison surgeon.

Finally, "*Anzeigegeräte für Blausäure-Reste*" (indicating instruments for hydrogen cyanide residues) do not actually exist, and the term "*Anzeiger*," moreover, is not applicable to a chemical apparatus, but rather to an instrument: it refers both to the entire instrument (*Anzeigeinstrument*) and to the pointer (*Zeiger*) of the instrument, for example this could refer to an instrument for the measurement of $\%CO_2$ or $\%CO+H_2$.

This designation, unknown in all of the specialized literature on the subject of Zyklon B disinfestations, appears solely in this letter and was coined especially for it. How to explain these oddities? And why did Pressac pass them by completely? If a historian affirms that a document furnishes "the ultimate proof" of some fact, he must also address and resolve all the problems which arise in this connection and he must not evade this burdensome task. This reproach must be extended, all the more so, to van Pelt, who has handled this question with his habitual negligence. He writes (2002, p. 311):

> *"Certain 'slips,' however, could not be avoided. Sometimes the Central Construction Office had to be specific in order to get exactly what they wanted."*

He then introduces the telegram from ZBL of February 26, 1943, which deals with the "*Gasprüfer*." In an effort to obfuscate the fact that they were simply instruments for the analysis of flue gases, van Pelt then mentions triumphantly the Topf letter of March 2, 1943, in respect of the "*Anzeigegeräte für Blausäure*." In this way, ZBL, when it needed "exactly" those "*Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*" to run their tests on gas residues in the light of the alleged homicidal gassings, ordered "*Gasprüfer*," instruments for analyzing flue gases, and in return received information on "*Anzeigegeräte für Blausäurereste*," instruments which did not really exist. And such most glaring anomalies did not prompt van Pelt to utter even one word of comment.

2.6.7. Prüfer and the "*Gasprüfer*"

During his interrogation by his Soviet captors on March 4, 1948, Prüfer was shown a photocopy of the famous Topf letter of March 2, 1943, dealing with the "*Gasprüfer*." The Topf engineer gave the following comment:[175]

> *"The gas testers which are mentioned in the photocopy of my letter of March 2, 1943, addressed to the SS-Bauleitung of the Ausch-*

[175] Interrogation of K. Prüfer on March 4, 1948. FSBRF file N-19262. Cf. Graf 2002, p. 412.

witz concentration camp as shown to me here, were looked for by me at the request of the head of said Bauleitung, von [sic] *Bischoff, in order to install them in the gas chambers of the camp crematoria.*

When von Bischoff approached me with the respective request he explained to me that, after the poisoning of the detainees in the gas chambers, there were often cases of vapors of hydrogen cyanide still remaining in them even after their aeration, leading to the poisoning of the operating personnel working in these chambers.

Therefore, von Bischoff asked me to find out which companies were manufacturing gas testers with which one could measure the concentration of hydrogen cyanide vapors in the gas chambers in order to render the work of the operating personnel risk-free.

I was unable to comply with von Bischoff's request, because I could not identify any company that would have manufactured such gas testers."

These explanations are totally baseless. First of all, the reason behind the request concerning the *Gasprüfer* given by Prüfer (accidental poisoning in the alleged homicidal gas chambers) is not borne out by any document. One does know, on the other hand, of at least two cases of intoxication by hydrogen cyanide in connection with disinfestation gassings: one, already mentioned in chapter 2.1.6., was cited by Höss in his *Sonderbefehl* of August 12, 1942; the other occurred on December 9, 1943, when a civilian operator forced his way into an *Unterkunftsbaracke* which had just been disinfested.[176]

Aside from not being grounded in documents, such a reason also makes very little sense: after having allegedly gassed 200,000 persons in the Birkenau "bunkers" (see chapter 18.4.), the SS is said to have suddenly remembered that there were risks involved in the handling of hydrogen cyanide and to have ordered those elusive "gas testers" even before they launched the alleged gassing activity in Crematorium II. But as I have already explained, Bischoff was not entitled to even place such an order, as this was the responsibility of the SS garrison surgeon. Prüfer's statement that he could "not identify any company that would have manufactured such gas testers" is just as absurd, as all that was needed to find out who sells them was to ask the garrison surgeon.

[176] RGVA, 502-1-8, p. 25.

Secondly, Prüfer speaks of "*Ausrüstung*" (in Russian: "*oborudovanie*"[177]) of the *Gasprüfer* in the alleged gas chambers, as if they had been mechanical monitors one could permanently have installed somewhere. Actually, as we have seen above, the real *Gasprüfer* were indeed mechanical monitors for the control of combustion gases normally installed in combustion equipment, but for precisely that reason it did not make sense to place them into an alleged homicidal gas chamber working with hydrogen cyanide. As opposed to this, the "*Gasrestnachweisgeräte für Zyklon*" were chemical devices for the instantaneous preparation of strips of paper soaked with a solution reacting with hydrogen cyanide; for that reason, they could not be "installed" once and for all in some kind of room.

What is astonishing from this point of view is not so much the request for some sort of "*Gasrestnachweisgerät*" for the alleged homicidal gas chamber, as the actual fact that such a device was *never* used in any alleged homicidal gas chamber, neither earlier nor later, even though it would have been an essential piece of equipment for the safety of the detainees and SS men assigned to the "gassings" and even though it was mandatory in the disinfestation chambers (Mattogno 2004m, pp. 150-155). As a matter of fact, *no* "eyewitness" has ever spoken of a test for residual gas in the alleged gas chambers.

For all these reason the Topf letter of March 2, 1943, is at least suspicious. Although it seems formally authentic, its content is utterly untenable.

2.7. "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*"

2.7.1. Statement of the Problem

The letter written by Bischoff to Topf on March 6, 1943, starts with the following lines:[178]

> *"On the basis of your proposal this office accepts pre-warming cellar 1 with the exhaust air from the rooms with the 3 forced-draft suction units. The supply and the installation of the necessary ducting and of the blower must be done as soon as possible. As you state in your a.m. letter, execution was to take place within this week."*

[177] The interrogations of the Topf engineers arrested by the Soviets were conducted directly in Russian, through interpreters. There is no German text.
[178] APMO, BW 30/25, p. 7.

Bischoff was referring to a letter dated February 22, 1943, which has been lost. In another document, which I will discuss later, the device is called *Warmluftzuführungsanlage*, hot air supply unit. Pressac comments laconically (1989, p. 454):

> *"Heating a mortuary is nonsensical. The extracts from these two letters are criminal traces of capital importance."*

On a different page Pressac lays out his argument in greater detail (p. 375):

> *"This document constitutes damning evidence. If, as the revisionists claim, Leichenkeller 1 remained a 'morgue,' it would be mad or stupid to want to 'preheat' a place, by definition cool or cold, destined for the temporary storage of corpses. Clinging to the theory of the 'typical morgue' without taking account of its evolution, amounts to denying the authenticity of this letter. 'Preheating' makes sense only for a gas chamber using Zyklon B, where the temperature has to be raised to 27°C for the hydrocyanic acid*[179] *to evaporate."*

The rigor of this argument is deceptive. In his classical treatment on crematoria, Wilhelm Heepke states (Heepke 1905b, p. 95):

> *"If morgues exist in a crematorium, they must, of course, be equipped with a separate heating system, preferably in the form of a continuously operating stove; but heating of the morgues must always be made possible and is frequently specified by the authorities."*

And in another handbook, dealing with cemeteries and crematoria, Prof. Ernst Neufert writes:[180]

> *"The temperature level in the mortuary* [must be] *≥ 2 – ≤ 12°C, never lower, because frost may cause the corpses to expand and to burst. By means of collective heating and cooling, this level has to be maintained, with constant ventilation, especially in the summer."*

Instead of being up in arms, Pressac ought to have reflected on how his star witness Tauber described the corpses lying in the morgue of Crematorium I (1989, p. 482):

> *"All were frozen and we had to separate them from one another with axes."*

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[179] The term "hydrocyanic acid" is misleading, as HCN = hydrogen cyanide turns into a (very weak) acid only when dissolved in water. Subsequently the term hydrogen cyanide is used thoughout this book.

[180] Neufert 1938, p. 271. A copy of this book is in the Zentralbauleitung archive. RGVA, 502-2-87.

Thus, heating a typical morgue was not that "mad or stupid." But there was also another reason. In the letter to the (then) *Bauleitung* dated November 4, 1941, Topf explains that for the new crematorium (the future Crematorium II) three forced-draft units had been planned (instead of two in the original project) also in view of the fact that:[181]

> *"frozen corpses will be incinerated, requiring more fuel which causes the exhaust gas volume to increase."*

In our case, a heating device for the air in *Leichenkeller* 1 was all the more useful, if the temperature of the air was to be kept within Neufert's limits, because the outside air temperature was very much lower in winter. This would also have allowed less fuel to be consumed for the cremation. The reason why heating was planned only for *Leichenkeller* 1 is, on the other hand, explained by Pressac when he says that "*Leichenkeller* 1 was to take corpses several days old, beginning to decompose and thus requiring the room to be well-ventilated, to be incinerated as soon as possible" (1989, p. 284). In practice, *Leichenkeller* 1 was the actual storage room for corpses, whereas *Leichenkeller* 2, according to the intentions of ZBL at the time, was to be an "*Auskleideraum*," where the corpses would be undressed.

2.7.2. Pressac's Explanation

Let us now look at the "criminal" explanation Pressac gives. He affirms, as we have seen, that "'preheating' makes sense only for a gas chamber using Zyklon B, where the temperature has to be raised to 27°C for the hydrocyanic acid to evaporate." Pressac confuses evaporation with boiling, though. The temperature he cites is in fact the boiling point of hydrogen cyanide, i.e. the temperature at which its vapor pressure is equal to earth's atmospheric pressure at sea level. Taking water as an example makes this easier to understand. Water boils at 100°C at sea level, but it evaporates also at much lower temperatures. In the same way hydrogen cyanide can even evaporate at temperatures below 0°C, its melting point being –13°C, i.e. it is a liquid between this temperature and its boiling point.

The experience obtained in Germany in connection with the disinfestation of military barracks performed on a large scale in 1940 and 1941 at temperatures between minus 4 and plus 8°C showed in fact that "in all cases, the essential phase of the gas release is complete after one

[181] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 83.

or, at the most, two hours" (Peters/Rasch, p. 136). No doubt, a temperature of 27°C or higher would have sped up the evaporation of the hydrogen cyanide, but would this have necessitated the installation of a heating device? As I have shown elsewhere (1994b, p. 65), the body of an adult standing on his feet generates 1.72 kcal per minute (Flury/Zernik, p. 29); 1,800 bodies would thus generate 3,096 kcal per minute. The latent heat of evaporation of hydrogen cyanide is -6.67 kcal per mol; as its molecular weight is 27.03, the heat required for the evaporation of 6 kg of hydrogen cyanide would be (6,000×6.67)÷27.03 = 1,480 kcal, less than half of the heat generated by 1,800 bodies within 1 minute.

An antirevisionist cardiologist has argued in a similar way (Rotondi, pp. 90f.):

> *"Because at rest 0.3 liters of oxygen are consumed* [per minute] *the heat generated by a person in one minute is about 1.5 kcal (5 kcal×0.3 liter). The 1,500 to 2,000 persons pressed together in a gas chamber generated 2,250 to 3,000 kcal per minute (1.5 kcal×1,500 or 2,000 persons), quite sufficient to reach, in a room of 200 m² floor area and a volume of some 500 m³, the boiling point of HCN within 2 minutes, starting out from an initial ambient temperature of 0°C. This does not even take into account that the heat produced by the organism increases greatly in stress situations (as was the case for the victims of the gas chambers)."*

Hence, a heating unit was as useless for a homicidal gas chamber as it would have been in the furnace hall, unless one wanted to assume that the engineers in ZBL were not even able to do computations of that kind. This is all the more absurd as the useless device cost ZBL 1,070 Reichsmarks, rather more than the cost of the *Demag-Elektrozug* (freight elevator) which came to 908 Reichsmarks.

What remains to be clarified is the nature of the *Warmluftzuführungsanlage*, its purpose, and why Bischoff's letter of March 6, 1943, speaks of *pre*heating. Straight away, the letter makes it clear that the preheating of *Leichenkeller* 1 was not an idea that came from ZBL. Rather, it came from Prüfer, who was a known expert in matters of crematorium ovens, not of homicidal gas chambers. This aspect by itself should cause one to be careful. Topf had manufactured units of this kind for public crematoria since the 1920s. A promotion leaflet describes their structure and operation in detail (Topf 1926, p. 3):

> *"In recent times, we have arranged air-heaters for recovery* [of heat] *from the exhaust gases. These units are mounted in the flue duct just ahead of the chimney. They consist of a heat exchanger with a large number of so-called pockets in which the flue gases and the air are circulating separately; an outside blower takes in fresh air and pushes it into the air-pockets. The exhaust gases are passing through the adjoining pockets; in this way, the air is heated and can be taken into the funeral chapel, heating the latter. A separate central heating system thereby becomes superfluous.*
>
> *Aside from the fact that the capital cost is much lower than would be the case for an independent boiler, the operating costs, due to the small blower, are so low that heating can be accomplished practically free of charge."*

On the last page of the leaflet, letters from various German municipalities express their satisfaction with the Topf ovens installed in their respective crematoria. One such letter, from "*Der Stadtdirektor Arnstadt i. Th. Abteilung IV*" is dated February 10, 1925 and states i.a.:

> *"Linked to the channel for the removal of the exhaust gases toward the chimney, an air heater for heating the funeral chapel has been installed by Messrs. Topf & Soehne. At the outlets into the chapel the air temperature is 50°C on average. When incinerations are carried out, the chapel can be heated without any fuel in a very short time."*

Here we cannot but mention van Pelt's incredible comment on this kind of equipment (2002, p. 215):

> *"A final development in German perversity was the attempt to use the heat generated in the ovens to warm water."*

The device proposed by Prüfer was simpler. Bischoff's letter of March 6, 1943, actually mentions only the ductwork and the blower, but not the heat exchanger, which means that the idea was to remove only the hot air ("*Abluft*") from the three forced-draft chambers which obviously became superheated.

If we want to understand how the "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*" of Crematorium II was to work, we must first of all look at the discharge system of the combustion gases from the ovens (see chapter 8.4.3.). Crematorium II (and III) had six smoke conduits (flues), i.e. one for each of the five ovens and one for the garbage incinerator (*Müllverbrennungsofen*). Each pair of channels ended up in a single one, which led to the three smoke channels that made up the chimney. Each of the

smoke channels was linked through a vertical shunt to a forced-draft unit working in suction (*Saugzuganlage*) housed in a special room; at the end of the three vertical conduits, below the respective blower, was a special vane (*Schieberplatte*), a plate of 1,250 by 840 mm which could close the vertical conduit, allowing the chimney to work in natural draft condition.

On March 24 and 25, 1943, Prüfer and his colleague Karl Schultze were summoned to Auschwitz by ZBL to discuss break-downs that had taken place in Crematorium II a few days before. On the 25th Kirschneck drew up a note for the files which noted the decisions of ZBL:[182]

> *"In view of the fact that the three forced-draft units have not performed satisfactorily in any respect and were even damaged on the first occasion of full operation, they will be dismantled and taken back by this company at their expense.*
>
> *ZBL expects that it will not suffer any loss of metal allocation*[183] *and that it will be credited the respective amount of steel. On the assumption that they were not damaged by the high temperatures, ZBL will take over the three electric motors (15 HP each) with clutch, switch, and starter. The hot-air supply unit for Leichenkeller 1 must be dropped because of the change in design and will be put into storage by ZBL."*

The dismantling of the three forced-draft devices obviously eliminated the overheating problem in the places where they were housed. For the same reason, the heating device which was to supply heat to "*Leichenkeller* 1" became useless.

On August 20, 1943, Topf sent ZBL a list of invoices still unpaid; among them was the one concerning order no. 43/219 for "*Warmluftzuführung für Krema. II. Rechnung v. 11.6.43*," in an amount of 1,070 RM.[184] The device in question thus bore the name of "*Warmluftzuführung*" (hot air supply). However, Bischoff's above letter speaks of *pre*heating ("*vor*gewärmt") the air. The reason is that – in keeping with the rules laid down by the SS garrison surgeon – the corpses were to be taken to the morgues in the crematoria twice a day, in the morning and

[182] Aktenvermerk of March 25, 1943. APMO, BW 30/25, p. 8.
[183] "Kennzifferverlust." The Kennziffer was the allocation of metal to private firms by the SS-Rohstoffamt (raw materials office) at Berlin-Halensee.
[184] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 26.

in the evening (see Mattogno 2004k, pp. 280f.; see chapter 12.7.). Seen in that light it makes sense to speak of *pre*heating.

In his second book, Pressac came back to this question, writing (1993, p. 73):

> *"When the draft devices were in operation, the temperature on the vanes rose dangerously. As early as February 19 Prüfer had pointed out this dangerous tendency and suggested to use the excess heat to warm up the morgue of Crematorium II. In advising to do this, he made another technical slip, because a morgue is, by definition, a place that has to be kept cool. Wanting to change this meant that the function of the room had been altered. The heat was to ensure a more rapid diffusion throughout the chamber of the hydrogen cyanide, which vaporizes at 27°C.*
>
> *The idea was immediately accepted by the SS, and Topf shipped, by ordinary freight on February 22, a wrought-iron blower no. 450 with a 4 HP motor for an exhaust volume of 9 – 10,000 m³ per hour, costing 522 RM. All that now remained to be made was the trident-shaped metal manifold, located in the attic between the roof of the housing of the forced-draft vanes and the blower which fed into the outlet duct of the gas from the gas chamber. By fitting a gate valve in this duct, between its upper end and the blower, closing the duct and starting the blower, the air-flow could be reversed with the warm air now travelling backwards down the brick conduit of the toxic gas exhaust. From there, it arrived in the gas chamber, pre-heating it before use. The order for the supply of the manifold was officially given on March 6, for a price of 1,070 RM, and the piece was manufactured within the week."*

The reference to a suggestion by Prüfer on February 19, 1943, is only a conjecture on Pressac's side, as can be deduced from the fact that he quotes as a source Bischoff's letter of March 6, 1943.[185] Still, there is the fact that the three forced-draft devices were housed in three chambers, 3.38 m long and respectively 3.36, 3.30, and 2.60 m wide, going from left to right. The two lateral chambers had a window each, 1.10 by 1.65 m,[186] too small, no doubt, to ensure proper cooling of the devices, which were massive metal structures. As can be deduced from the drawings of Crematorium II,[187] each device consisted of a large no. 625

[185] Pressac 1993, note 224 on p. 106.
[186] Plan 109/15 of September 24, 1943. Pressac 1989, p. 327.
[187] Plans 933 and 934. Pressac 1989, pp. 282-283.

blower, housed in a metal frame, shaped like a drum and measuring about 1 m in width by 1.8 m in diameter. Together with the ducting that linked it with the chimney, each device was about 2.5 m long, had suction/pressure connections 62.5 cm in diameter and weighed 775 kilograms.[188]

In addition to the heat content of the combustion gases from the ovens which passed through the device, the unit also had to remove the heat generated by the powerful 15 HP electric motor.[189] Actually, as we have seen above, when they were first run at full load, all three devices caught fire. This signifies that the "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*" was more of a structure to cool the forced-draft housings than one to heat *Leichenkeller* 1.

Likewise mere conjecture on Pressac's side is the assertion that Topf had shipped the blower for the hot-air device with its electric driver to Auschwitz on February 22, sending the ducting later. In a list of unpaid invoices submitted by Topf in December 1944, there is an entry dated May 24, 1943, in an amount of 522 RM for a "three-phase electric motor," and another on June 11, amounting to 1,070 RM concerning "*Lieferung einer Warmluft. für Kremator. II*."[190] Hence, what cost 1,070 RM was the entire device, as it would be otherwise absurd to believe that the metal ducting was more than twice as expensive as the blower with its motor.

As far as the design of the ductwork is concerned, we must stress that, in Pressac's conjectural system, it was planned to make use of the de-aeration channel (*Entlüftungskanal*) of *Leichenkeller* 1, because the de-aeration shaft (*Entlüftungsschacht*) was closer to the chambers with the forced-draft devices than the aeration shaft. Thus, in a simple manner, one would have obtained two results with a single device: cooling of the forced-draft units and heating of the real and true mortuary.

2.7.3. Van Pelt's Explanation

To this "criminal trace" van Pelt has devoted only a few lines repeating Pressac's thesis (2002, p. 211):

> *"Correspondence explained that these ventilation ducts were connected to a ventilator driven by a 3.5 horsepower electric motor and that the space was also equipped with a separate system for in-*

[188] Topf shipment note of June 18, 1942. RGVA,502-1-313, p. 165.
[189] Topf, Schluss-Rechnung Nr. 69 of January 27, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-26, pp.230-230a.
[190] RGVA, 502-1-96, p. 33.

troducing air into it – an arrangement that made no sense if the space was used as a morgue (because corpses must be stored cold) but which made a lot of sense if the space was used as a Zyklon B gas chamber (because hydrogen cyanide, which has a boiling point of around 27 °Celsius, works much faster when used in a preheated space […]*."*

He later returns to the question, bringing in a new argument:

"There are also German documents that attest to the fact that the gas chamber was heated, a fact which, as I have pointed out above, strongly suggests that that room was not intended to be used as a morgue anymore. The most important is a letter the chief architect of Auschwitz, Karl Bischoff, sent to Topf on March 6, 1943."

After quoting the letter, van Pelt goes on (p. 372):

"Both Bacon's testimony and Bischoff's letter demolished Leuchter's argument that the gas chamber of Crematorium 2, and by implication the gas chamber of Crematorium 3, was not heated."

This means that, in van Pelt's opinion, the "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*" was actually installed and operated not only in Crematorium II but also in Crematorium III. The ignorance of this "expert" when it comes to historical facts and their documentation is really dumbfounding! As already stated, the operation of the device in question depended on the forced-draft units feeding the chimney of Crematorium II. But on March 24 and 25, 1943, when they were damaged by overheating, ZBL decided to dismantle them and not to install them in Crematorium III in the first place. Thus, the "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*" of Crematorium II became unusable and for Crematorium III, obviously, such a device was never ordered.

We have yet to examine Yehuda Bakon's "confirmation." At the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem he declared that, when the "*Rollwagenkommando*" in which he worked had finished their work near the crematoria and it was cold (van Pelt 2002, pp. 371f.),

"the Kapo of the Sonderkommando took pity on us and said: 'Well, children, outside is cold, warm yourselves in the gas chambers! There is nobody there!'

Q.: And you went to warm yourselves inside the gas chambers?

A.: Yes. Sometimes we went to warm ourselves in the Kleidungskammer,[191] *sometimes in the gas chambers."*

[191] "Clothing chamber," no real meaning in German, probably intended to mean something like"Auskleidungskammer" or "undressing room" in holocaustic perspective.

Thus, for the witness even the alleged undressing room was heated, which is in disagreement with all documentary evidence; not only that, but the alleged gas chamber was heated even when no homicidal gassings were scheduled – what for, if the "*pre*heating" of the room was done to facilitate the vaporization of the hydrogen cyanide? Besides, Bakon speaks in a general way of a crematorium, without saying which. The above quotation continues (State of Israel, pp. 1247f.):

> *"It sometimes happened that, when we came to crematorium, we were told: 'You cannot enter now – there are people inside.' Sometimes, it was in crematorium number 3, after they had been burned, we took the ashes, and in winter the ashes were to be used for the roads."*

What Bakon designated as "crematorium number 3" was Crematorium IV. As far as the reliability of the declaration, it must be stressed that, according to Miklos Nyiszli, non-authorized detainees were not allowed to enter the crematorium area, not even the "*Leichenkommando*" (corpse command; Nyiszli 1961, p. 51):

> *"The Sonderkommando chief came hunting for me and announced that an SS soldier was waiting for me at the door of the crematorium with a crew of corpse-transporting kommandos. I went in search of them, for they were forbidden to enter the courtyard."*

But then, why was it possible for the entire "*Rollwagenkommando*" to be invited without any fuss right into the homicidal gas chamber? If we listen to van Pelt, however, Bakon could also wander around the inner yard of the crematorium quite leisurely (2002, p. 171):

> *"During his testimony* [at the Eichmann trial] *Bacon* [sic] *did not mention that he had also seen the roof of the underground gas chambers. As he wandered one day through the compound of Crematorium 3, he climbed up the low rise that marks the gas chambers and had a close look at one of the four little chimneys on that plateau. He removed one of the wooden covers and looked down into the central pipe, which was riddled with little holes; it was one of the four gas columns."*

As his source, van Pelt gives personal information supplied to him by Bakon on November 16, 2000 (note 113, p. 522). The witness did not talk about this at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, during which he declared that there were 20 boys in his group who could thus certainly not

have gone unnoticed![192] We shall return to this witness in chapter 13.3.1. Van Pelt then goes on to discuss the objection that heating of *Leichenkeller* 1 was done to keep the deposited corpses there from freezing, to which he replies (p. 443):

> *"Yet this did not explain why there was no trace of heating before the building was completed. Why was this suddenly so urgent in March 1943 when the design dated back to October 1941?"*

As I have explained above, when ZBL ordered the "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*" they did so in response to a suggestion from Prüfer who was a heat engineer, not a specialist for gas chambers. His suggestion was, in fact, related to the overheating of the forced-draft equipment, and for that reason in particular the "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*" had to be built "*schnellstens*" (a.s.a.p.).

When the three devices of the forced-draft system were damaged beyond repair by the high temperatures of the combustion gases, the problem went away and the equipment would lie around unused in the "*Bauhof*," the materials yard. It would have been possible to install some sort of "*Lufterhitzer*" in one of the three main flue conduits, which entered the three smoke ducts of the chimney, as was the case for heating units which Topf built for public crematoria. The fact that ZBL never opted for this simple solution and never even thought of installing a "*Warmluftzuführungsanlage*" in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III proves that the order for such a device to be used with Crematorium II, as Pressac has correctly explained, was only a measure temporarily considered, but then abandoned, in order to eliminate the excess heat which was generated in the three chambers housing the forced-draft blowers.

2.8. "*Holzgebläse*" – Wooden Blower

On this subject Pressac stated (1993, p. 70f.):

> *"In the letters and telegrams that went back and forth between Bauleitung and Topf on February 11 and 12 in relation to this incomplete delivery, reference is made to a wooden blower. As Prüfer would explain later, it was to be used for the de-aeration of Leichenkeller 1. To say that it was a blower made of wood constituted a 'technical slip' which allowed only one possible conclusion, viz. that the air to be extracted no longer came from a mortuary and was thus loaded with noxious and foul-smelling substances, but that it was*

[192] Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, 106th session on October 30, 1964, p. 23165.

mixed with an aggressive chemical product which could be extracted only with a corrosion-resistant blower, made entirely of wood, cypress being the most suitable type.

The poison gas used in the gas chambers was hydrogen cyanide at a high concentration (20 g/m³), and acids are corrosive."

A few pages on, Pressac adds that on March 25, 1943, the SS decided "to substitute the wooden blower in the de-aeration of the gas chamber by a metal one (because Schultze had exaggerated the risk of corrosion)" (p. 77). This recreated scenario has no foundation. On February 11 the head of ZBL wrote Topf a letter, in which he complained about the delays in the shipments and about promises not kept. In this context he underlined:[193]

"Thus, on January 21, 1943, you wrote that all of the equipment for the aeration and de-aeration unit would be shipped on January 22, 1943. On arrival of the freight-car, these parts were missing, and your fitter Messing could not continue his job. Over the telephone your Mr. Prüfer stated that all parts had been shipped. When [we] *checked with you again, another gentleman told us that the remaining parts had not yet been finished. In the end we were told that the finished parts were held in storage. Now we have received a bill of lading with a shipment date of February 6, 1943. After verification and contact with your fitter, it was found that a blower no. 450 with its 3.5 HP motor is missing again, and it happens to be the blower for L.-cellar I which is the one most urgently needed. Also, one 7.5 HP motor for exhaust blower no. 550 of L.-cellar II* [is missing].

Therefore, a cable was dispatched to you again in this matter: 'Ship immediately blower 450 with 3.5 HP motor for L.-cellar I and motor 7.5 HP for exhaust blower no. 550 for L-cellar II not shown on your bill of lading of 6.2.43, as otherwise unit cannot be started up. Recable'."

In their reply dated February 12, 1943, Topf stated, referring to the above cable:[194]

"Blower no. 450 was shipped on 8.11.42 and blower no. 450 (wooden blower) on 25.1.43. For the latter blower, the 7.5 HP motor was still missing, we had urged our supplier repeatedly in this matter – both by telephone and by cable."

[193] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 88. The words in italics are underlined in the original.
[194] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 84.

But the blower with the 7.5 HP motor was no. 550 for the de-aeration of *Leichenkeller* 2, not no. 450 for *Leichenkeller* 1, hence the wooden blower was type 550 – a mistake made by Topf. Pressac himself had come to this obvious conclusion in his first book, when he translated the above passage (1989, p. 361):

> *"The No. 450 blower was dispatched on 8.11.42 and the No. 450 [error: it should be 550] (wooden blower) on 25.1.43."*

The Topf memo of February 17 says explicitly that it concerned the "*Belüftungsgebläse*," i.e. the blower feeding fresh air into *Leichenkeller* 1 from the outside; it could thus not have come into contact with hydrogen cyanide vapors in any case (see chapter 2.1.7.). The note for the file of March 25, 1943, on the other hand, states:[195]

> *"For the de-aeration unit of morgue 1 a wrought-iron blower will be selected for execution instead of the wooden blower. ZBL will absorb the additional expense for the blower housing."*

But there is another document which complicates the matter still further. It is a letter written by Bischoff addressed to Topf and dated March 29, 1943, which begins:[196]

> *"We hereby confirm the order given orally for the replacement of the wooden housings of the exhausters of the 2 de-aeration units by wrought-iron* [housings] *air-tight type."*

Hence, both de-aeration blowers, i.e. no. 450 for *Leichenkeller* 1 and no. 550 for *Leichenkeller* 2, had wooden housings. Confirmation is found in the expense ledger (*Bauausgabenbuch*) for Crematorium III, which has a payment to Topf in an amount of 842 RM under the date of July 15, 1943, for "*Gehäuse zu Gebläsen*" (housings for blowers), which had evidently been substituted as per the above order. This fact by itself is enough to invalidate Pressac's "criminal trace," because no one claims that hydrogen cyanide was ever planned to be used in *Leichenkeller* 2.

Let us continue, though. If we follow Pressac, the wooden blower was suggested by Schultze who, "informed by Prüfer about the particular aspect of the aeration/de-aeration of morgue 1, had planned the removal of the acid gas" (1993, p. 71), but had simply "exaggerated the risk of corrosion" by hydrogen cyanide.[197] However, no document links

[195] APMO, BW 30/25, p. 8.
[196] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 53.
[197] HCN turns into an extremely weak acid only when dissolved in water, weaker by a factor of 870 than carbonic acid (=carbon dioxide in water), hence it is not corrosive at all. Pres-

Schultze to the wooden blower. What Pressac writes is not only pure fantasy, but also unrealistic, because it is known that the disinfestation chambers using hydrogen cyanide in the recirculating "*Degesch-Kreislauf*" system were equipped with devices entirely made of metal – not only the blower and the respective ductwork, but also the recirculation equipment (*Kreislaufgerät*, cf. document 13). These metal units were exposed to hydrogen cyanide at a concentration of 20 g/m³ several times a day, and ZBL was perfectly well aware of this: As early as 1941, the then *SS-Neubauleitung* of the main camp had, in fact, planned 19 disinfestation chambers using hydrogen cyanide in the *Degesch-Kreislauf* system for the reception building (*Aufnahmegebäude*; see chapter 6.1.). The contracting firm Friedrich Boos, doing the construction work, had obtained from the Heerdt-Lingler company, the distributor of Zyklon B, two technical papers on this product, i.a. the article by Peters and Wüstinger. *SS-Neubauleitung* had received the two articles on July 3, 1941.[198] This literature was rediscovered on July 21, 1942, by the civilian employee Jährling who supervised the erection of the units, when the negotiations with Boos began. On September 12, 1942, Boos, in fact, drew up a cost estimate (*Kostenanschlag*) "about the installation of 19 delousing chambers for the hydrogen cyanide delousing plant at KL Auschwitz," which Jährling checked on September 30.[199] The article by Peters and Wüstinger gave a detailed description of the *Degesch-Kreislauf* chambers and clearly showed the metallic recirculation device.[200]

Hence, by 1942 ZBL was fully aware of the fact that a metallic blower coming into contact with hydrogen cyanide even at high concentrations ran no risk of "corrosion." We must remember that in January 1943 Jährling worked in the "*Technische Abteilung*" of ZBL (cf. Mattogno 2005h, p. 21). This confirms that the choice of a wooden blower had nothing to do with the use of hydrogen cyanide. The surprising thing is that Pressac also knew the story of the article by Peters and Wüstinger, as he cites it in a most fanciful context (1993, pp. 41f.).

The real motive for the choice of wood was simply the scarcity of metal, a substance that during WWII was rationed even for Auschwitz.

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sac's confusion may have its source in the German term for hydrogen cyanide, "Blausäure" = blue acid.

198 Letter from Heerdt-Lingler to SS-Neubauleitung at Auschwitz dated July 1, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 86. Cf. document 15.

199 RGVA, 502-1-137, pp. 13-16.

200 RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 89.

The ZBL correspondence of February 1943 contains numerous reference to this bureaucratic problem, some letters being solely devoted to this question, such as the one dated February 27, 1943, concerning "metal requirements for aeration/de-aeration unit and forced-draft unit of Crematorium II in Birkenau PoW camp."[201] A note for the file of February 15 explains on seven full pages the efforts of ZBL to obtain metal allocations from the offices in charge. From this document we can see, i.a., that ZBL received allocations established quarterly and passed on the necessary amounts to the contractors working for it. For the first quarter of 1943 the request for steel had been 200 tons,[202] but the allocation was only 150 tons.[203]

It was for precisely this reason that Kirschneck, in his note for the file of March 15, 1943, discussed above, also raised the question of metal allocations, in addition to ZBL's decision to have the three forced-draft devices – which had been damaged by excessive temperatures – removed by Topf at the company's expense (except for the three motors, provided that they were still intact). Summarizing the procedure in simple terms, ZBL, having decided to have the three devices removed by Topf, did not want to lose the respective *Kennziffer* (allocation number) which it had used for the construction, because otherwise the ZBL would have found itself, as it were, with a quantity of metal not spent, which could have been used to replace the wooden blowers and housings by steel replacements. The letter of March 19, 1943, the beginning of which has been quoted above, continues with the following request:

> *"We use this opportunity to ask you to inform us about the amount of steel which will be credited to ZBL on account of the replacement of the three forced-draft units (excl. vanes and motors with clutch and switchgear)."*

In order to be able to recover the amount of steel in question, the listing of the metal devices at the end of the letter was labeled "*Reparaturbedarf*" (for repairs).[204] On April 9 Bischoff returned to the matter and sent Topf a letter in which he stated, referring to his letter of March 29:[205]

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[201] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 72.
[202] The request for the first quarter of 1943 was filed by Bischoff on November 21, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-319, pp. 53-54.
[203] RGVA, 502-1-26, pp. 39-45.
[204] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 53.
[205] APMO, BW 30/25, p. 9.

> *"In connection with the order passed to you for the exchange of the wooden housings of the exhaust blowers, dated March 29, 1943, Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz confirms, with special reference to the Führer Decree for the Protection of the Armament Economy dated March 21, 1942, that the above order concerns 'repair requirements' and that the order, in terms of type, quantities, and date of supply, conforms to the spirit of the above Decree."*

On April 16 Topf informed ZBL that the company was unable to credit ZBL for the amount of steel in the forced-draft units because they had not been able to use them for other orders,[206] but by that time ZBL had already requested the substitution of the wooden blower and/or the two wooden housings by metal parts.

2.9. Elimination of Corpse Slides

2.9.1. Blueprint 2003 of December 19, 1942, and its Significance

After having stated that the architect Werkmann, a civilian employee in *Abteilung* II/3/3 (*Bauangelegenheiten der KL und KGL*) of *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* (Section II/3/3, buildings at KL and KGL (= PoW camp), at SS main office of budgets and buildings) had planned a slide to facilitate the transfer of bodies from the outside of the crematorium into the morgues below ground, Pressac makes the following statement (1993, pp. 63f.):

> *"The 'special' use of the basement* [of Crematorium II] *made the corpse-slide superfluous, as the victims to be gassed were still alive and could walk down the stairs to the morgue planned to become a gas chamber. Dejaco drew up a new blueprint for the basement on December 19* [1942]*, no. 2003, and committed a 'major architectural blunder.' Going by the designations on the blueprint, the north staircase became the only access to the morgues which meant that the dead would have had to walk down the stairs. Blueprint 2003 arrived at sites 30 and 30a too late, the concrete for the slide had already been poured."*

The blueprint in question is labeled "crematorium at KGL, cover page for nos. 932 and 933, relocating basement access to street side." Both on the blueprint for the half-basement (*Kellergeschoss*, Pressac

[206] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 36.

1989, p. 302) and on the one for the ground floor (*Erdgeschoss*, *ibid*., p. 303), both the slide *and* the double stairway are, in fact, missing. In 1994 I had explained that the drawing in question was a project for an access to the half-basement from the outside and not a project for the elimination of the slide; therefore the absence of the slide is only a technically irrelevant simplification of an irrelevant part of the drawing. The matter will now be discussed in more detail.

No one has yet pointed out that on the ground floor blueprint, in the area where the slide and the staircase should have been found, there is a new room labeled "*Abstellraum*" (store room) linked, by means of a door, to a previously non-existent "*Waschraum*" (wash room [for corpses]). This means that this blueprint provided for an additional room closing off the opening which led from the outside to the half-basement, clearly visible on blueprint 1173 (Pressac 1989, p. 274).

The reasoning behind this project is not explained in any document. Strictly speaking, it is not correct to say that the new entrance constituted "the only access to the morgues," because there was also a second route via the freight elevator. Actually, the ground floor blueprint shows that from the entrance to the crematorium, passing through an air-lock (*Windfang*) and a hall, one arrived in the "*Waschraum*" with the doors to the freight elevator on one side; the doors opposite led into the furnace hall.

This type of route is, admittedly, not very convincing, but doing away with the corpse-slide in two crematoria planned as normal sanitary installations is even less so, because the crematoria continued to receive corpses of registered inmates on a regular basis who had died in the camp (see chapter 12.7.).

If the SS had planned two crematoria with a total of 10 ovens of 3 muffles each for a daily capacity of 2,880 corpses per day, arising from the "natural" mortality of the camp, how could they possibly throw out the corpse slide?

On the other hand, it is not only the slide which is missing on blueprint 2003, but also the double stairway which led to the half-basement. From blueprint 933(p) (Pressac 1989, p. 285) we can see that each of the stairs running along on either side of the slide was 1.05 m wide with the slide itself measuring 0.70 m in width. Now, if it was actually necessary for nefarious reasons to eliminate the slide, because it was no longer useful (but this cannot be true), the simplest solution, architecturally speaking, would have been to join up the two flights of stairs in-

to a common one, 2.80 m wide, leaving the entry as it was (1.80 m) or widening it. The new stairway on blueprint 2003 is 1.80 m wide, but then: what was gained by having the victims march down these stairs rather than the two stairways alongside the slide? After all, with the slide left intact, the victims still had available a greater total width of 2.10 m as against 1.80 meters.

This suggests instead that there was a well-defined architectural reason behind all these changes. The new stairs were, in fact, located next to the main entrance to the crematorium and were obviously meant to be the service access for the SS. The stairs were placed there, because in order to enter the basement from the ground floor it would otherwise have been necessary to step out of the crematorium, walk around the building, climbing over *Leichenkeller* 2, whose upper part protruded from the ground, and then go into the basement by way of the entrance with the slide. This can be seen quite well in document 14, which shows the ruins of Crematorium II. In the foreground we have the steps leading to the main entrance, right behind there is the new entrance and, further on, marked by an arrow, the steps used for climbing on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 2.

All this converges on the conclusion that blueprint 2003 was a project for providing the half-basement with an access from the outside and not one aiming at the elimination of the slide. Therefore the absence of the slide and the presence of an "*Abstellraum*" in that drawing are not a project in themselves but simply an unexplained fact. It is just as unexplained as the fact that the corpse slide *was actually built* into Crematorium II as well as Crematorium III.

Pressac asserts that "blueprint 2003 arrived at sites 30 and 30a too late, the concrete for the slide had already been poured." In reality, work at the sites of Crematorium II and Crematorium III did not progress at the same rate, quite the opposite. At the end of December 1942, advancement was 60% for Crematorium II, but hardly 20% at Crematorium III.[207] Even on January 23, 1943, insulation work against the ground water had only been prepared in the half-basement of Crematorium III, and work on the drainage pipes had just started.[208] Hence, the floor of the half-basement did not yet exist, let alone the corpse slide.

[207] Baubericht für Monat Dezember 1942. RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 7.

[208] "Keller I und II. Wanne und Isolierung gegen Grundwasser fertig. Mit Verlegen der Entwässerungsleitungen begonnen" (Cellars I and II. Basin and insulation against groundwater terminated. Laying of drainage pipes started). Bericht Nr. 1 of Zentralbauleitung of January 23, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 55.

Blueprint no. 2136 of Crematorium III dated February 22, 1943 (Pressac 1989, p. 305), drawn over two months after blueprint 2003, shows the slide and the double stairway along its sides as was the case in the original blueprint; therefore, as far as Crematorium III is concerned, Pressac's explanation is unfounded.

No documents about Crematorium II speak specifically of the realization of the slide, but this can be inferred from the works done by November 31, 1942:[209]

> *"Brickwork of ground floor finished over cellar section. All ceilings poured. Concrete pressure plate mounted in cellar 3. Brickwork of cellar 1 finished."*

If we take into account that the work would still go on for 19 days before blueprint 2003 was realized, we can be certain that by December 19 the slide was already in place. But then why should something which existed and was necessary have been eliminated? Even if we accept – without conceding the point – that, as Pressac has it, "the concrete of the guide-rails [of the slide] had already been poured" what would have prevented ZBL to have them dismantled, if that had served its project in any way? But there is yet another fact which invalidates Pressac's conjectures. The blueprint of the new crematorium which Dejaco drew on October 24, 1941, shows two underground morgues (the future *Leichenkeller* 1 and 2) accessible via a staircase without a slide ("*zum L.-Keller*") or by way of the freight elevator ("*Aufzug*"),[210] exactly as on blueprint 2003. Following Pressac's line of thought – leaving aside the freight elevator – the stairs also on this blueprint were "the only access to the morgues which meant that the dead would have had to walk down the stairs," but this conclusion is in glaring disagreement with his central thesis that the crematorium was planned as a normal hygienic installation. Hence, if this arrangement could not have a criminal significance on the blueprint of October 24, 1941, why should an identical arrangement on blueprint 2003 of December 19, 1942, be judged differently?

2.9.2. Concealing the Slide

Moving along in his conjectures, Pressac states (1993, p. 65):

> *"Later, when the SS decided to add to the gas chamber (Leichenkeller 1), an undressing room (Leichenkeller 2) with a stairway of its*

[209] Baubericht für Monat November 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 53.
[210] Plan of new crematorium, October 24, 1941. Pressac 1993, document 9 outside text.

own, the projection of the slide into the small space which separated the two halls was demolished and its outlet concealed by means of boards."

Why not remove the "guide-rails" as well? Actually, the "projection of the slide," i.e. its final, horizontal part, some 2.20 meters long, was not demolished, as we can see from section E-F of blueprint 2197 of March 19, 1943. Pressac bases his argument on the following order from ZBL, no. 204, dated March 18, 1943 (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 88):

"PoW camp Crematorium II, BW 30. Object: For wooden partition in cellar in front of slide: 4 pcs. door hinges, 60 cm long, 4 pcs. pins 9 cm long. Delivery: urgent. Bauleitung order no. 100, dated 17.3.43. Execution by Godarski. Finished: 19.3.43."

Commenting on blueprint 932(b), Pressac writes (1989, p. 285):

"The central location of the corpse chute, with the bottom end advancing well into the vestibule between the three Leichenkeller would be in the way of people going from the undressing room (Leichenkeller 2) to the gas chamber (Leichenkeller 1)."

To demonstrate this obstacle, Pressac has drawn, into an enlargement of the blueprint in question, the path of the alleged victims, which hits the end of the slide. However, this enlargement shows that the corridor leading to *Leichenkeller* 2 was no wider than 1.87 m, whereas in the vestibule (*Vorraum*), from which it came, the tip of the slide stood 3.4 m from the freight elevator: why would the victims, who would have come out of the narrow space of the corridor and entered a room nearly twice as wide, have been hampered by the slide?

Yet even if we accept – again without conceding the point – that the slide was shortened so as to keep it from interfering with the victims' path, why would it have to be "concealed"? To keep the victims from realizing that they were in a crematorium? In that case it would have been better to "conceal" the enormous chimney!

There is also a similar order for Crematorium III, which Pressac does not mention, bearing the number 294 and the date of April 10, 1943 (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 91):

"PoW camp Crematorium III, BW 30a. Object: For wooden partition in cellar in front of slide: 4 pcs. door hinges, 60 cm long, 4 pcs. pins 8 cm long, 20 pcs. tube hooks 100 for holding duct. Delivery: by 15.4.43. Bauleitung order no. 162, dated 9.4.43. Execution by Godarski, Durski. Finished: 14.4.43."

Precisely because – as I have explained above – for Crematorium III it would have been possible to leave out the corpse slide altogether, the fact that it was built anyway and then covered with boards as was the case in Crematorium II demonstrates that this was not a matter of "concealing" it. Without further information from documents it is difficult to say what the boarding-up was good for. It probably had a temporary purpose, because Pressac's star witness Henryk Tauber has nothing to say about it at all. He limits himself to declaring (Tauber 1945b, p. 128):

> *"To pass between these two cellars there was a corridor linked to the outside by a stairway and an inclined plane down which* [they] *dumped the corpses brought in from the camp to be cremated."*

In the light of what has been discussed in the chapter concerning the "*Vergasungskeller*," in particular with respect to van Pelt's objections, this woodwork could have served to separate the "unclean" from the "clean" side. The partition had, in fact, two doors – as can be deduced from the 4 hinges and the 4 pins – which could have allowed access along two different routes: one via the entrance of *Leichenkeller* 2 into *Leichenkeller* 1 and one from *Leichenkeller* 1 via the slide and the double stairway to the outside, or the other way around. An order from ZBL to *Häftlings-Schlosserei* dating from the same period as the woodwork may have something to do with it. It is order no. 181 of March 12, 1943, which says:[211]

> *"ZBL Crematorium II BW 30: Object: 1 pc. suspension device as per sketch, – 1 pc. angle-iron guide-rail as per sketch – 1 pc. framework of narrow-gauge rail with wire-mesh cage as per sketch. Material requirements to be calculated and transmitted immediately. Delivery: begin and finish immediately. Bauleitung order no. 78 dated 11.3.43. / Expenses to be coordinated with administration KL. / Execution by Mirek, Dyntar. Finished: 25.3.43."*

There is also an order for Crematorium III, no. 293 of April 10, 1943 (*ibid*., p. 91):

[211] Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 87: "Zentral Bauleitung Krematorium II BW 30. Przedmiot: 1 Stück Einhängevorrichtung nach Skizze, – 1 Stück Winkeleisenführung nach Skizze, – 1 Stück Feldbahnenschienengestände [sic, probably recte: Feldbahnschienengestänge] mit Maschendrahtumspannung nach Skizze. Material ist sofort auszuziehen, und anzugeben. Lieferzeit: sofort beginnen und fertigstellen. Baults. Auftrag nr. 78 vom 11.3.43./:Verrechnung mit Verwaltung K.L. vornehmen./. Wykonawcy: Mirek, Dyntar. Ukończono: 25.3.43."

> *"Crematorium III. BW 30a: Object: 4 pcs. suspension devices as per sketch, – 4 pcs. angle-iron guide-rail as per sketch, – 1 pc. framework of narrow-gauge rail with wire-mesh cage as per sketch. Make exactly like already done before with order of 11.3.43. Sketch now available at detainee metal workshop. Delivery: begin and finish immediately. / Expenses to be coordinated with administration KL Au. / Bauleitung order no. 161 dated 9.4.43. / Execution by Mirek, Dyntar. Finished: 28.4.43."*

As far as the order of March 11, 1943, is concerned, there exists also a document in which a footnote marked Jäh[rling] and Kir[schneck] states that it concerned "*4 Stck. kompl. Anlagen*" (4 pcs. complete devices).[212] The sketch has not been preserved. The term "framework of narrow-gauge rail" indicates a metal framework made of rails as used in the narrow gauge railways found throughout the camp. The fact that the devices had a cage of wire-mesh could possibly mean that they were somehow "suspended" from the suspension device and guided by the guide-rail. These devices are reminiscent of the mobile carts in disinfestation gas chambers, on which were hung the garments to be disinfested, somewhat similar to the design shown in document 7, but covered with wire-mesh. In the original document dated March 11, 1943, the framework mentioned above follows immediately the "angle-iron guide-rail," i.e. a guide-rail made up of a right-angled iron profile, which obviously was used for introduction of the framework itself. The "suspension device" reminds us in a surprising manner of the "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen*" (see chapter 2.5.3.), but the similarity is merely superficial, because only one single device was ordered for Crematorium II, not four, whereas four were ordered for Crematorium III, although the inventory of this crematorium at the time when it was handed over to the camp administration does not mention the presence of any "*Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen*" at all. It is instead possible that M. Kula had been inspired by these devices when he invented the story about the Zyklon B introduction devices.

[212] APMO, BW 1/31162 AuI, p. 317.

3. Secondary "Criminal Traces" Related to Crematorium II

3.1. Origin and Definition of the Secondary "Criminal Traces"

A comparison of blueprint 932 (basement of the future Crematoria II and III), originally drawn on January 23, 1942, with the later blueprints, in particular blueprints 1311 of May 14, 1942, 1300 of June 18, 1942, 2003 of December 19, 1942 and 2197 of March 19, 1943, reveals structural changes in the half-basement which Pressac interprets as being criminal. His analysis of the original blueprint is very accurate (1989, p. 284):

> *"The date of 21/1/42 is that of the original version, but cannot be accepted for this version. For the semi-basements, Leichenkeller 1 and 2, as shown here could not be built on the site in the main camp for lack of space.*
>
> *This drawing is therefore most probably a second version of the basement area of the planned Krematorium, redrawn to suit the new site in Birkenau, no doubt in April 1942. The only differences between this and the original version of January 1942 drawn for the main camp would be:*
>
> 1. *An increase in the area of the two Leichenkeller originally planned [letter of 22nd October 1941, no. 715?/41 Ho], explicable by the camp, originally planned for 10-30,000 prisoners, being increased to take a planned 100-150,000 or even more;*
> 2. *Leichenkeller 1 and 2 now planned as semi-basements instead of full basements, because of the high water table in Birkenau;*
> 3. *creation of a third underground morgue, Leichenkeller 3.*
>
> *The numbering of three Leichenkeller, 1, 2 and 3, is not explained in any known German document. Judging by their arrangement around their source of supply, the corpse chute, and the ventilation shown on drawing 932, it is reasonable to suppose that:*
>
> a) *Leichenkeller 3 was to be the reception morgue, where the camp ID number of the corpses would be recorded;*
> b) *Leichenkeller 2 was to be temporary storage for newly arrived and recorded corpses awaiting cremation (delay of 3 or 4 days);*

c) Leichenkeller 1 was to take corpses several days old, beginning to decompose and thus requiring the room to be well-ventilated, to be incinerated as soon as possible.

There is nothing on this drawing that indicates the future 'special' use of this Krematorium. Quite the contrary, it looks a perfectly 'normal,' though very high capacity, incineration facility."

This basically very reasonable explanation demolishes Pressac's hypothesis on the subject of the cremation capacity of the 5 triple-muffle ovens planned for the crematoria. If, in fact, these units could actually incinerate 1,000 to 1,100 bodies in 24 hours (p. 244) and if the bodies stored in *Leichenkeller* 2 faced "a delay of 3 or 4 days" before they could be cremated – and those in *Leichenkeller* 1 even more than 4 days – it follows that the expected mortality exceeded by far the cremation capacity of the ovens, i.e. no less than (1,000 to 1,100×5 =) 5,000 to 5,500 corpses per day: a bit on the high side for a "perfectly 'normal'" installation. Pressac then lists the reasons which speak against the thesis of the criminal aim of this crematorium (p. 284f.):

1. Absence of an access from the outside to *Leichenkeller* 2 to take the victims into the future undressing room;
2. direction of opening of the door of *Leichenkeller* 1 (the future "homicidal gas chamber") which would have prevented this door from being opened after the gassing of a large group of victims;
3. design of the door of *Leichenkeller* 1, double-leaved instead of single-leaf, which would have been easier to make gas-tight;
4. drainage system of *Leichenkeller* 1, connected to other sewage pipes in the western part of the building, which opens up into the sedimentation pond (*Absetzgrube*); this means that, if gas had been used in *Leichenkeller* 1, there would have been a chance that toxic gas could penetrate rooms on the ground floor;
5. ventilation system of *Leichenkeller* 1 designed for a morgue;
6. central location of the corpse slide with the lower end advancing into the vestibule, which would have been in the way of people moving from the undressing room (*Leichenkeller* 2) to the alleged gas chamber (*Leichenkeller* 1).

Then Pressac enumerates the "criminal" modifications shown on the later blueprints of ZBL, allegedly with the aim of transforming the crematorium into an extermination facility (p. 286):

"1. An access stairway from the exterior to the undressing room (Leichenkeller 2) was built. In the meantime a hut erected in the

Krematorium yard was used as a temporary undressing room in the second half of March 1943;

2. *The direction in which the double door of Leichenkeller 1 opened was reversed (Drawing 2003 of 19/12/42, drawn by Dejaco);*
3. *The double door was subsequently reduced to a single, gas-tight door;*
4. *The drainage system of Leichenkeller 1 was separated from the other drains in the west of the building and run direct to a sewer outside the building (drainage drawing, 1300, of 18/6/42);*
5. *The efficiency of the Leichenkeller 1 ventilation system was tested after introducing Zyklon B in March 1943;*
6. *A wooden wall was built in front of the corpse chute, which caused problems with passage from Leichenkeller 2 to Leichenkeller 1 (order 204 of 18/3/43 for Krematorium II, sent to the DAW workshops);*
7. *4 heavy wire mesh columns with lidded chimneys above the roof for pouring Zyklon B were installed in Leichenkeller 1 (PMO file BW 30/34, page 12);*
8. *14*[213] *wooden dummy showers were installed in the ceiling of Leichenkeller 1 (PMO file BW 30/43, page 24 for the Krematorium III);*
9. *The 3 water taps in Leichenkeller 1 were removed (drawing 2197[b](r));*
10. *Benches with clothes hooks on the wall above them were installed in Leichenkeller 2;*
11. *The area of Leichenkeller 3 was reduced (drawing 1311 of 14/5/42) then this morgue was eliminated altogether, having no use in the criminal context of Krematorium II (drawing 2003 of 19/12/42).”* (Pressac’s emph.)

Pressac then presents two more indications not included in the above list:

12. Elimination of the slide (*Rutsche*) for the corpses on the blueprint of December 19, 1942 (p. 302);
13. Presence of a barrack in front of Crematorium II on the Birkenau map no. 2216 of March 20, 1943 (pp. 227, 462, 492).

[213] The original erroneously has 24.

3.2. General Aspects

The modifications listed by Pressac may appear to be "criminal," if they are considered as a whole and as having been simultaneous. If they are being considered individually and within their historical development over a period of nine months instead, though, they lose that stigma.

The aim of these modifications is said to have been the creation of homicidal installations in Crematoria II and III laid out in a fairly elementary manner: undressing room and gas chamber with gas-tight door and Zyklon B introduction system. Once such a decision had been taken, it would have been obvious to launch a project grouping all the modifications necessary in order to transform two sanitary installations into extermination sites, but Pressac tells us that these modifications were implemented stepwise between June 18, 1942, and February 1943, and this alteration *in installments* appears altogether incomprehensible. We only have to recall the fact that Crematorium II was built without a door leading from the outside into the alleged undressing chamber and without any openings for the introduction of Zyklon B in the gas chamber, all said to have later been added in great haste by breaking holes into walls and ceilings, without even mentioning the fact that the ventilation system which appears on blueprint 2197 dated March 19, 1943, an attachment to the acceptance document for Crematorium II (Pressac 1989, pp. 311f.), is the same as that on blueprint 1173-1174 dated January 15, 1942.

Two entries on Pressac's list (nos. 7 and 8) are part of the 39 main indications and have already been examined in previous chapters as indications nos. 12 and 13. Indication no. 5 is not based on any document, only on an arbitrary conclusion by Pressac, as I have explained in chapter 2.6. Indications 9 and 10, in turn, have nothing to do with either the blueprints of the crematorium or any German documents; they have been taken from Henryk Tauber's deposition and are, for that reason, no "criminal traces." As I have already said, Pressac adopts a somewhat curious method: as a matter of principle he discards witness testimonies in favor of purely documentary evidence, only to side-step his principle by using elements taken from the testimonies and including them underhandedly among the documents. This is especially true for indication no. 9, which is a prime example of a document-testimony hodge-podge. I will now examine the new indications.

3.3. The Drainage System of the Crematorium

Let us start with the earliest indication, chronologically speaking, not because it is particularly important in itself, but because of its implications. It dates from June 18, 1942, and – as already mentioned – that very date excludes any nefarious modification of the crematoria and shows us how far Pressac takes his "criminal traces," even when it comes to documents which are absolutely irrelevant to the matter, both for reasons of chronology and by their contents. Pressac explains (1989, p. 285):

> *"The drains of Leichenkeller 1, being connected to the others in the western part of the building, run directly into the common sewer (Absetzgrube), so that if gas were used in Leichenkeller 1, there would be a chance of toxic gas penetrating rooms on the ground floor."*

Specifically for this reason the sewers of *Leichenkeller* 1 are said to have been separated from the others. This argument is unfounded, both architecturally and technically. Toxic gas could only have entered the ground floor of the crematorium under two conditions:

1. a link of the drain of *Leichenkeller* 1 with the sewers in the eastern part of the crematorium, i.e. the ground floor;
2. an up-hill flow of the drainage water.

Regarding the first point we must note that blueprint 932 of Crematorium II shows two distinct and separate sewage conduits, one for the half-basement, the other for the ground floor. The former is constituted by a conduit in *Leichenkeller* 2 running west-east, a conduit in *Leichenkeller* 3, initially split, running east-west, another in *Leichenkeller* 3 running north-south, and a conduit in *Leichenkeller* 1 running south-north. These four conduits fed a common sedimentation basin (*Absetzgrube*), the first three by way of a common sink located at the lower left corner of *Leichenkeller* 3, as on blueprint 1300, the fourth taking a 90 degree turn to the east in front of the wall with the door. The sedimentation basin runs in a north-south direction.

The ground floor lay-out is made up

- by a conduit running outside of the crematorium, on the southern side, from east to west, taking up the effluent from the furnace hall and emptying into a control sink (*Kontrollschacht*) located in front of the "*Geräte*" room, and

- by a conduit which came from the north-east corner of the crematorium, ran north-south into a shaft, from there turned 90 degrees to the west, and eventually led to the control-sink as well. The latter, too, was connected to the *Kläranlage* (purification plant) via a conduit ("*zum Kanal*") which ran north-south.

Hence, Pressac's hypothesis is architectonically untenable, because right from the planning start the drain from *Leichenkeller* 1 was not connected with those of the ground floor. Such a connection does instead exist on blueprint 1300. On this blueprint, all the soiled effluents from *Leichenkeller* 2 and 3 – which retain the drainage system of blueprint 932 – and from the ground floor of the crematorium, join up in an inspection sink (*Revisionsschacht*) bearing the number III and corresponding to the sedimentation basin of blueprint 932, which is connected to the *Kläranlage* via a drain running north-south as shown on blueprint 932; the drainage system of *Leichenkeller* 1 is connected to this drain, the system consists of two conduits running north-south and south-north and ending up in a central common pit from which another conduit, from east to west, eventually links up with the main sewer, which feeds the soiled water into the *Kläranlage*.

In the left portion of blueprint 1300 we have a longitudinal section (*Längsschnitt*) of the drainage system of the ground floor with the indication of the slopes of the individual conduits from one inspection shaft to the next. The ground floor sewers are obviously running downwards toward the common inspection shaft number III.

About blueprint 1300 Pressac has this to say (1989, p. 296):

> *"The complete separation of the drainage system of Leichenkeller 1 from that of the rest of the building (as foreshadowed on drawing 932), is the first trace of the criminal conversion of Leichenkeller 1 into a gas chamber."*

In actual fact, on blueprint 932 the drainage system of *Leichenkeller* 1 was already separated from that of the rest of the building; moreover, the drawing shows that the drainage system of the ground floor was separated from that of the half-basement. In conclusion and when applying *Pressac's* "logic," the risk of a penetration of toxic gas into the ground floor rooms would have been *possible* with the drainage system modified for *criminal* aims, whereas it would have been *impossible* with a *normal* drainage system as in blueprint 932. However, as the waste water could not run uphill from the half-basement to the ground floor, a contamination by gas would have been impossible. Furthermore, any

liquid containing hydrogen cyanide (which is extremely soluble in water) which would have penetrated the sewers of *Leichenkeller* 1 would have run off together with the waste water toward the *Kläranlage* without even the slightest risk for anyone.

Such a case can be easily verified on blueprint 1293, dated May 9, 1942, and concerning "water supply to and drainage of delousing barrack at PoW camp" (Pressac 1989, p. 56), the disinfestation unit in BW 5b. Here we have, on the inside of the disinfestation gas chamber (*Gaskammer*) using hydrogen cyanide, two parallel effluent pipes which flow into a third, perpendicular to them; the latter runs through the whole installation from the "clean" side (*reine Seite*) to the contaminated side (*unreine Seite*) and then empties into an external sewer. This drainage system which was even connected to the one for the shower room and which was realized in accordance with the blueprint (see document 16) refutes Pressac's conjectures categorically.

3.4. Opening an Access to *Leichenkeller* 2

The creation of an access stairway leading from the outside into *Leichenkeller* 2 is, no doubt, in agreement with Pressac's hypotheses, but this does not necessarily mean that it had a criminal background. On the subject of this operation, Pressac writes (1989, p. 217):

> *"On 10th February* [1943]*, work began on piercing the opening for and building the western access stairway to Leichenkeller 2 (future undressing room) of Krematorium III, under the supervision of Huta foreman Kolbe. This was done in six days, being completed on 15 [PMO file BW 30/38,pages 25 to 27]. It is not known when this operation was carried out for Krematorium II. The only mention of its realization dates from 26th February, or eleven days after that of Krematorium III was completed. This paradox cannot be explained without further documents."*
>
> The document cited by Pressac states:[214]
>
> *"1.2.43 – Betonieren der Platte i/LK.2.* [pouring the floor slab in *Leichenkeller* (LK) 2]
>
> *2.2.43 – Außenwände mauern i/LK.2.* [brickwork of outer walls]
>
> *3.2.43 – Mauern der Außenwände LK. 2.* [brickwork of outer walls]
>
> *4.2.43 – Mauern LK 2-3.* [brickwork]

[214] APMO, BW 30/38, pp. 25-32.

5.2.43 – Mauern LK 2+3. [brickwork]
6.2.43 – Mauern a/LK 1-2-3. [brickwork]
7.2.43 – Mauern LK 2+3. [brickwork]
8.2.43 – Mauern der Kellerwände LK 1-2-3. [brickwork of cellar walls]
9.2.43 – Mauern der Außen- u. Innenwände im L.K. 2+3. [brickwork of outer and inner walls]
10.2.43 – Mauern der Außen- u. Innenwände im L.K. 2+3. [brickwork of outer and inner walls] *Umänderung des Kellertreppeneingangs.* [modification of cellar stair entrance]
11.2.43 – Mauern a/LK. 1+2. [brickwork] *Umänderung der Kellereingangstreppe.* [modification of cellar entrance stairs]
12.2.43 – Mauern der LK 1+3. [brickwork] *Umänderung der Kellereingangstreppe.* [modification of cellar entrance stairs].
13.2.42 – Mauern a/LK 1-3. [brickwork] *Beton der Kellereingangstreppe.* [concrete for cellar entrance stairs]
14.2.42 – Mauern a/LK1. [brickwork]
Mauern und Putzen der Schutzwände bei der Umänderung der Kellereingangstreppe. [brickwork and plastering of protective walls for modification of cellar entrance stairs]*"*

Because work on the outside walls of *Leichenkeller* 2 began on February 2, it makes no sense to speak of *opening up* an entrance in them. The "*Umänderung der Kellereingangstreppe*" (modification of cellar entrance stairs) without any particular reference to *Leichenkeller* 2 refers to the stairs of blueprint 2003. In connection with Crematorium II, Pressac mentions a handwritten note dated February 26, 1943, which says:[215]

"Krema 2 BW 30 – 8 lin. meters clay pipe entrance – 1 branch piece diam. 12½ cm cellar 2 – fixtures cellar 1."

It is accompanied by a drawing showing the position of the new entrance (see document 17) which was probably installed at that time. This new entrance was created for a number of concomitant reasons. Above all, the ventilation system in *Leichenkeller* 2 had only an exhaust fan taking in the air from the inside of the hall and an outlet on the roof of the crematorium; if it was to work well, there had to be a fresh-air inlet which the new entrance provided. In addition to that, the mortality

[215] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 68e.

in the camp was very high in February 1943: no less than 5,900 deaths (Grotum/Parcer 1995, vol. 1, p. 249). This caused ZBL to add a new entrance for the bodies, as the existing slide (hardly 78 cm wide) was very impractical. The new entrance, moreover, allowed a more systematic operation: the corpses could be taken into *Leichenkeller* 2, where they were undressed and registered (*Auskleideraum*) and then moved on into the proper morgue (*Leichenkeller* 1). They could be transferred to *Leichenkeller* 2 in various ways, for example by means of stretchers or carts on a mobile ramp made of boards placed on the steps. Another motive was the need to create a second entrance/exit for the "*Vergasungskeller*" being planned in such a way as to have an "unclean" access path to the room and a "clean" exit from it, as explained in chapter 2.9.2.

3.5. Opening Direction of *Leichenkeller* 1 Door

On blueprint 932 the double-leaf door of *Leichenkeller* 1 opens toward the inside; on blueprint 2003 it still has two leaves, but opens toward the outside. If, as Pressac will have it, the first criminal trace, chronologically speaking, was the modification of the drainage system in Crematorium II – as early as June 18, 1942 – it would mean that it took the engineers at ZBL six months to grasp the idea that the door of a homicidal gas chamber, opening inwards, would be blocked by the victim's bodies in case of gassings of large groups, or by a mere rush to the door! And all they would have had to do to reach this conclusion would have been to understand the functioning of the homicidal installation they had themselves allegedly set up previously in Crematorium I!

As we have seen in chapter 2.5.5., van Pelt surmises that a blueprint of Crematorium II dated October 22, 1942, which has not been preserved (how convenient for van Pelt!), presents the locations of the openings for the introduction of Zyklon B on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1. Blueprint 932 shows a section of *Leichenkeller* 1, some 10 m long, both for the half-basement and for the ground floor, on which at least one of the four alleged Zyklon B openings should appear in the same way as the two ventilator shafts are indicated between the room designated for "gold works" (*Goldarb.*; for the recovery of dental fillings and crowns) and the vestibule (*Vorplatz*).

On this blueprint is thus no indication of the use of *Leichenkeller* 1 as a homicidal gas chamber, and therefore the door's opening direction into this hall has, *per se*, no criminal connotation.

Germar Rudolf has pointed out that changing the door's orientation may have had a technical, albeit entirely innocuous reason (2003b, p. 106):

> *"The change in orientation of the doors was probably caused by the design of this morgue's ventilation system. Since the air inlet of this system had a higher resistance than the outlet* […], *a considerable subpressure was caused in morgue 1, constantly sucking air in from the rest of the building. This is a desired effect for a morgue where many corpses had to be stored, so that unpleasant smells would not reach other parts of the building. A double door opening to the side with a lower pressure (inside morgue 1) would open automatically, whereas a door opening to the side of higher pressure closes automatically."*

3.6. Substitution of Double- by Single-Leaf Door in *Leichenkeller* 1

Later on a smaller, probably single-leaf door, must have been installed in *Leichenkeller* 1. This follows from the fact that on blueprint 2197 of March 19, 1943, one can see that the wall which separated the door to *Leichenkeller* 1 from the freight elevator was extended so that the door opening in that blueprint is only some 160-175 cm wide (see document 19). Although this is much wider than would suit a one meter wide door (the "gas-tight" door discussed in chapter 2.2. was 1 m wide), this indicates that some change was indeed made. The reason for this was probably that one wing of the double-leaf door into *Leichenkeller* 1, as designed on older blueprints like no. 2003, would have hit the right wing of the freight elevator door (see document 18)

However, since the disinfestation gas chamber (*Gaskammer*) of BW 5a and 5b had two double-leaf doors as well,[216] this invalidates Pressac's argument that such double-leaf doors could allegedly not be ren-

[216] Cf. the corresponding plans 801 dated November 8, 1941, 1293 dated May 9, 1942, and 1715 dated September 25, 1942, in Pressac 1989, pp. 55-57.

dered gas-tight, hence the reduction from double- to single-leaf door is no "criminal trace" either.[217]

3.7. Elimination of the Faucets in *Leichenkeller* 1

The three faucets in question appear on blueprint 2197 dated March 19, 1943 (Pressac 1989, p. 310, 312), which was part of an inventory and described the installations existing in Crematorium II. They are listed as well in the inventory referring to the half-basement in the acceptance transaction for Crematorium II (see chapter 2.5.1.) dated March 31, 1943. Then how can Pressac say that they were removed? Only by using Tauber's testimony (Tauber 1945b, p. 130):

> *"The gas chamber had no water connection. The water faucet was located in the corridor and from there the floor of the chamber was washed down with a hose."*

There is, however, no document proving that this statement is correct and Pressac's indication is thus worthless.[218]

3.8. The Elimination of *Leichenkeller* 3

On blueprint 1311 dated May 14, 1942, the area of *Leichenkeller* 3 as shown on blueprint 932, dated January 23, 1943, is split up into five rooms: a gold laboratory (*Goldarb.*), an office (*Büro*) with a vault (*Tresorraum*) and a little hall (*Vorplatz*) and finally a morgue (*Leichenkeller* 3), measuring 4.48 by 5.58 meters (Pressac 1989, pp. 294f.). On blueprint 2003 dated December 19, 1942, this area has undergone further modifications: the gold laboratory is unchanged, but the office, the vault and the little hall have been moved to *Leichenkeller* 3 which has disappeared.

The reason is very simple: an entrance hall with an air-lock (*W.f. u.*[Windfang und] *Vorplatz*) had been created in front of the new entrance to the half-basement in the space which formerly held the office, the vault and the little hall and which were now moved to the *Leichen-*

[217] A potential argument Pressac has omitted would have been that double-leaf doors opening outwardly cannot withstand a panicking crowd; but that is true for *all* of the wooden "gas-tight" doors produced by the camp's workshop, which had rather flimsy wrought-iron latches that could have been forced open by a single person – not to mention a panicking crowd of a thousand people or more. See Nowak/Rademacher. Editor's remark.

[218] But even if they and the respective pipes had been removed, this might simply have happened in order to avoid frost damage. Since the morgues were unheated, water in undrained pipes would have frozen in winter, potentially destroying the pipes.

keller 3 area. Hence this was an obvious architectural solution which had nothing to do with the assertion that *Leichenkeller* 3 had "no use in the criminal context of Krematorium II," as Pressac claims (p. 286).

4. "Criminal Traces" for Crematorium III

4.1. Pressac's Interpretation

The two indications referred to by Pressac are found in the acceptance transaction (*Übergabeverhandlung*) of Crematorium III, by which it was handed over to the camp administration on June 24, 1943.[219] Pressac affirms that this document "is the only one known at present [in 1989] that proves, indirectly, the existence of a HOMICIDAL GAS CHAMBER in Leichenkeller 1 of Krematorium III" (1989, p. 439). This proof results from the "incompatibility" claimed to exist between a benign use of the facility and two installations which this transaction attributes to *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III: "*1 gasdichte Tür*" and "*14 Brausen*" (1 gas-tight door and 14 showers). Pressac writes: "This incompatibility constitutes the *fundamental proof*" (p. 429). He then expounds a kind of syllogism whose proposition "A" is that "a gas-tight door can be intended only for a gas chamber," hence the "incomprehensible" conclusion of the presence of showers in a gas chamber, proposition "B" being "a room fitted with showers is a place where people wash themselves," hence the other "incomprehensible" conclusion of the presence of a gas-tight door in a shower room (*ibid*.).

Pressac then points out that for the showers planned at the hygienic installations at Birkenau a floor area of 1.83 m² each was specified which meant that *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III with its 210 m² would have had to have 105 shower heads, but "in fact only 14 were planned and we know that they were fitted, because seven wooden bases to which similar shower heads were fitted are still visible in the ruins of the ceiling of L-keller 1 of Krema II."

Pressac adds that on one of the copies of inventory blueprint 2197 "of the Krematorium II/III," "water pipes are shown supplying the 3 taps of Leichenkeller 1 and the 5 of Leichenkeller 2, but none are connected to the 'showers,'" so that it "can only be concluded that these are DUMMY SHOWERS, made of wood or other materials and painted, as stated by several former members of the Sonderkommando." Pressac's conclusion is peremptory:

[219] RGVA, 502-2-54, pp. 77-78.

> *"This inventory is absolute and irrefutable proof of the existence of a gas chamber fitted with dummy showers in Krematorium III."*

He explains that these showers were meant "to mislead people entering Leichenkeller 1 / gas chamber 1" into believing that they were indeed in a normal shower room (*ibid*.). This argument is of such importance for Pressac that he made it the only one to be mentioned in his general "Conclusion" of the treatment concerning the "39 criminal traces" (p. 456):

> *"Summarizing, a study of the files concerning the construction of the four Birkenau Krematorien reveals 39 (THIRTY NINE) 'slips' or 'criminal traces' of different sorts, the majority of which constitute material proof of the intention to make certain rooms IN THE FOUR KREMATORIEN 'Gasdichte' or gas-tight. The incompatibility between a gas-tight door and 14 shower heads indirectly proves the use of one of these rooms as a HOMICIDAL GAS CHAMBER. There can no longer be any contestation or denial of the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Birkenau in view of such an accumulation of written indiscretions on a subject that was supposed to remain secret but became an open secret throughout all of what was then Upper Silesia."*

4.2. Historical Context

Actually, what preceded was one of the arguments which best illustrate the fallacious method Pressac has used to build his system of specious "criminal traces." When taken back into their real historical background, the showers of Crematorium III make an about turn and instead of "criminal traces" become proof of the contrary.

To begin with, Pressac's syllogism with respect to the alleged "incompatibility" of a gas-tight door and a shower room is wrong even in its propositions: a work-sheet (*Arbeitskarte*) of the wood-working shop (*Tischlerei*) of ZBL dated November 13, 1942, for "*Entlausungsbaracke KGL BW 5a*" (delousing barrack) speaks of "fabrication of 2 pcs. gas-tight doors 1.00/2.00 m for the sauna."[220] At this point, we must open a parenthesis. With respect to what has been argued above, one of van Pelt's co-workers, Zimmermann, writes (2000, note 135, pp. 374f.):

[220] RGVA, 502-1-328, p. 70. Cf. document 20. On the number and the arrangement of gas-tight doors in BW 5a and 5b see Mattogno 2004h, pp. 46-50.

"The document he [Mattogno] *cited is a work order in AA File 502-1-328. It states: 'For: Delousing Barrack. The following work is to be done: The creation of two steel gas proof doors for the sauna.' In other words, if we are to believe Mattogno's explanation of this document, gas-tight doors were being used in the shower facilities of the sauna. Why would gas-tight doors be needed in a shower facility unless prisoners were being gassed?*

The sauna is a reference to delousing barracks BW 5a which contained legitimate prisoner shower facilities and rooms where clothing was deloused with Zyklon B. Any logical person reading this document would realize that the gas-tight doors were for that portion of the sauna used to disinfest clothing, not for the shower facilities. If Mattogno's explanation of this document is to be believed, then he has demonstrated that prisoners were gassed in the shower facilities of the sauna because the work order specifically refers to the type of gas-tight doors which were used in the clothing disinfestation facility!

Mattogno may have believed that because the word sauna was used the argument could be made that it referred to the shower portion. But in fact the building known as the Central Sauna – which began operation in December 1943 – had legitimate shower facilities and places where clothing was disinfested. Not even Mattogno has claimed that the prisoner shower facilities of the Central Sauna had gas-tight doors."

Let me state, first of all, that Zimmermann confuses the *Zentralsauna*, constituted by BW 32 (*Desinfektion und Entwesungsanlage* = disinfection and disinfestation facility), with BW 5a (*Entlausungsbaracke* = delousing barrack). Secondly, as I have explained elsewhere (Mattogno 2001b, pp. 57-61; Engl.: 2004h), a total of 22 *gas-tight doors*, 11 for each building, were installed in the two disinfestation units, BW 5a and 5b, at the following locations:

Designation of location	No of doors
Gaskammer (gas chamber)	2
Schleuse (airlock = vestibule of the gas chamber)	2
Sauna (sauna)	2
Entwesungsapparat (disinfestation device)	1
Entwesungskammer (disinfestation chamber)	2
Desinfektion (disinfection)	2
Total	11

Hence, the above 2 gas-tight doors refer precisely to the shower installation. And this brings down the alleged "incompatibility" of a gas-tight door and a shower room.

But back to Pressac. Other than being wrong in principle, Pressac's argumentation is from the very beginning infected by a major blunder: he proposes, in fact, to judge the structure of Crematorium III as of June 24, 1943, on the basis of an inventory blueprint of Crematorium II (*Bestandsaufnahme des Krematoriums II*) drawn on March 19! The absurdity of such a procedure becomes evident from the fact that the "showers" were part of a project – realized only in part – which was worked out nearly two months later, when the gas-tight door had already existed for a long time, having been ordered on March 6, 1943 (and installed a few weeks later) in an entirely different context.

In early May 1943 a vast program was launched at Birkenau of "*Sondermassnahmen für die Verbesserung der hygienischen Einrichtungen*" (special measures for the improvement of the hygienic installations) variously referred to in the documents as "*Sofortprogramm*" "*Sondermassnahme*," "*Sonderprogramm*," "*Sonderbaumassnahmen*," and "*Sonderaktion*" (immediate program, special measure, special program, special construction measure, and special action; see Mattogno 2001b, pp. 56-59). The respective written order was transmitted by Kammler to the Auschwitz commander on May 14.[221] From the very beginning the crematoria were made part of this program for the improvement of the hygienic installations at the Birkenau camp.[222]

On May 13, 1943, Bischoff drew up a "Report on the work scheduled for immediate program at PoW camp Auschwitz" in which all officers, non-coms and civilian employees of ZBL were assigned specific tasks within the overall plan. The task attributed to civilian employee Jährling is described under item 9 of this report:[223]

> *"ZA Jährling has to implement the installation of heaters and boilers in the washing barracks, also the showers in the undressing room of Crematorium III. On the subject of showers, SS-Sturmbannführer Bischoff will discuss with the camp commander, SS-Obersturmbannführer Höss.*
>
> *SS-WVHA will transmit an OT drawing for the disinfestation ovens."*

[221] Aktenvermerk by Jothann of October 5, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 77.
[222] For an in-depth treatment of the question please see Mattogno 2004k, pp. 271-294.
[223] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 338.

Two days later, on May 15, Bischoff sent the following telegram to Topf:[224]

> *"Urgent telegram! – Address: Topfwerke Erfurt. – Text: bring Monday tentative project for hot water supply for ca. 100 showers. Installation of heating coils or boilers into garbage incineration oven under construction Krem. III or flue duct for using high exhaust gas temperatures. If needed, heightening of oven to take up large reserve tank is possible. You are asked to give respective drawings to Herr Prüfer on Monday, 17.5."*

On May 16 Bischoff sent Kammler a "Report on measures adopted for the implementation of special program at PoW camp Auschwitz ordered by SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr.-Ing. Kammler." Item 6 reads:[225]

> *"6. Disinfestation pant. An OT disinfestation unit has been planned for at each of the BA II subcamps for the disinfestation of the detainees' clothes. For a proper body delousing of the detainees, heaters and boilers will be installed in the two existing detainee baths at BA I for the production of hot water for the existing shower unit. Also planned is the insertion of heating coils into the garbage incinerator at Crematorium III for the production of* [hot] *water for a shower unit to be installed in the cellar of Crematorium III. Negotiations for the implementation of this unit have taken place with Topf & Söhne Co., Erfurt."*

The plan to install showers in the half-basement of Crematorium III was quickly extended also to Crematorium II. On June 5, Topf sent to the Auschwitz ZBL the following letter, headed "*Krematorium II und III. Müllverbrennungsofen*" (Crematoria II and III. Garbage incinerator):[226]

> *"Enclosed please find drawing D 60446 concerning the insertion of the boilers into the garbage incinerator. An identical drawing has been sent to our foreman Wilh. Koch. In case you accept to have the installation built according to this drawing, please inform Herr Koch.*
>
> *Similarly, please inform us as well so that we can confirm the order for the additional work."*

[224] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 40.
[225] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 311.
[226] RGVA, 502-1-336, p. 104.

The extension of the project to Crematoria II and III is confirmed by an undated questionnaire (*Fragebogen*) filled out by Bischoff in June 1943. The ZBL head, in reply to the first four questions, states that in Crematoria II-V there were 18 ovens[227] with 46 muffles, that they had all been built by Topf in the years 1942-1943, that they were coke-fired, that they all had cracks, that they had altogether 6 chimneys 16 m high and that the chimneys did not possess forced-draft units (*Saugzuganlagen*). To the fifth question "Are the waste gases utilized?," Bischoff answered "planned but not implemented" and to the following question "If so, for what purpose?" he replied "for bathing installations in Crematoria II and III."[228]

The project to install 100 showers in Crematorium III (and a further shower section in Crematorium II) could not have been intended for the detainees of the crematorium personnel, because at that time the *Zentralsauna*, the disinfestation and disinfection unit for the whole camp, had only 54 showers, as Bischoff told the head of *Amt C/I* of SS-WVHA on June 4, 1943:[229]

> *"The shower unit for the detainees contains 54 showers and is fed by two boilers of 3,000 liters each. The plant has been laid out for continuous use."*

Actually, the shower room (*Brauseraum*) of *Zentralsauna* contained only 50 showers.[230] It is therefore clear that the showers planned for Crematoria II and III were destined for the detainees of the entire camp.

For that reason, the 14 showers which appear in the acceptance transaction of Crematorium III on June 24, 1943, represent a partial implementation of the original project. Precisely because such a project was developed in May 1943, no showers are mentioned in the inventory of the half-basement of Crematorium II, the acceptance transaction of which was dated, we must remember, March 31, 1943,[231] and for the same reason the water pipes in the inventory blueprint of Crematorium II, dated March 19, 1943, are not connected to any showers.

The scope of the 14 showers was obviously limited, but not irrelevant if compared to the 50 showers in the *Zentralsauna*. The initial plan

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[227] The 8-muffle oven of Crematoria IV and V was considered to consist of 4 ovens.
[228] RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 8.
[229] RGVA, 502-1-336, p. 107.
[230] Inventory of Übergabeverhandlung for "Desinfektions- und Entwesungsanlage" (Zentralsauna) of January 22, 1944. RGVA, 532-1-335, p. 3.
[231] RGVA, 502-2-54, pp. 77-78.

was not fully implemented for two reasons. First of all, 50 showers[232] were installed in each one of the two disinfestation units (*Entwesungsanlagen*) of *Bauabschnitt* I (*Bauwerke* 5a and 5b). Work began at the end of May, as we know from the "Progress report about special measures at PoW camp" of May 30, 1943:[233]

> *"Work has started on the installation of the hot water supply in the 2 delousing barracks (detainee baths)."*

On July 13 both units were in operation, as we can see from the "Progress report about the continuation of work on special measures at PoW camp and main camp" compiled by Bischoff on that day:[234]

> *"The hot water supply in the two delousing barracks (detainee bath) of building section I have been started up."*

Furthermore, the construction of the "*Desinfektion und Entwesungsanlage,"* the *Zentralsauna*, went on diligently, and its termination was scheduled for early September.[235] However, the unit went into service on a limited scale only in early December,[236] a month and a half before it was handed over to the Auschwitz camp administration.[237] Still, the shower project, based on the recovery of the heat of the exhaust gases from the crematoria ovens, resurfaced on March 25, 1944, when Jothann sent Topf a letter on the subject "PoW camp Auschwitz, cremat[*oria*], utilization of exhaust gas" in which he said:[238]

> *"You are requested to send us soonest an offer with sketch and calculations plus detailed description. Crematoria II and III and possibly also IV and V are being considered."*

As Pressac himself has written (1989, p. 512):

> *"it is obvious that KGL Birkenau cannot have had at one and the same time two opposing functions: health care and extermination."*

But because the project of sanitary installations in the Birkenau crematoria is based on irrefutable *documentary evidence*, whereas the idea of mass extermination devices is founded only on "indications," it

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[232] Übergabeverhandlung for Bauwerk 5a – Entlausungsanlage, inventory. RGVA, 502-2-58, p. 129. Plan Nr. 2948 of Entlausungsanlage FL BW. 5a of October 6, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-230, p. 174. Cf. also Zentralbauleitung plan 2540 of July 5, 1943 in: Pressac 1989, p. 58.

[233] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 281.

[234] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 119.

[235] RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 10.

[236] Letter from SS-Standortarzt to Leiter der Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei Schlesien of December 9, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-336, p. 84.

[237] The Übergabeverhandlung of the installation is dated January 22, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-335, p. 1.

[238] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 11.

is equally obvious that the real function of the crematoria could not have been the exterminatory one defended by Pressac.

4.3. Wooden Plates of Alleged "Dummy Showers"

What remains to be examined is Pressac's argument on the subject of the little wooden plates set into the ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, to which, he says, the alleged dummy showers were fastened. His explanation is a veritable fallacy, though, because he tries to demonstrate the presence of fake showers in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III on the base of wooden plates present in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II. However, the wooden plates of Crematorium II are real, yet for this building no showers (fake or otherwise) show up in its inventory, whereas for Crematorium III showers (real ones, though) are documented, but no wooden plates have so far been proved to have existed there.[239]

In June 1990, when I visited Birkenau for the first time accompanied by two engineers and after having attentively read Pressac's book, one of our first investigations concerned precisely those plates which I photographed repeatedly, also on later visits (see Mattogno 2005d, photos 9 & 10, p. 392). In *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, I identified eight such items, including the empty holes in the concrete which held them originally (*ibid*., photo 11, p. 393). They are arranged along two parallel lines to the right and left of the central beam at a distance of some 1.65 cm from the beam and 1.90 cm from one another. The dimensions vary slightly (10×11 cm; 9×12 cm), the thickness is 4 cm. Individual pairs of plates (or empty holes in the concrete) are located in a staggered way in the longitudinal sense of the *Leichenkeller* with respect to the columns.

What were these wood pieces used for? If we follow Pressac, the architects at ZBL had inserted 14 fake showers in a space of 210 m² to fool the thousands of alleged victims! An inspection of the alleged gas chamber of Crematorium I furnishes us with the explanation of this apparent mystery. Eight supporting beams of this hall show, in fact, in their center rectangular indentations of the same type set into the concrete (*ibid*., photo 12). The lamps which now light up the room are set into three of them. Hence, the wooden plates were simply the bases onto which were fastened the lamps of *Leichenkeller* 1. This is even con-

[239] Although it is likely that they did exist, but the utter destruction of the room's ceiling prevents us from finding material evidence for it.

firmed by a document. Blueprint 2197[b](r) of Crematorium II dated March 19, 1943 (Pressac 1989, p. 312), shows the arrangement of the lamps in *Leichenkeller* 1: eight pairs of lamps are arranged along two lines on both sides of the central beam at equal distance from the columns, i.e. at 1.90 m from one to the next. This corresponds to the relative position of the plates mentioned above. In the sectional view of *Leichenkeller* 1 along its width, the lamps are located next to the central beam, but it is reasonable to assume that they were set in the center of the two sides of the hall, i.e. at middle distance between the beam and the opposite wall (3.3. m), hence at 1.65 m from the central beam, where, in fact, the plates can be found. Actually, from the positions shown on the sectional view of the blueprint, the lamps would have illuminated only poorly the side of the hall in which they were located, and even less well the opposite side, because the central beam with its thickness of 55 cm would have created a broad shadow zone. For the same reason, the plates were placed in a staggered manner with respect to the pillars of *Leichenkeller* 1.

The strange position of each pair of lamps on the two sides of the central beam as shown on the blueprint may have the following explanation: In the western part of the *Leichenkeller*, the blueprint also shows the location of the sewage channel (*Entwässerung*) for that hall which ran lengthwise between the central beam and the wall opposite, which means that, if the lamps had been drawn at the positions of the wooden plates, the marks for seven lamps on this side of the hall would have been superimposed on the channel, creating confusion. That the lamps were indeed not placed right next to the central beam as indicated in drawing 2197[b](r) is demonstrated by the fact that no wooden plates or other fixation devices for lamps can be found there, which validates the above explanation.

4.4. The “Gas-tight Door”

From the documentation referred to above it clearly results that the “*Gasdichtetür*,” i.e. the gas-tight door, did not have any direct connection with the showers but stemmed from an earlier project that was abandoned. This door, as I have mentioned above, had actually been ordered prior to March 31, 1943, whereas the shower project came into being in May of that year. Bischoff’s report of May 13, 1943, explicitly mentions the project of the installation of showers in the “*Ausk-*

leideraum" (undressing room) of Crematorium III, something which – as Pressac would have put it – would be incomprehensible if this room had really been the undressing room for victims on their way to the alleged gas chamber, all the more so, as the project also referred to Crematorium II.

This confirms that the "*Gasdichtetür*" had nothing to do with a homicidal gas chamber. In conclusion, it can be said that the gas-tight door was installed in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III merely because it had already been built in March 1943 for a different project which was later abandoned, whereas the showers were real. Therefore neither the "*Gasdichtetür*"" nor the "*Brausen*" have any value as criminal traces, let alone as a "fundamental proof" of "the existence of a homicidal gas chamber in Leichenkeller 1 of Crematorium II" as Pressac claims.

5. "Criminal Traces" Relative to Crematoria IV & V

5.1. Presentation of the Indications

On the subject of these crematoria, Pressac has identified three indications: "*Gas[s]dichtenfenster*," "*Gasdichte Türen*" and "*Gas[s]kammer*." If we want to understand their significance, we must examine them within the general context of the planning and erection of Crematoria IV and V. The first indication refers to an order placed by ZBL for "12 pcs. gas-tight doors ca. 30×40 cm," about which Pressac writes (p. 443):

> *"Although the word 'Türen/doors' is hardly suitable for openings of 30 by 40 cm, more the size of small windows, it was nevertheless used 4 times before the civilian workers of Riedel & Sons, who had to fit some of them in the gas chambers of Krematorium IV, began to call them more correctly 'gas-tight windows.' Each of the Krematorien had 6 such windows, while their gas chambers had 7 Zyklon B introduction openings to be fitted."*

We will later see how Pressac explains this incongruity. Here it suffices to say that, on the basis of blueprint 2036 dated January 11, 1943, the only windows in Crematoria IV and V which measured 30 by 40 cm – while they were located in the area of the alleged homicidal gas chambers – were 8 in number for each crematorium, 7 on the outside, 1 on the inside. This will be discussed in section 7 of this chapter. The second indication presents problems for Pressac, because the number of gas-tight doors ordered for Crematoria IV and V is greater than that needed for the alleged gas chambers. We will see how the author attempted to cope with this difficulty. The third indication – *Gas[s]kammer* – comes up in a context which is not in agreement with Pressac's thesis.

5.2. Crematoria IV & V: Original Plan

Pressac concedes that there is no evidence for the presence of homicidal gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V, but in spite of this he not only assumes that they existed there anyway, but even attempts to illustrate their development and their operation (1989, p. 447):

"This 'phantom' document[240] *is not 'conclusive' proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers in Krematorium IV, but it helps us to understand and establish how they were planned, built and used.*

Contrary to what I said in my article 'Les Krematorien IV et V de Birkenau' in 'Le Monde Juif,' the three documents cited above […] *together with Krematorium IV drawing 1678 of 14th August 1942 and 2036 of 11th January 1943 enable us to state THAT KREMATORIEN IV AND V WERE DESIGNED AS CRIMINAL INSTRUMENTS, although modifications introduced in the course of their construction and operation made their operating sequence absurd."*

He then exerts himself to demonstrate this assertion (*ibid*.):

"The Bauleitung produced only two drawings for Krematorium IV, valid also for Krematorium V. Comparing these drawings with the 'Schlosserei WL' orders reveals the following evolution:

– *Preliminary project: based on drawing 1678 of 14th August 1942, showing only the furnace room with two twinned 4-muffle incineration furnaces and its associated rooms on the eastern side, connected through a safety air lock to a large gas chamber of undetermined length. I state that this incomplete room is a gas chamber (and not a morgue, which by definition has to be kept cool) in order to explain the presence of a stove and a buffer air lock between this room and the furnace room. The flue from the stove runs underground to the chimney of one of the twin 4-muffle furnaces. This incomplete preliminary project could have been completed by an undressing room in the western part, so that its functioning would have been in a straight line running west to east. It was abandoned for unknown reasons that I would assume were connected with the risk of accidental poisoning in the furnace room during natural ventilation of the gas chamber."*

Actually, as I have explained in chapter 2.7., the presence of a stove is not incompatible with a typical morgue. From his unfounded hypothesis, Pressac then goes out to deduce another, even less solid one (p. 398):

"In order to explain the lack of an undressing room in Krematorien IV and V, it must be borne in mind that they were originally conceived simply as additional cremation installations, dependent

[240] The order for 4 gas-tight doors of January 18, 1943.

on Bunkers 1 and 2, and not as fully fledged complexes like Krematorien II and III."

In his second book, Pressac comes back to this question and affirms (1993, p. 54):

"Crematoria IV and V, with their summary lay-out, are directly tied in with bunkers 1 and 2, and even though their original equipment (without gas chambers) was not of a criminal nature, their destination was, for they stood at the end of a killing process of which they were part."

In reality, the "bunkers" as homicidal gas chambers never existed (see Mattogno 2004i). But even if we leave this fact aside, such a project would have been nonsensical, as the alleged "bunker 1" was some 800 m (by road) away from the crematoria and "bunker 2" even some 900 m, which means that the corpses of the gassed victims would have had to be taken to the crematoria by truck. This would have been planned at a time when ZBL had allegedly already implemented a more rational way of operation at the main camp by locating the homicidal gas chamber within Crematorium I.

Moreover, if we take into consideration that the open-air incinerations at Birkenau are said to have begun on September 21, 1942 (Czech 1989, p. 305), the alleged function of Crematorium IV and V as "additional cremation installations dependent upon bunkers 1 and 2" according to blueprint 1678 of August 14 becomes fully anachronistic. In his description of these units Pressac states (1993, p. 67):

"As far as Crematorium IV (and V) is concerned, the first drawing of August 1942 shows only the incineration zone. In mid-October the firm Karl Segnitz, doing the roof, presented a blueprint with the definitive dimensions; the furnace room had been provided with a vast extension, 48 by 12 m (576 m²), to show its function 'as the last link in a chain': the stages of undressing and of gassing the victims still took place in bunker 2, but the corpses thus 'produced' were taken to the morgue and stored there before they were incinerated. Later, the SS attempted to create a gas chamber (heated by a stove) at the center of the building which would have resulted in the following logical sequence:

'Undressing room > gas chamber > lock > furnace hall with 8 muffles'."

The Segnitz drawing is blueprint 1361 dated October 14, 1942 (Pressac 1989, p. 397), but the stove appears as early as August 14, 1942, on

blueprint 1678 "Incineration plant at PoW camp" drawn by the detainee no. 538 – the Pole Leo Sawka (*ibid*., p. 393). On this subject and just a page earlier, Pressac had declared the presence of a stove in a mortuary to be absurd, as such a room ostensibly had to be kept cool by definition. Hence he had maintained that the stove actually served to promote the evaporation of hydrogen cyanide:

> *"the presence of a stove in the uncompleted room of the drawing 1678 is a formal indication that it was used for gassing."*

For Pressac, then, this room was a homicidal gas chamber using hydrogen cyanide. But if the future Crematorium IV already possessed a homicidal gas chamber from the beginning of its planning, how can one assert that it was initially only planned to serve as "an additional cremation installation" connected with the Birkenau "bunkers"? Arguing the other way around, if a homicidal gas chamber was added "later," i.e. after October 14, the presence of stoves in the original blueprint could not, in fact, be linked to the evaporation of hydrogen cyanide.

Blueprint 1678 also gives the exact dimensions of the alleged gas chamber: 48.25 by 12.20 meters. Even though it shows only part of the mortuary, the dimensions of this room are obvious: the length indicated (48.25 m) corresponds precisely to that of the entire building (67.50 m) minus the length (19.25 m) of the furnace hall and the *Schleuse* (airlock) in the final drawing.[241] The planning of the future Crematorium IV thus had nothing to do with the mysterious "bunkers" 1 and 2 and did not include a homicidal gas chamber. Instead, it included a very large mortuary of 588.65 m², something quite obvious, if we take into account that it was conceived at a time of extremely high "natural" mortality among the detainees of the camp, caused by a terrible typhus epidemic.[242] And the fact that it showed in detail only the furnace hall and the adjoining rooms indicates that the attention of ZBL was directed mainly toward the aspect of cremation, hence the project was intended for the corpses of the victims of the epidemic. Pressac himself came to this logical conclusion, even though he had rejected it by his erroneous conjecture concerning the stove (1989, p. 384):

> *"The first phase is revealed by Bauleitung drawing 1678 of 14th August 1942, entitled 'Cremation installation in the POW camp,' an*

[241] Plan 2036 of January 11, 1943 "Einäscherungsanlage für das K.G.L." Pressac 1989, p. 399.

[242] In August 1942 the highest mortality in the history of the camp was recorded: about 8,600 deaths.

installation to be duplicated and which was connected with the production of Bunkers 1 and 2, which was the result of the 'special actions.' The disastrous health situation in the camp in August 1942 probably explains why the 'cremation' part of the drawing was completed while the rest, considered secondary, was not.

The building, measuring 67 m by 12 m, was made up of a 'cremation' section (comprising the furnace room and its annexes and the separating air lock) and a 'morgue' section of 48 m×12 m, whose floor area of 576 m² was by no means exceptional for Birkenau, the combined area of Leichenkeller 1 and 2 of Krematorium II or III being slightly greater than this. However, the apparent normalcy of this additional cremation installation is called into question by a stove (source of heat) being shown in the morgue (cool room), thus indicating the presence of a gas chamber."

Blueprint 1678 also gives the height of the rooms of the crematorium: 3.80 meters. The large room thus had a volume of (48.25×12.20× 3.80 =) 2,236.87 m³. How can anyone seriously believe that this room was a homicidal gas chamber with natural ventilation employing hydrogen cyanide, if *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematoria II and III with its volume of ca. 506 m³ had allegedly been selected by ZBL as a homicidal gas chamber, because its ventilation system provided for some 9.5 air exchanges per hour?

Furthermore, Pressac makes the cremation capacity of Crematorium IV 500 corpses per day (1989, p. 384; 1993, p. 121), which means that a gassing operation at full load (over 5,800 victims for a packing density of 10 persons per m²; Pressac 1989, p. 384) would have required 11 days of uninterrupted cremation (or more than 36 days for the actual cremation capacity; see chapter 8.7.).

5.3. Crematoria IV & V: First Operating Concept

Pressac then goes on to propound what he takes to be the first operating concept for extermination in these crematoria (1989, p. 447):

"First design: based on drawing 2036 of 11th January 1943, the orders of 18th January and 19th March 1943 for FOUR gas-tight doors and that of 13th February 1943 for 12 gas-tight windows for BOTH Krematorien IV and V (SIX per building).

The drawing shows that the two rooms on the west side are gas chambers, for they each have a stove and require, to be made gas-

tight, 4 doors (two per room) and 6 windows (3 per room), one being INSIDE the corridor giving access to the chambers, unlike the five others that are on the outside). The victims would take the route: gas chamber 1 OR gas chamber 2, corridor, vestibule, morgue [central room] and furnace room. This sequence is linear, thus LOGICAL.

In industrial terms, 2 manufacturing units [gas chambers 1 and 2] alternately supply a product [corpses] to be held in a store [morgue] while waiting to be consumed [in the cremation furnaces]. In human terms, people walk in on their own two feet at the western end of Krematorium IV and go out in the form of smoke from the chimneys at the eastern end.

The position of the two gas chambers and their corridor, at the western end, permits natural ventilation without danger to the people working in the morgue or the furnace room. But the building has no undressing room. The victims have to get undressed outside. The Bauleitung could alleviate this problem by erecting a 'stable type' hut for this purpose on the other side of the 'Ringstraße/ring road,' just opposite Kr IV." (Pressac's emph.)

But in this context, the two gas chambers could just as easily be disinfestation chambers without anything else having to be changed, because their *homicidal* character does not result from any such indication. Pressac himself, on the other hand, calls attention to an incongruous aspect of the matter which renders his hypothesis not very convincing: the absence of an undressing room. It is quite true, obviously, that ZBL *could* have remedied this inconvenience by placing an undressing barrack in front of the crematorium, but it is a fact that such a barrack does not appear on the Birkenau map drawn on February 17, 1943 (Pressac 1989, p. 220), one month after the alleged decision to install two gas chambers in Crematorium IV. Such a decision would have to be the basis for the order of January 18 concerning the construction of 4 gas-tight doors, because otherwise this order would have no basis.

5.4. Crematoria IV & V: Second Operating Concept

Let us look at Pressac's second hypothesis (1989, pp. pp. 447f.):

"Second design: based on the letter of 31st March 1943 and the testimony of S. Dragon with the creation of a gas-tight unit comprising the two gas chambers and the corridor. Three doors and six or

> *seven windows are required to make it gas-tight. By adding the possibility of using the morgue as an undressing room, the following sequence is obtained: entry through the vestibule, undressing room [central room], vestibule, eastern unit of the two gas chambers and corridor, vestibule, morgue [central room] and furnace room. The route is no longer linear and the operating sequence has become totally illogical, the argument I maintained in my article* [Pressac 1982].
>
> *According to a photograph of Krematorium IV in the 'Auschwitz Album,' a gas-tight door was fitted in the corridor to give direct access from the outside, without having to pass through the vestibule. This additional door, visible on a photograph taken in May or June 1944* [recte: 1943] *must be connected with the third design proposed for Krematorien IV and V."* (Pressac's emph.)

These two hypotheses proposed by Pressac are based on the assumption that ZBL had ordered for Crematorium IV *first* 4 gas-tight doors (orders of January 18 and February 19, 1943) and *later* 3 such doors (order mentioned on March 31, 1943) cancelling the preceding order, as well as 12 gas-tight windows for Crematoria IV and V (order of February 13, 1943). In fact, things are not as simple as that. The order for "4 [gas]tight doors" for Crematorium IV appears on February 19, 1943, order no. 109, in the "*Schlosserei WL*" register. It shows the dimensions (100×205 cm) and refers to order no. 2261/80/17 of January 18, 1943, which was given by *Häftlings-Schlosserei* to *WL Schlosserei* at the D.A.W. office. This order was mentioned in Bischoff's letter to D.A.W. of March 31, 1943, in which he explains:[243]

> *"that three gas-tight doors are to be executed in accordance with the order of January 18, 1943 for BW 30b and 30 c, exactly with the dimensions and the design of the doors delivered so far."*

Thus, the two documents cited refer to the same order, no. 2261/80/17 of January 18, 1943, but the first spoke of four and the second of three doors. Pressac's hypothesis that the order of March 31, 1943, initially referred to four doors (1989, p. 384) and was thus a rectification of the order of January 18, is unsustainable; in that case, Bischoff would have mentioned a rectification and would not have referred to the original order. Furthermore, the order given by ZBL to *WL*

[243] APMO, BW 30/34, pp. 59-60. As we know, the first carbon copy of this document has the term "Türme"; on the other copy it has been corrected by hand to "Türen," but only the first time it appears.

Schlosserei on April 16 and referring to Crematorium IV mentions the supply of "metal fittings as previously supplied" for 4 gas-tight doors and not for 3, and because this document is dated later than the letter of March 31, Pressac's hypothesis breaks down. These four "metal fittings" were in fact ordered by ZBL from *Häftlingsschlosserei* on January 22, 1943, by order no. 185 which said "4 pcs. compl. gas-door fittings according to instructions."[244] They were manufactured on January 30, as results from the corresponding *Arbeitskarte* dated February 10.[245] Bischoff's letter, thus, does not constitute the cancellation of an order not yet filled, but a new order, and, as Pressac had already well explained in his article, it referred to Crematorium IV (Pressac 1982, p. 119, note 14):

> *"'Für das BW 30b und 30c'* [For BW 30b and 30c] *could make one believe that the three doors were meant for Crematoria IV and V. Two points contradict this. The object of the letter mentions an order for das [the, sing.] BW 30b (Crematorium IV). The use of the singular of the article das indicates the buildings BW 30b and 30c [together], and results from the practice of speaking globally of a single worksite in connection with Crematorium IV / Crematorium V as opposed to Crematorium II / Crematorium III, a distinction which was due to the different nature of the buildings. We are not dealing here with 3 doors for Crematoria IV and V but with 3 doors which were to be made for the worksite Crematorium IV / Crematorium V as an order for Crematorium IV."*

Therefore 7 gas-tight doors were supplied to Crematorium IV. But then it follows that the 4 gas-tight doors, 100 by 205 cm, of the order dated January 18, 1943, repeated on February 19, were not meant for the west side of the building, but for the east wing, more specifically for the *Schleuse* (air-lock) as Pressac himself had asserted in his article (*ibid*., pp. 119f.):

> *"Order no. 109 of 19.2.43 for Crematorium IV for '4 dichte Türen'/4 hermetic doors,' 100 by 205 cm was not meant for the gas chambers but for the 4 openings in the space which separated the furnace hall from the large hall / mortuary (initial project). Blueprints 1678 and 2036 confirm their dimensions. It is possible to argue that the doors in the 'western' part also have the dimensions of 2.05 by 1.00 meters.*

[244] RGVA, 502-2-54, p. 31.
[245] RGVA, 502-2-54, p. 32.

The clearly earlier date – together with the presence of civilians – as compared to the three that existed on the date of the official dedication of the building, sustained by the need to separate the morgue from the furnace hall if only for the simple reason of preventing fires, sustained by the installation of a lock between the two parts, would seem to be a strong element in favor of 'normal' use."

There is also another item speaking for this interpretation, namely that, according to the work sheets of the *Riedel* company, the work on the building proceeded from east to west, i.e. from the furnace hall to the alleged gas chamber. The entry "floor concreted in gas chamber" stems, in fact, from March 2, 1943, but the floor for the pavement in the furnace hall had already been laid on February 17.[246] Pressac himself contributes to the self-destruction of his hypothesis when he writes that the 240 some odd square meters of this alleged gassing unit could have "processed" 2,400 victims in one gassing batch, but (1989, p. 384):

"It would take four or five days to cremate these 2,400 bodies."

In actual fact, it would have taken two weeks. Regarding the "additional door, visible on a photograph taken *in May or June 1944*," actually in April 1943, it will be discussed in section 9 of this chapter.

The conclusion from these considerations is that Pressac's two hypotheses discussed above are unjustified and misleading both in principle and because they are based on groundless assumptions.

5.5. Crematoria IV & V: Third Operating Concept

Pressac has yet a third hypothesis regarding the operational structure of the alleged homicidal gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V (1989, p. 448):

"Third design: based on the testimony and drawing of S. Dragon and the ruins of Krematorium V. The design was adopted for Krematorium V and perhaps also for Krematorium IV. It was imposed by the need to be able to gas small groups of victims and by inadequate Zyklon B supplies. A fourth gas chamber was created in the western unit by dividing the corridor in two in the proportion 1:2 [visible in the ruins of Krematorium V]. Four gas chambers, each of which had to be gas-tight, required six doors (or seven including the external door of the corridor) with seven openings for pouring Zyklon B. The

[246] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 93

ruins of Krematorium IV give no indication as to whether a fourth gas chamber was installed there."

Elsewhere, Pressac says specifically (*ibid*., p. 252):

"The same principle was applied in May 1944 in Krematorium V, where an internal wall was built to create a gas chamber of about 12 m² in order to be able to 'treat' small groups using a minimum of Zyklon B."

This explanation is contradictory in itself as well as nonsensical. It is contradictory, because Pressac has this situation arise in May 1944, i.e. at a time of highest activity in terms of the claimed extermination, about which he writes (*ibid*., p. 253):

"Between May and the beginning of July 1944, some 200,000 to 250,000 Hungarian Jews were annihilated in the gas chambers and incineration furnaces of Krematorium II and III, the gas chambers (the original internal wall dividing the building into four small gas chambers had been removed, leaving a single chamber of external dimension 7 m by 15 m) of Bunker 2/V and its incineration ditch of 30 m² area."

Thus, on the one hand the influx of victims alleged to be gassed was so enormous that bunker 2 had to be reactivated and *its internal partitions demolished* to create a single large gas chamber, yet on the other hand a partition was set up in Crematorium V to create a gas chamber of 12 m² for "small groups of victims." But what small groups? According to Pressac, the average number of Hungarian Jews arriving to be gassed over the 58 days of this campaign was (200,000 to 250,000÷58 =) about 3,450 to 4,300 per day! The hypothesis makes no sense at all, even if we allow for the occasional "small groups." If it was a problem of not wasting Zyklon B, all that was needed was to wait for a couple of days for a larger group to arrive and then gas everybody at the same time in a larger gas chamber.

In his second book, Pressac picks up the ZBL projects in a summarizing way without adding any new considerations (1993, pp. 67f.).

5.6. The Gassing Technique

After all these alleged projects, here is the final result acc. to Pressac (1989, p. 386):

"Although the operation sequence looks simple enough, it had become irrational and ridiculous. It was irrational to have the vic-

tims going from the central room to the gas chambers then being brought back, thus destroying the linear logic of the initial design. It was ridiculous to have an SS man in gasmask balancing on his short ladder with a 1 kg can of Zyklon B in his left hand while he opened and then closed the 30 by 40 cm shutter through which he introduced the pellets with his right hand. This performance was to be repeated six times. If he was not capable of such balancing act, the SS had to climb his little ladder three times for each opening: first to open the shutter (up and down), second to introduce the Zyklon B (up and down) and third to close the shutter (up and down). Six openings, eighteen times up and down the ladder wearing a gasmask. A simulation shows that this exercise would take 10 minutes. A few steps installed beneath each opening would have avoided all this performance."

In his second book he repeats (1993, p. 68):

"The criminal modification of Crematorium IV (and V), decided on solely by the technicians and engineers of Bauleitung, was so aberrant that it would have been unworkable had it not been for the intervention of Topf Co. which, incidentally, was partly responsible for the poor operation of the ovens."

The reference to Topf concerns the order for a de-aeration unit for Crematoria IV and V. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 10. Here we will note only that, according to Pressac, this unit was installed only in Crematorium V, as late as May 1944, so that the gassing technique used in this building remained "irrational," "ridiculous," and "aberrant" up to that point, and was so at all times in Crematorium IV.

5.7. Introduction of Zyklon B

There are two more aspects not considered by Pressac but given in evidence by H. Tauber, which render the alleged operation even more irrational and ridiculous to the point of making it inapplicable. The witness Tauber had declared that all four of the alleged gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V

"had gas-tight doors, windows with grilles on the inside and were closed from the outside by means of gas-tight shutters. These little windows which a man standing on his feet could reach with his hand raised up were used for pouring the contents of the 'Cyklon' cans into the gas chambers full of people." (Tauber 1945b, p. 148)

In Tauber's Soviet deposition he declared on the subject of the alleged gas chambers (1945a, p. 6):

> *"For throwing in the 'Zyklon,' there were openings with bars in the walls at a height of two meters that could be closed hermetically by means of covers."*

Thus an SS man, perched on his little ladder, would have had to ask the victims kindly to allow themselves to be gassed without any fuss, as they would otherwise have been able, by simply raising their hands, to keep him from pouring in the contents of his can of Zyklon B through the little window 30 by 40 cm wide. Blueprint 2036 of January 11, 1943, shows in section A-B that the ceiling of the alleged gas chambers was 2.20 m high, with the windows set at 1.7 to 2.1 m from the floor. Thus, the victims could easily have averted any gassing attempted in this manner. But that is not all.

Pressac publishes the photographs of 3 "gas-tight" shutters which belonged to Crematoria IV/V and which carry the Auschwitz Museum identification number II-5-64/1-3 (1989, pp. 426ff.). The external dimensions of the frames are 30×40 cm, but the covers are smaller than the frames and, because of the particular structure of the covers,[247] the internal opening is smaller yet: about 20×30 cm for the windows II-5-64/2 and 3 and about 15 by 25 for window II-5-64/1. This means that the available space for the introduction of Zyklon B was even smaller: a Zyklon B can of 500 grams had a diameter of some 15.4 cm and a height of 12.5 cm – the 1,500 gram type had the same diameter but was 31.5 cm high, with the 1,000 gram can having an intermediate height. One also has to consider the hand of the operator. Hence, the introduction of a can of Zyklon B through such a restricted opening would have been impossible, if only a single victim had resisted it with one hand.

But even that is not all yet.

The window bars mentioned by Tauber for the alleged gas chambers are confirmed by two orders given by ZBL to *Schlosserei*. The first, no. 252 of March 29, 1943, for Crematoria IV and V, concerns the fabrication of "*Eisengitter*" (iron grilles) for various windows, among them 4 measuring 0.30×0.40 m (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 89). The job was terminated on April 30. The second is no. 351 dated April 27, also for Crematoria IV and V, and mentions i.a. "12 pcs. window grids 50×70 cm" (*ibid*., p. 92). The job was finished on April 30. As all windows of the

[247] Cf. document 21, photograph of the window, APMO II-5-64/2.

two crematoria had standard dimensions of 100×150, 50×100 and 30×40 cm, it is obvious that the 4 grilles could only be meant for the windows measuring 30×40 cm, i.e. those of the alleged homicidal gas chambers. The total number, 16, corresponds in fact to the total number of windows 30×40 cm in Crematoria IV and V. The dimensions 50×70 cm probably corresponded to later variations in the design of the walls. As the function of the metal grilles was to protect the open space of the windows, it is clear that the small openings of the gas-tight windows were barred, but even two simple cross-bars would have been enough to prevent any introduction of Zyklon B.

We may conclude that the homicidal gassing system by way of the windows, as described by Pressac, was technically impossible.

5.8. Van Pelt and the "12 pcs. Gas-tight Doors"

Van Pelt restricts himself to mentioning Pressac's document without any comment (2002, p. 336). At the end of the book, he returns to the argument in an effort to refute Germar Rudolf's thesis that the alleged homicidal gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V were disinfestation chambers (p. 502):

> *"Moreover, he ignored a curious feature of these gas chambers which one does not find in any of the delousing chambers in Auschwitz: the presence of the small gas-tight shutters, measuring 30 by 40 cm. These were located close to the ceiling. When opened, these gas-tight shutters allowed the SS to introduce Zyklon B into the gas chamber without having to enter the space. Such shutters were not necessary in delousing rooms, as a person equipped with a gas mask could enter such spaces, open a can with Zyklon B, pour the contents on the floor, and quickly leave, shutting the gas-tight door behind him. But if the room was filled with people, this procedure was impossible, and therefore the presence of the small, gas-tight shutters, located above the heads of the victims, was required."*

Van Pelt, for his part, disregards the fact that the introduction of Zyklon B "was impossible" even in this case. Even so, retaining the hypothesis that the little windows were used for the introduction of Zyklon B, the most logical explanation is linked with disinfestation. Van Pelt, in fact, ignores the fact that in disinfestation chambers, too, the garments to be treated were arranged on carts: if the gas chamber was completely filled to use as much space as possible, it became impossi-

ble to enter the chamber and spread the Zyklon B on the floor; it could be done only through openings in the ceiling, as in the Stutthof disinfestation chamber (see Graf/Mattogno 2003a, p. 56), or in the walls.

5.9. Natural Ventilation

One of the most incredible elements of Pressac's thesis is the fact that the ZBL technicians should have planned homicidal gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V for mass exterminations without any mechanical ventilation system, even though, as early as December 9, 1940, they had ordered ventilation units for the dissection room and the mortuary of Crematorium I (see Mattogno 2005e, pp. 17-22) and after having designed ventilation systems and installed them not only in Crematoria II and III, but also in the disinfestation gas chambers using hydrogen cyanide in *block* 3 of the main camp (Pressac 1989, pp. 25f.), in the disinfestation units of BW 5a and 5b at Birkenau (*ibid*., p. 59), as well as in the so-called *Kanada I* barracks (*ibid*., pp. 44f., 48). Pressac concedes that the possibility of using natural ventilation in the alleged homicidal gas chambers was very limited. He believes(!) that ZBL accepted this only later, and that they had a door broken into the corridor leading to the two alleged homicidal gas chambers of Crematorium V.

Pressac publishes a photograph taken in the "beginning of April 1943" showing the southern front of the eastern part of Crematoria IV and V (which, according to him, housed the homicidal gas chambers). The front of Crematorium V shows vague shadows behind the tree trunks. He asserts that, in that portion, "to the left of the coal store window" (1989, p. 416), a door can be seen, but this is a little adventurous, to say the least. The window, though, can be seen quite well, although it is not the one of the coal store-room, but the one of the "*Vorraum*" (vestibule). Pressac did not take into account the inversion of the blueprint of Crematorium V with respect to Crematorium IV, which was its mirror image. To the right of the window, hidden by the end of Crematorium IV, was the entrance. Pressac himself was so unsure of the location of such a door that he did not even mention it in the legend of this photograph (ph. 8(a), p. 417). But even if we accept – without conceding the point – that such a door did exist, nothing demonstrates that it was gas-tight, as his thesis would have it (p. 416):

> *"Without this new door absolutely essential for proper ventilation, operation of the gas chambers of Krematorien IV and V would*

have been hampered by lack of adequate ventilation and the attendant risk of contamination of the rest of the building."

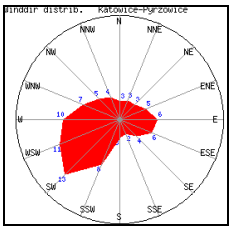
Such a contamination would have been inevitable in any case. Ventilation of the two alleged gas chambers could be accomplished only by opening the two outer doors of these rooms as well as the entrance to the *Vorraum*. With a prevailing wind from the north, as Pressac states (p. 386),[248] ventilation in Crematorium IV would have been along the path indicated by the arrows in document 22, but in Crematorium V, which was its mirror image, the path would have been reversed, leading to an inevitable contamination not only of the *Vorraum* (room 4), but also of the coal storage room (room 5), of the surgeon's room (room 6), and of the large hall (room 7). The arrangement of the alleged gas chambers as on blueprint 2036 defies all logic and is in glaring contradiction with the arrangement Pressac himself ascribes to bunker 2 (1993, p. 42):

"In the end, in the little white farmhouse, four small gas chambers of 50 m² were built, parallel to one another, without any mechanical ventilation, but laid out, as best as they could be, in the direction of the prevailing wind (north-south at Birkenau)."

Such an arrangement would have gone back to June 1942 (*ibid*., p. 41). In the same way, the most rational lay-out would have been the one illustrated by document 23: a simple solution which would have entailed the opening of a door in room 1 and of two more, one in room 1 and the other in the corridor. By keeping the gas-tight door between the corridor and the *Vorraum* closed, a more efficient ventilation of the area – room 1, room 2, and corridor – could have been achieved. Obviously, it would have been even simpler to equip each gas chamber with two fans, one in, one out, set into the outside walls, as in the disinfestation chambers of BW 5a and 5b, which had this kind of ventilation.

The possibility of using the stoves for ventilation will be discussed in chapter 5.10 below.

[248] In central Europe prevailing winds come predominantly from southwest to west. The statistical distribution of winds in % for the city of Katowice near Auschwitz looks as follows: Average of daily measurements between August 2002 and May 2010 from 7am to 7pm local time; source: www.windfinder.com/windstats/windstatistic_katowice.htm. Editor's remark.



5.10. Mechanical Ventilation

It was only later that ZBL ordered a mechanical ventilation system for Crematoria IV and V. In this respect Pressac writes that Topf, "having had problems in locating an appropriate electrical motor, shipped one of the two devices by normal freight on December 21 [*1943*]. It was stored at the *Bauhof* on January 1, 1944 and stayed there until the end of May of that year" (1993, p. 88) Then he adds (p. 89f.):

> *"The de-aeration device, stored since January, was mounted in May in Crematorium V whose oven performance was judged to be satisfactory. For the two gas chambers and the corridor which had a volume of 480 m³, nearly the same as that of mortuary I in Crematoria II and III, Schultze had opted for an exhaust system of the same power – a blower no. 450 with a 3.5 HP driver for an air volume of 8,000 m³ per hour. The second device was to be supplied in July but was never installed."*

As far as the arrival of one of the two de-aeration devices at Auschwitz, Pressac relies on "an undated handwritten note (end of December 1943) countersigned by the SS non-com Wegener [recte: Wegner], head of the *Bauhof*" (*ibid*., note 273, p. 108). The note in question, however, is not a receipt for material stored at the *Bauhof* (the storage yard), but the record of an invoice and its contents. The first column of the note has, in fact, the heading designation "*Rechnung Nr.*" (invoice no.) and below it the handwritten entry "23.12.43 Nr. 2134." These data correspond exactly to the Topf invoice concerning the de-aeration devices of Crematoria IV and V which I shall discuss presently. The second column, "*Absender*" (sender) contains the name of the Topf company, the third column, "*Gegenstand*" (object) lists the various items of the above invoice, and in the fourth column the number of pieces ("*Stck.*") in agreement with those mentioned in the invoice in the column "*Menge*" (quantity). The following column, "*Ank.*" ("*Ankunft*," arrival) refers to the invoice, not to the shipment.

The items were taken over by "*Materialverwaltung*," which checked the merchandise unloaded on the basis of the bill of lading (*Versandanzeige*), which showed the day of shipment, the number of the railway freight car used, and the detailed description of the pieces shipped (*ibid*.). The note carries the stamp "*Richtigkeit bescheinigt*" (certified correct) with the signature of *SS-Oberscharführer* Wegner; higher up we have the stamp of *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei "Schle-*

sien" of a later date. As we shall see presently, the two devices arrived at Auschwitz on January 25, 1944. On June 13, 1944, Jothann wrote Topf a letter which says under item 3:[249]

> *"Based on your invoice of December 23, 1943, on the arrival of the equipment we ordered a down-payment amounting to RM. 1,200. – to be made in your favor. The plant having been terminated, the remainder can now be made available. For this purpose we need a final invoice which we have written out and attached for you to complete by affixing your company seal and signature."*

The invoice mentioned above is "*Rechnung Nr. 2134*" dated December 23, 1943, order number 43 D 775. It bears Jährling's stamp "*Fachtechnisch richtig*" (technically correct) with date of January 25, 1944, certifying the technical verification, as well as a handwritten note by Jährling of the same date, ordering the down-payment of 1,200 RM "on arrival of the equipment," as mentioned in the above letter. The de-aeration devices for Crematoria IV and V had been ordered by Bischoff after a meeting with Prüfer on May 18, 1943. On June 9, Topf sent a cost estimate for an amount of 2,510 RM, accompanied by a drawing about which Topf wrote:[250]

> *"Furthermore, we attach two copies of drawing D 59620 on which you can see the detail of the brick de-aeration ducts and the lay-out of the air-exhaust ducting to be supplied by us, as well as the blower and the feed-air duct."*

The drawing has been lost. The cost estimate mentions for each device a blower no. 450 with an hourly capacity of 8,000 m³ of air, operated by a three-phase, 380 V motor rated 3.5 HP, a suction duct (*Saugrohrleitung*) and a pressure duct (*Druckrohrleitung*).[250] Pressac assigns these devices to the alleged gas chambers of the crematoria and even provides a drawing showing their lay-out (1993, p. 90). Actually, this is mere speculation, for one thing because he claims without any proof that the devices were indeed meant for the alleged gas chambers, but also because it does not take into account the "*gemauerten Entlüftungskanäle*" (brick de-aeration ducts). Pressac's interpretation is moreover at variance with technical and historical elements. Pressac asserts that the two alleged gas chambers and the corridor had a volume of 480 m³, "nearly the same as that of mortuary I in Crematoria II and III," but this

[249] RGVA, 502-1-327, p. 28.
[250] RGVA, 502-2-26, p. 221. Pressac 1989, p. 389.

is wrong. According to the blueprint 2036 of January 11, 1943 (Pressac 1989, p. 399), the rooms in question had the following dimensions:

1) 12.35 × 7.72 m = 95.3 m²
2) 11.69 × 8.40 m = 98.2 m²
3) 11.69 × 3.70 m = 43.2 m²

236.7 m²

The height of the rooms was 2.20 m, hence the total volume of all three rooms was (236.7×2.20 =) 520.7 m³. As the blower had a capacity of 8,000 m³ per hour, (8,000÷520.7 =) 15.36 air exchanges per hour were thus provided for. Therefore, engineer Schultze, with the blessing of ZBL, would have used, for rooms above ground which also had windows and doors and were therefore easier to ventilate than half-basements, a number of air exchanges higher than what was used in the alleged gas chamber in Crematoria II and III (9.48 air exchanges per hour).

Historically, the decision to install de-aeration devices in Crematoria IV and V goes back to May 18, 1943, i.e. right into the period of the "*Sondermassnahmen für die Verbesserung der hygienischen Einrichtungen*" ordered by Kammler early that month and which, as we have seen, concerned also the crematoria. They therefore integrate neatly into a hygienic and sanitary context, not a homicidal one. Pressac himself, when speaking of the Topf letter of June 9, 1944, with the cost attachment, had declared earlier that (1989, p. 386):

> *"nothing in this letter indicates that the air extraction systems proposed for Krematorien IV and V were for the gas chambers, and they could on the face of it be for the furnace rooms."*

5.11. Analysis of Blueprint 2036 of January 1943

In the preceding chapters I have demonstrated that the thesis of gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V is unfounded for a number of reasons, starting with the bars in the alleged little windows for the introduction of Zyklon B and ending with an altogether irrational and inefficient system of natural ventilation.

What the purposes of the rooms in the west wing of the crematoria actually were is difficult to say. The acceptance transaction of the unit,

dated March 19, 1943,[251] contains a "*Gebäudebeschreibung*" (description of the building) which speaks of the following rooms:[252]

> *"1 vestibule, 4 rooms, 2 rooms for coal, 1 room for surgeon, 1 room for air-lock and tools, 1 day-room, 1 washroom with toilet and vestibule, 1 incineration room."*

The inventory of the acceptance transaction[253] of the crematorium mentions 11 unspecified "rooms" (document 28). Those of interest to us here are numbered from 6 to 11 and correspond to the rooms which I have marked with those numbers in document 22.

Pressac's third indication has its entry here. In the work report by Riedel & Sohn of March 2, 1943, there appears, in fact, the following entry:[254]

> *"Floor covered with hard fill, tamped down, and floor concreted in gas chamber."*

As Pressac states, this is the only time this term appears in the above reports. But this is not the only thing which is strange about these reports. The day before, March 1, there is the following entry:[255]

> *"Carry scaffolding* [away?]*, bring in floor bed fill for chamber and pound."*

The next day, March 3, the report has:[256]

> *"Lay down cement screeding,* [pour] *concrete floor, and bring in and pound floor bed fill in both chambers."*

For March 4 we read:[257]

> *"Lay down cement screeding,* [pour] *concrete floor, and rub down in both chambers and vestibule."*

Finally, for March 5 the report states:[258]

> *"Cement floor lay screeding and rub down in second chambers, vestibule, and surgeon's room."*

When speaking about these entries, Pressac asserts that the person writing the reports was apparently called to order after having used the term "*Gasskammer*," and hence had probably used the more general

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[251] RGVA, 502-1-54, p. 25. Cf. document 26.
[252] RGVA, 502-1-54, p. 26. Cf. document 27.
[253] RGVA, 502-1-54, p. 26a.
[254] Pressac 1989, p. 446. The spelling mistakes (including Ga[s]sdichtefenster) are probably due to the fact that the reports were written by a Polish worker who spoke and wrote German imperfectly.
[255] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 71.
[256] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 66.
[257] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 58.
[258] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p.55.

term "*Kammern*" after that (1982, p. 111). This hypothesis cannot be sustained in the face of the facts, though. The daily work sheets by Riedel & Sohn were done at night, after work, and – presumably – verified daily by a *Bauführer* (site superintendent) delegated by ZBL. In this case it was the civilian employee Paul Wiera standing in for *SS-Sturmmann* Rudolf Seitner. If we follow Pressac, then Wiera, alarmed by the use of the prohibited term "*Gasskammer*," informed ZBL straight away and ordered the writer to use "*Kammer*" in the future. Logic would have it, though, that the head of ZBL (or even Wiera himself) would have simply ordered a revised work sheet without the term "*Gasskammer*" and thrown away the first one, a matter of a few minutes.[259]

Pressac's hypothesis is unsustainable also on account of the very context of the reports. As we have seen above, in the western section of Crematorium IV, behind the large room (which was rightly often called as such: "*großer Raum*"[260]) there were *six* more rooms which I have designated in document 22 as 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and V, in accordance with the inventory of the acceptance transaction.

Room 7 is the "*Arztzimmer*" (surgeon's room), room 8 the "*Kohlenraum*" (coal storage room), room V the "*Vorraum*" (vestibule). The work sheets mention specifically "*Vorraum*," "*Artzraum*" (= "*Arztzimmer*"), "*Kohlenraum*,"[261] "*Gasskammer*," and "*beide*" or "*zwei Kammern*" (both or two chambers), six rooms altogether. This signifies that the two "*Kammern*" were not the same as the "*Gaskammer*." Hence, the only thing one may infer from the worksheet of Riedel & Sohn of March 2, 1943, is that there was *a single* gas chamber in the western section of Crematorium IV. But in which room?

The succeeding reports list the following jobs (with the usual spelling errors):

> *"Install stoves in medical room, and at water installation (Krema IV)."* (March 16)[262]
>
> *"At water installation 1 bricklayer Krema 4."* (March 17)[263]
>
> *"At water installation employed 2 bricklayer + 1 helper."* (March 18)[264]

[259] The reports were written on printed forms, the one dated March 3 had 10 lines of text.
[260] For example: "Innen Verputz im großen Raum" (inside plastering in large room): February 23, 1943. APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 81.
[261] "Zementfußboden im Kohlenraum reiben," "rub down floor in coal storage room": February 28, 1943. APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 73.
[262] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 29. Cf. document 29.
[263] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 27. Cf. document 31.

Blueprint 2036 shows that three stoves were planned for the western section of Crematorium IV: one in the surgeon's room and two in rooms 9 and 10, but these were the rooms with the "water installations," hence the "*Gasskammer*" was room 11. It had three doors 100 by 205 cm, in perfect agreement with Bischoff's order for three gas-tight doors by letter of March 31, 1943.

Before we go on, it is important to stress that these doors were ordered 12 days after the acceptance transaction of Crematorium IV; the work, therefore, continued beyond that date. Furthermore, the attached "description of building" did not correspond to the actual state of construction, because it does not mention the stoves installed by Riedel & Sohn in rooms 9 and 10 on March 16.

What were those "water installations"? A document unknown to Pressac permits us, above all, to appreciate the extent of the work involved. It is a work card (*Arbeitskarte*) concerning the order no. 286 of March 20, 1943, for the plumbing group (*Installateure*) of ZBL[265] at "Crematoria IV and V of PoW camp, BW 30b and c"; the job to be done was described as "Execution of sanitary installations." The work began on March 15 and ended on April 23, for a total of 653 man-hours of specialists and 163 of helpers. In the upper right-hand margin of the document a handwritten entry specifies that the work concerned "BW 30b," i.e. Crematorium IV. This job constituted the realization of the corresponding order no. 285 of March 5, 1943, having the same objective: "Execution of sanitary installations."[266]

The pipe-work of crematorium 4 had already been laid when the job was begun, as we know from the "description of the building" in the acceptance transaction (e.g. there was a wash-basin with faucet in the surgeon's room); therefore the job concerned the "water installations." The latter was furthermore related to the two stoves, thus they could have been two sets of showers fed by hot water coming from the stoves which possibly had a heating coil inside. The two stoves in rooms 9 and 10 are actually much larger than those of room 7 (the surgeon's room) and are hooked up to chimneys some 7 meters high. They were fired with coal stored in room 8 (coal storage room) which measured 3.05 by 8.40 m = 25.6 m²; the coke storage room for the 8-muffle oven in the crematorium was not much larger – 4.60 by 7.67 = 35.2 m². One may

[264] APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 25. Cf. document 30.
[265] RGVA, 502-2-54, pp. 38-38a. Cf. document 32.
[266] RGVA, 502-2-54, p. 37.

thus assume that the stoves were planned to be used intensively and continuously, which would agree with the hypothesis of showers. Pressac himself brings in a further indication in favor of this hypothesis. For the two rooms in question, 4 wall-lamps (*Wand-Lampen versenckt* [sic]), water-proof, had been planned, hence (Pressac 1989, p. 400):

> *"It might be thought that in such rooms the SS intended to install showers supplied with hot water heated by the big 8-muffle furnace,"*

a hypothesis which he discards on account of Blueprint 2036, but without considering the later work. Two more elements, on the other hand, support the hypothesis. One is the existence of two drainage pits in both rooms for the waste water, connected to the outside sewer, the other is the fact that there was a surgeon's room in the crematorium. Pressac explains it by saying that the presence of a physician in the homicidal gas chambers was required "to certify death" of the victims (*ibid*., p. 398), but why should anyone certify the death of people whose death was never registered and who, according to the witnesses, were incinerated even if they were still alive? One can also discard the idea that the "*Arztzimmer*" was used for performing autopsies, because it did not possess a corresponding table, as opposed to the dissecting room (*Sezierraum*) of Crematoria II and III. The most logical explanation, therefore, is the presence of a physician to inspect the detainees after the shower in order to assess their state of health.

A final observation: In the light of the general context and of the technical incongruities outlined above, if any type of gas chamber had actually been planned for Crematorium IV, it could only have been an emergency disinfestation chamber, similar to the "*Vergasungskeller*" of Crematorium II which had been arranged for the same reasons. The arrangement of the rooms is, in fact, fairly logical. The two rooms could function, in alternation, both as shower rooms and as "*reine Seite*" (clean side) and "*unreine Seite*" (unclean side) of a disinfestation unit constituted by a gas chamber (room 11) 3.70 by 11.69 m, heated by the two stoves. Blueprint 2036 shows, in fact, that each stove was connected to room 11 by a rather large opening in the respective partition (see document 24). The stoves probably operated with an air circulation heating up the room next door, in accordance with the lay-out which appears on document 33. In that case there was also a second opening perpendicularly above the one shown on the blueprint: cold air entered at the bottom and warm air left at the top. This system with two open-

ings was also used in the central stove for the disinfestation *Gaskammer* of BW 5a. As the doors of the stoves were in the adjoining rooms, room 11 could also be heated even when it had been made gas-tight. The warm air would have facilitated the disinfestation gassings, as in the gas chambers of BW 5a and 5b, but also the natural ventilation of the room.

6. "Criminal Traces" of General Nature

6.1. "Normal Gas Chamber"

A brief sketch of the historical framework is needed, before the significance of this "criminal trace," the use of the term "normal gas chamber," becomes clear. According to the initial ideas of the SS, (1941-1942), the reception building of the camp, *Bauwerk* 160, also called "*Wäscherei- und Aufnahmegebäude mit Entlausungsanlage und Häftlingsbad"* (laundry and reception building with delousing unit and detainee bath), was to include 19 disinfestation gas chambers using hydrogen cyanide in the *Degesch-Kreislauf* system with air recirculation (see Pressac 1989, pp. 31-39). The project was revived in 1944, as can be seen from a correspondence between ZBL, the firm Friedrich Boos of *Köln-Bickendorf* (Cologne), which had received the order for the erection of the plant, and the firm Tesch & Stabenow (abbreviated "Testa"), which sold the Zyklon B in the regions east of the Elbe river. The civilian employee Jährling was in charge of the construction. Referring to this state of affairs, Pressac writes (1993, p. 89):

> *"On this occasion, the civilian employee Jährling made a tremendous blunder in a letter to Testa. He designated the gas chambers for delousing by the term 'Normalgaskammer,' a word underlined and set in quotation marks, as if there were 'normal' gas chambers and others that were 'abnormal.' Testa took over this designation and asserted, first of all, that a switch* [from Zyklon B] *to Ariginal*[267] *was mandatory only for new installations, and also insisted that the personnel assigned to the normal gas chambers using hydrogen cyanide had to be particularly well trained, insinuating that their use was far more complicated than the mere dumping of Zyklon B into the 'abnormal' gas chambers."*

This fanciful interpretation is based on a total lack of comprehension of the sources (Jährling's registered letter of June 8, 1944 and Testa's letter of June 13, 1944; Pressac 1993, notes 281f., p. 108) as can be judged by the series of events which resulted from the documents. On March 7, 1944, ZBL informed Boos by telegram of the following:[268]

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[267] Recte: Areginal, a disinfestation agent based on ethyl formiate.
[268] Telegram from Jothann to Boos Co. of March 7, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-333, p. 59.

"For reception building 11 instead of 19 delousing chambers must be erected a.s.a.p."

On May 3, Jothann sent another cable to Boos with the following request:[269]

"Send project with cost estimate and drawings for 11 hydrogen cyanide delousing cells reception building. Plant must be finished a.s.a.p. Expedite equipment and inform supply date."

The request was repeated the following day, as results from a letter from Boos of May 4:[270]

"Send project and detailed drawing for 11 hydrogen cyanide delousing cells."

In the same letter Boos requested from ZBL "the latest drawing of the equipment and the ventilation installation for one delousing cell," because the structure of the "recesses for the placement of the equipment"[270] had been modified recently. In parallel, Boos also asked Tesch & Stabenow for the same information; the latter, as we know from Jährling's letter of June 8, 1944, replied that they had in turn asked their supplier, Degesch, for the design of a "*Normalgaskammer*" also made by this firm. The translation of it reads (for the original text see document 34):[271]

"On May 12, 1944, you wrote to Boos Co. that you had requested the detailed drawing of a 'normal gas chamber' from your supplier. This drawing, which must be executed large-scale and which must show all dimensions both in plan and in sectional view, is now needed here most urgently. The drawing must also show in which direction the doors are to open, as we shall order same from here.

Our garrison surgeon informs us that, of late, Zyklon B gassing chambers are to be converted to 'Ariginal gassing.' Garrison surgeon wanted to get in touch with you directly in connection with the corresponding modifications.

Has this occurred and have the necessary modifications been incorporated into the drawings?

On the subject of the operation of the equipment, detailed operating instructions must be attached in triplicate. Similarly, please send also 3 copies of the drawing.

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[269] The telegram is quoted in the letter from Zentralbauleitung to Boos Co. of May 9, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-347, p. 31.

[270] Letter from Boos Co.to Zentralbauleitung of May 4, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-333, p. 51.

[271] Letter from Jothann to Tesch & Stabenow of June 8, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-333, p. 35.

The matter is most urgent and must be dealt with accordingly. Your reply by return mail is requested."

Hence, the term "*Normalgaskammer*" was already in use with Tesch & Stabenow in a letter antedating the one from Boos, from which Jährling had taken it, and for that very reason he set it out underlined and in quotations marks, exactly the same way he did for the term "*Ariginalvergasung*" which he had taken instead from the letter written by the SS garrison surgeon to ZBL on May 20, 1944.[272] Does this mean that the "blunder" occurred within Tesch & Stabenow? Not even that is true, as can be seen from this company's reply of June 13, 1944, to the letter mentioned above:[273]

"We thank you for your above letter and inform you as follows in this matter:

On the basis of your telegram of May 3, 1944, to Friedrich Boos Co. at Köln-Bickendorf this company has approached us. Thereupon, we have contacted our supplier asking whether in the meantime there have been any modifications with respect to the erection of the normal gas chambers. Having received their answer, we then informed Friedr. Boos Co. on May 18 of this year that there have been no recent changes to the normal gas chambers.

At the same time, enclosed in said letter, we sent Friedr. Boos Co. mounting instructions for the installation of the recirculation equipment, as well as the corresponding drawings DK[274] *271, DK 283, and DK 284. On the availability of these drawings, together with our booklet about normal gas chambers, a perfectly clear picture for the production of blueprints and for the erection of the unit will result. We assume that you have meanwhile received the missing documents from Friedr. Boos Co.*

The doors of the gas chambers open toward the outside, as doors opening toward the inside – depending on the degree of loading of the chamber – would obviously risk not being able to be closed at all.

We have noted that gassing chambers are to be arranged also for AREGINAL gassing. Your garrison surgeon has not yet approached us in this matter, but on 9 cr. we received instructions from Reichs-

[272] The letter is mentioned in a text of Zentralbauleitung dated December 7, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-255, illegible page number.

[273] Letter from Tesch & Stabenow to Zentralbauleitung of June 13, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-333, pp. 30-30a. Cf. document 35.

[274] DK = Degesch-Kreislauf.

arzt-SS und Polizei, the Top Hygienist, to include the additional AREGINAL equipment. No modifications of the gassing chambers are necessary, it is sufficient to install the AREGINAL gassing unit as well. You will receive an appropriate installation drawing when the AREGINAL units have been supplied by the manufacturer. For the sake of completeness, we inform you here that the price of the AREGINAL unit amounts to RM 27.– and the steel requirements are 12 kilograms.

A detailed operating procedure exists for the equipment, but only specially trained personnel is authorized to use hydrogen cyanide gas in recirculation chambers.

It is therefore necessary on start-up to train the respective operating personnel in practical and theoretical matters. For the dispatch of one of our gassing instructors we charge merely the travel expenses (2nd class) in addition to daily expenses of RM 22.50 per day including travel.

We attach a copy of our letter of today's date to Friedr. Boos Co. for your information."

We may conclude that a "*Normalgaskammer*" was simply a standard (= norm = normal) disinfestation gas chamber using hydrogen cyanide in the *Degesch-Kreislauf* process and that this term was in such common use that it appeared even in the "*Fibel über Normalgaskammern*" (primer on normal gas chambers) booklet. The "normal gas chamber" were not the opposite of "abnormal," i.e. homicidal gas chambers, as Pressac imagined, but of "*behelfsmäßige Blausäuregaskammern*," make-shift hydrogen cyanide units, as can be gathered from the era's most comprehensive treatise on this subject (Puntigam et al. 1943, pp. 62-68). At Auschwitz-Birkenau, *all* disinfestation chambers using hydrogen cyanide which then existed fell into this latter category.

This having been clarified, let us move on to Pressac's second assumption. The text of the letter quoted above indicates clearly that Tesch & Stabenow did not "insinuate" even remotely that the operation of the "*Normalgaskammern*" was "far more complicated than the mere dumping of Zyklon B into the 'abnormal' gas chambers," but simply explained that the use of hydrogen cyanide was highly dangerous, and that written instructions, even "*gut erläuternde*" (well explaining), were not sufficient to run a "*Normalgaskammer*," but that specially authorized operators were mandatory by law. The most important legal dispo-

sitions concerning the use of hydrogen cyanide for disinfestation purposes were the following (see Mattogno 2004e; pp. 41-44):

- "Decree concerning disinfestation by means of highly toxic substances"[275]
- "Decree concerning implementation of the decree concerning disinfestation by means of highly toxic substances"[276]
- "Decree concerning disinfestation by means of highly toxic substances" dated March 25, 1931,[277] regarding the application of the two preceding decrees;
- "Circular of the minister for public welfare: Disinfestation with highly toxic substances"[278]
- "Decree for the implementation of the decree concerning disinfestation by means of highly toxic substances"[279]
- "Circular of the Reich minister for food and agriculture and of the Reich minister of the interior," on the use of hydrogen cyanide for disinfestation, which summarizes all the preceding dispositions.

6.2. Why Not Use *Degesch* Gas Chambers for Homicides?

Van Pelt deals with this question in his answer to Leuchter (2002, p. 380):

> *"I questioned Leuchter's assumption that the Germans would have bothered to use the design of delousing chambers for their gas chambers."*

He then cites three reasons which I shall address in turn:

> *"First of all, the delousing chambers were designed to operate with very high concentrations of hydrogen cyanide – between forty and seventy times the concentrations the Germans used to kill humans in Birkenau – and these concentrations were applied for several hours."* (*ibid*.)

[275] "Verordnung über die Schädlingsbekämpfung mit hochgiftigen Stoffen," January 29, 1919, *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1919, Nr. 31, pp. 165f.
[276] "Verordnung zur Ausführung der Verordnung über die Schädlingsbekämpfung mit hochgiftigen Stoffen," August 22, 1927, *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1927, Teil I, Nr. 41, p. 297.
[277] *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1931, Teil I, Nr. 12, pp. 83-85.
[278] "Runderlaß des Ministers für Volkswohlfahrt: Schädlingsbekämpfung mit hochgiftigen Stoffen," August 8, 1931, VMBl., 1931, column 792-796.
[279] "Verordnung zur Ausführung der Verordnung über die Schädlingsbekämpfung mit hochgiftigen Stoffen," November 29, 1932, *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1932, Teil I, Nr. 78, pp. 539-540.

To begin with, we must have an understanding of the structure and operation of a disinfestation chamber with the *Degesch-Kreislauf* system. The chambers had standard dimensions 4 by 1.35 by 1.90 m (height). The Zyklon B can was opened from the outside by means of an appropriate four-way switch equipped with an opening device, which was basically a sophisticated can opener. The Zyklon B then dropped into a sheet-metal receiver below, which was mounted in front of a heater and was struck by a recycled current of hot air driven by a blower (for 72 air exchanges per hour) set into the suction portion of the ducting opposite the "*Kreislaufgerät*." When the disinfestation was over, the gas mixture was removed through an appropriate vent. The operating temperature was 35-40°C. Normal duration of one disinfestation was 70-75 minutes.[280] In the *Degesch-Kreislauf* chambers at Buchenwald, the duration of one run varied between one and twelve hours; for a normal load it was three and a half hours (see chapter 14.2.).

It therefore makes no sense to say "the delousing chambers were designed to operate with very high concentrations of hydrogen cyanide." The "*Kreislaufgerät*" allowed the rapid evaporation of any quantity of hydrogen cyanide by means of hot-air recirculation. Needless to say that such a device would have vaporized smaller quantities of hydrogen cyanide even more quickly.

The next assertion, *viz.* that in the homicidal gas chambers HCN concentrations "between forty and seventy times" lower were used, i.e. of some 0.5 – 0.3 g/m³, is refuted categorically by the witnesses cited by van Pelt himself, Höss in particular, who gives precise indications from which it is possible to calculate the presumed HCN concentration as having been about 17 g/m³ in the alleged homicidal gas chambers as opposed to 20 in the *Degesch-Kreislauf* chambers (see chapter 14.1.). Van Pelt finally declares that the high concentrations of HCN in these chambers "were applied for several hours." This is only partly true, but this time was obviously needed to kill lice, nits, eggs, and all. In respect of the gassing of human beings, this argument makes no sense, as it would amount to saying: because the *Degesch-Kreislauf* chambers took "several hours" to kill lice, they were unsuitable to kill human beings.

Let us now take up van Pelt's second reason (p. 380):

> *"Second, the delousing chambers were, as Leuchter observed, designed in such a way that they guaranteed the highest possible*

[280] Peters/Wüstinger, pp. 193-196. "Degesch-Kreislauf-Anlage für Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure." APMM, VI, 9a, vol. 2, pp. 1-4.

safety for their users while allowing for the greatest possible efficiency in the quick loading and unloading of the chamber. The issue of safety was of lesser importance in the gas chambers, because the Sonderkommandos who entered the room were expendable."

Van Pelt forgets that the "users" of the disinfestation chambers were detainees just like those of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*," and one is therefore at a loss to understand why safety measures applied only to some but not to others.[281] From Tauber's Soviet declaration we know that the work of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*" was well organized and that each detainee was assigned specific tasks. Practically, from the holocaust point of view, the "*Sonderkommando*" detainees were "specialized" workers, and the SS were most interested in maintaining their efficiency. We will not even go into the aspect that they were supervised by SS men who thus also ran the risk of being poisoned. This means that the safety measures, under the hypothesis of homicidal gassings, could not be "of lesser importance," if only to safeguard the lives of the SS guards. Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 2.6.7, according to Prüfer's – spurious (see Graf 2002) – testimony after the war, Bischoff had ordered from Topf the 10 "*Gasprüfer*," because "poisoning of the operating personnel working in these chambers" – i.e. precisely the detainees of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*" – had allegedly occurred and was to be prevented in the future.

We now come to van Pelt's third reason (p. 380):

"Furthermore, in the case of the gas chambers, efficiency in filling the room with living people and retrieving their bodies afterward was less important. But in the case of the delousing chambers, the rate-delimiting factor was the technology of the room itself; in the case of the gas chambers it was the cremation process which invariably went considerably slower than the gassing. In other words, the delousing rooms were designed to operate more or less continuously with high doses of hydrogen cyanide and relatively short periods of downtime in between, while the gas chambers were designed to operate for very short times with low doses of hydrogen cyanide while remaining idle for extended periods of time."

[281] Pressac shows a passage from the declaration made on February 2, 1961, by Andrzej Rablin, a former detainee who had worked in the gas chambers employing hydrogen cyanide in Block 3 of the Stammlager, stating that this inmate fell victim to an HCN poisoning because of a leak in his gas mask and was treated for two months in the detainee hospital. Pressac 1989, p. 25.

But a unit designed to operate "continuously" with a concentration of HCN close to that of the alleged homicidal gas chambers (20 g/m³ as against 17 g/m³) would only have made any discontinuous gassings more efficient.

From the historical point of view, the question discussed by van Pelt takes on an entirely different character, though. It is obviously legitimate to ask: If Auschwitz became an extermination camp "in mid-1942" (van Pelt 2002, p. 69), then why should the ZBL, facing the task of designing homicidal gas chambers, have thought of the *Kreislaufgeräte* it discussed with Boos only in September of that year? But this is not the essential point. In June 1942 the complex labeled "*Entlausungs- und Effektenbaracken*" (BW 28) was fully operational. It consisted of 4 *Effektenbaracken* and one gas chamber using Zyklon B, which went into operation a short time later (Mattogno 2004h, pp. 49f.). The gas chamber was equipped with two blowers (Pressac 1989, photo 13, p. 45). The "*Entlausungsbaracken*" I and II, located respectively at BA Ia and BA Ib of Birkenau in buildings BW 5a and 5b, had a gas chamber using Zyklon B equipped with two blowers and three stoves that would be started up in autumn of 1942. The Zyklon B gas chamber of *block* 3 at Auschwitz had a suction fan (see chapter 13). The unbelievable aspect of this is that ZBL, in its effort to implement an alleged government order for a mass extermination in the alleged gas chambers of the Birkenau "bunkers" – which, according to van Pelt, resulted in more than 200,000 victims (2002, p. 455) – did not even install one miserable exhaust fan there.

The same is true for the alleged homicidal gas chambers of Crematoria IV and V. The contemporary German government "Instructions for the use of hydrogen cyanide (Zyklon) for the elimination of vermin (disinfestation)" (NI-9912) specified a minimum aeration time of 20 hours after the gassing of a building for disinfestation. Höss himself, speaking of the alleged homicidal gassing in block 11 of the main camp, asserts that "the whole building had to be ventilated for at least two days" (Broszat 1981, p. 159). It is therefore certain that natural ventilation would have reduced the efficiency of the alleged homicidal gas chambers enormously and would have increased their risks. Hence why were not even simple exhaust blowers installed in those eight (out of ten) alleged homicidal gas chambers?

6.3. "Incineration with Simultaneous Special Treatment"

6.3.1 The Document

We will now consider the only "criminal trace" found by van Pelt. On January 29, 1943, there was a meeting between *SS-Unterscharführer* Swoboda, head of "Technische Abteilung" of ZBL and the engineer Tomitschek of the Kattowitz office of AEG company. The same day, Swoboda wrote a note for the file concerning "Power supply and installation at main camp and PoW camp."[282] He noted that AEG had not yet received the steel and metal allocations and could therefore not proceed with the jobs scheduled. Swoboda then continues (van Pelt's translation, 2002, p. 329):

> *"As a result of this, it is not possible to complete the installation and electricity supply of crematorium 2 in the Prisoner of War Camp* [Birkenau] *by January 31, 1943. It is only possible to complete the crematorium for operation earliest by February 15, 1943 using materials that are in stock for other building projects. This operation can only involve a limited use of the available machines*[283] *(whereby is made possible an incineration* [Verbrennung] *with simultaneous special treatment), because the main electricity supply to the crematorium is not capable to carry its power consumption."*

Van Pelt underlines strongly the necessity to be aware of the historical context, if the significance of this letter is to be understood. He asserts that "it is important to know the context of this letter" (*ibid*.) and he reiterates (p. 331):

> *"I provided the historic context of this document because, like any other document, it is mute when taken by itself. Like any other piece of evidence, it must be placed where it belongs, and this requires knowledge of what was going on at the time, at the building site in Birkenau, in the architect's office and, in this case, in Greece."*

He then states on the next page that "here is important to note that a basic rule in the interpretation of historical evidence is that any piece of evidence depends upon the context from which it is taken" and repeats once more (p. 333):

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[282] Aktenvermerk of SS-Unterscharführer Swoboda of January 29, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 196.

[283] In the original "vorhandenen Maschinen."

"The hastily written Tomitschek/Swoboda memorandum is completely unintelligible as a historical source if one does not know the historical context, which includes the speed with which the SS tried to complete the crematoria, the difficulty they had obtaining allocations for building materials, the meaning of the word Sonderbehandlung, the need to fire up the ovens before they were used, and so on."

6.3.2. The "Historical Context" According to Van Pelt

Let us examine now what this illuminating context sketched by van Pelt really is like (pp. 329-331, my numbers added):

[1] *"Throughout January, regular transports were arriving in Auschwitz, and the bunkers were hardly able to keep up.*

[2] *In fact, Eichmann was forced to divert trains destined for Auschwitz to Sobibor and Treblinka.*

[3] *Completion of the crematoria was of the greatest urgency. But in fact, construction had fallen two months behind schedule. Unexpected problems in the electricity supply to the buildings caused additional delays.*

[4] *When the SS architects modified the basement plan of Crematoria 2 and 3 to include a gas chamber, they increased the anticipated electricity consumption of the building. The ventilation system was now intended to simultaneously extract the Zyklon B from the gas chambers and fan the flames of the incinerators.*

[5] *They had contacted AEG, the contractor for the electrical systems, but due to rationing AEG had been unable to get the heavy-duty wiring and circuit breakers the system required. As a result, Crematorium 2 was to be supplied with a temporary electrical system; nothing at all was available for use in Crematorium 3.*

[6] *The AEG representative in Kattowitz, Engineer Tomitschek, warned the Auschwitz Building Office that the capacity of the temporary system would not allow for simultaneous 'special treatment' and incineration.*

[7] *The SS did not heed his warning: when Crematorium 2 was finally handed over to the camp authorities, they immediately began to work the ovens at full capacity, against Tomitschek's advice.*

[8] *The electrical system caught fire.*

[9] *Both the forced-draft system that fanned the incinerator flames and the ventilation system to extract the Zyklon B from the gas chamber were damaged."*

6.3.3. Van Pelt's Errors

Van Pelt has crammed such a hodge-podge of mistakes, falsifications, and absurdities into these few lines that we need to look at them line by line. For this reason I numbered them consecutively in the preceding section.

[1]: According to the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* (Czech 1989), a total of some 45,700 persons were gassed in the two "bunkers" or about 1,475 per day. Van Pelt asserts that the "bunkers" had "hardly" been able to keep up with this rate and that the urgency associated with the crematoria was the result. However, Szlama Dragon, much appreciated by van Pelt, affirmed in his statement of May 10 and 11, 1945, that the two "bunkers" could accommodate some 4,500 persons at one time (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 104), hence if we assume only one gassing per day with that load, this amounts to a daily capacity of 4,500 persons. This means that even with merely one single gassing per day the two "bunkers" would have had a capacity of (4,500×31 =) 139,500 persons in January 1943 alone. The witness Dragon thus contradicts the very foundations of van Pelt's most careful analysis.

[2]: The assertion that "Eichmann was forced to divert trains destined for Auschwitz to Sobibor and Treblinka" has no historical foundation; van Pelt is unable to produce any document in support of his claim.

[3]: The urgency of the construction of the crematoria had nothing to do with any alleged homicidal gassings. As far as Crematorium II is concerned, the projected completion date of January 31, 1943, had been set by Bischoff on December 18, 1942,[284] and accepted by Himmler a few days later.[285] But on January 4, 1943, Bischoff informed Kammler that he could not maintain his schedule (January 31 for Crematorium II, March 31 for Crematorium III, and February 28 for Crematorium IV). On the 11th Kammler replied that he agreed "to the non-respecting of the dates set," provided that the utmost was done to speed up the

[284] Fernschreiben (telex) from Bischoff to Kammler of December 18, 1942 concerning "Fertigstellung der Krematorien" (termination of crematoria). APMO, BW 30/27, p. 17.
[285] Letter from Bischoff to Topf of December 22, 1942. APMO, BW 30/27, p. 51.

work.[286] For this very reason, Swoboda's note for the file explained that "it is not possible to complete the installation and electricity supply of crematorium 2 in the Prisoner of War Camp [Birkenau] by January 31, 1943." According to the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* (Czech 1989), some 16,800 persons are said to have been gassed in the two "bunkers" in December 1942, which makes van Pelt's conjecture regarding the urgency of the matter even less consistent.

[4]: Van Pelt's assertion is completely wrong that the ZBL architects, when they planned the alleged homicidal gas chamber, had "increased the anticipated electricity consumption of the building." Actually, the consumption of electricity for *Leichenkeller* 1 estimated before its alleged transformation into an alleged homicidal gas chamber remained unchanged after the assumed alteration. The "*Kostenanschlag über Be- und Entlüftungs-Anlagen*" (cost estimate for aeration and de-aeration installations) for the future Crematorium II prepared by Topf on November 4, 1941, provided, in respect of the *"B"-Raum* (= *belüfteter Raum*: aerated room), i.e. *Leichenkeller 1*[287] for 2 blowers (one for *Belüftung* the other for *Entlüftung*), each with an hourly rating of 4,800 m³ of air against a total pressure difference of 40 mm water column, driven by a 2 HP 3-phase motor. The cost amounted to 1,847 RM altogether.[288] The ventilation equipment actually installed in Crematorium II is listed in the Topf invoice no. 171 dated February 22, 1943. This invoice covers "Supply of aeration and de-aeration equipment as described in detail in our cost estimate of November 4, 1941." Two blowers (one in aeration, one in de-aeration) each having an hourly capacity of 4,800 m³ of air against a pressure difference of 40 mm water column and driven by a 2 HP 3-phase motor were installed in "*B-Raum*" for a total price of 1,847 Reichsmarks.[289] Therefore, the power rating of Crematorium II was not in the least altered by the alleged transformations of *Leichenkeller* 1 and this further invalidates van Pelt's conjectures.

[5]: The problems surrounding the allocations of metal (the assignment for Crematorium II requested by AEG in November 1942 had not

[286] Letter from Kammler to Zentralbauleitung of January 11, 1943 concerning "Fertigstellung der Krematorien" (termination of crematoria). RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 59.
[287] Leichenkeller 2, in this document, is called "L"-Raum. Pressac interprets it as "Leichen-Raum" (morgue).
[288] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Kostenanschlag über Be- und Entlüftungs-Anlagen. November 4, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 151-153.
[289] RGVA, 502-1-327, p. 25. Reproduced in Mattogno 1994b, p. 112. Cf. chapter 1.8.

yet been approved by the end of January 1943) illustrate the rather low priority of Crematorium II for the SS. If this site had really become the center of an alleged extermination ordered by Himmler for Birkenau, such difficulties would be absolutely inexplicable.

[6]: Van Pelt's assertion that "the capacity of the temporary system would not allow for simultaneous 'special treatment' and incineration" is absolutely baseless, because the text states exactly the opposite; the limited use of the "available machines" would still enable "incineration with simultaneous special treatment."

[7]: Van Pelt affirms that the SS "immediately began to work the ovens at full capacity," but this is historically wrong, because the damage to the chimney and the flues was caused by "heating of single ovens only" (see chapter 8.8.3.).

[8]: Van Pelt claims that "the electrical system caught fire"; this is wrong, because the cause of the damage was not electrical but thermal, as I will explain next.

[9]: Van Pelt asserts that "both the forced-draft system that fanned the incinerator flames and the ventilation system to extract the Zyklon B from the gas chamber were damaged," which is utter nonsense. Kirschneck's *Aktenvermerk* of March 25, 1943, states clearly that the only units that suffered damage were the three forced-draft units and that the damage had been caused by overly high temperatures. ZBL intended to retain "the three electric motors (15 HP each)," provided "that they were not damaged by the high temperatures,"[290] which confirms that the damage was not electrical. The "ventilation system to extract the Zyklon B from the gas chamber" i.e. the *Belüftung / Entlüftung* had, of course, not been damaged. The "forced-draft system," on the other hand, served to remove the smoke during the cremations by increasing the draft of the chimney, but this increased the air-feed to the hearths only indirectly. Van Pelt, for his part, believes that the forced-draft units "fanned the incinerator flames" like a pair of bellows. This serious lack of understanding demolishes van Pelt's conjectures once and for all.

Van Pelt concludes (p. 332):

> *"The problem which Tomitschek and Swoboda discussed was rooted in the circumstance that electricity was necessary to operate the ventilation system of the gas chambers.*

[290] APMO, BW 30/25, p. 8.

> *Yet, at the same time that this ventilation system was to extract the hydrogen cyanide from the gas chamber, the crematorium also needed electricity to operate the forced air system to heat the incinerators as they were readied to cremate the remains of the people killed in the gas chambers. In other words, there was an overlap in the electricity consumption of the gas chamber and the ovens, the former still using electricity after killing had occurred, the latter using electricity before the incineration could commence."* (van Pelt's emphases)

This is what is supposed to be meant by "*Verbrennung mit gleichzeitiger Sonderbehandlung*." The text of Swoboda's *Aktenvermerk* says exactly the contrary of van Pelt's assertion, and we must also stress that such an "overlap in the electricity consumption" makes no sense, technically speaking, because the *Saugzuganlagen* were actually not needed to fire up of the ovens – which is borne out by the fact that, in practice, all crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau operated with natural draft. Moreover, such an "overlap" of electricity needs for the presumed homicidal gassings and subsequent cremations would have been both irrational and at once perfectly avoidable, because the only thing needed to circumvent this alleged problem was to begin heating the furnaces before the gassing, so that the furnaces were ready for use after the gas chamber had been ventilated.

Ironically, precisely at a point where van Pelt eloquently refers to "the basic rule in the interpretation of historical evidence," to "historical context," the ignorance of which renders a document "completely unintelligible," he himself shows his complete ignorance of the historical context of the document, and in this way furnishes us with a most telling example of his extraordinary incompetence in technical and historical matters.

6.3.4. The True Historical Context

On January 29, 1943, Prüfer inspected the worksites of the four crematoria at Birkenau and prepared a "*Prüfbericht*" (inspection report) in which he wrote on the subject of Crematorium II:[291]

> *"This building site is complete except for minor secondary jobs (the planking of the ceiling of morgue 2 cannot yet be removed because of frost). The 5 pcs. triple-muffle incinerating ovens have been*

[291] Prüfbericht des Ing. Prüfers of January 29, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 101.

completed and are presently being dried by heating. Supply of the aeration/de-aeration unit for the underground morgues is delayed because of railway restrictions and the installation can probably be done only in 10 days' time. Thus, start-up of Crematorium II is certainly possible on February 15, 1943."

Tying in with this report, Swoboda's *Aktenvermerk* shows that:

1) Prüfer's start-up date for the crematorium (February 15, 1943) could be maintained only with "a limited use of the available machines"
2) this would still enable "incineration with special treatment."

What were those "available machines"? The answer to this question is found in two important documents. There is Kirschneck's *Aktenvermerk* of January 29, 1943, which says in respect of Crematorium II:[292]

"The electrical connections of the motors for the compressed air feed to the oven are presently being laid. The 3 large forced-draft units at the chimneys have been installed and are ready for start-up. Here, too, the electrical connections for the motors are being laid. The corpse elevator is being installed on a temporary basis (as flat-plate elevator). The aeration/de-aeration unit for the morgues has not yet arrived on account of the railway restrictions which have only been lifted a few days ago; the freight-cars are rolling, and we count on their arrival at any time. Installation can be done in about 10 days' time."

This report is fully confirmed by the "time spent" forms filled out by the Topf technician Messing, which describe the following jobs he carried out in Crematorium II in January and February 1943:[293]

"4-5/1/43: travel.

5-10/1/43: installation of forced-draft units in crematorium.

11-17/1/43: transportation and installation of the 3 forced-draft units in Crematorium I [= II].

18-24/1/43: installed forced-draft units in Crematorium I of PoW camp.

25-31/1/43: forced draft and aeration/de-aeration units. 5 pcs. secondary blowers for the 5 triple-muffle ovens. Transportation of material.

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[292] Aktenvermerk of Kirschneck of January 29, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 105.

[293] Topf, Arbeits-Bescheinigung for Messing for the period January 4 – February 7, 1943. APMO, BW 30/31, pp. 31-36. Cf. Pressac 1989, p. 370.

1-7/2/43: installation of secondary blowers for the five triple-muffle furnaces."

The temporary elevator had not yet been installed. It was ordered by ZBL to *Häftlingsschlosserei* on January 26, 1943 (order no. 2563/146), but it was terminated only on March 13 (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 83). Summarizing, the "available machines" on January 29, 1943, were:

- three forced-draft units (*Saugzug-Anlagen*) of the chimney, each with a blower 625 D (*Gebläse* 625 D),[294] with a 3-phase 380 volts 15 HP motor.[295]
- five compressed-air devices (*Druckluft-Anlagen*) of the crematorium ovens, each with a blower 275 M (*Gebläse Nr.* 275 M) with a 3-phase 380 volts 3 HP motor running at 1420 rpm (*Drehstrommotor* 3 PS, n = 1420/Min. 380 Volt).[296]

The machines that were *planned* but were, as yet, *non-existent* were:

- *Be- und Entlüftungsanlage* (aeration/de-aeration) for "*B-Raum*" (2 motors, 3-phase 380 volts, 2 HP),
- *Entlüftungsanlage* (de-aeration) for the furnace hall (1 motor a 3-phase 380 volts, 3.5 HP),
- *Entlüftungsanlage* (de-aeration) for *Sezier-, Aufbahrungs- u. Waschraum* (dissecting, laying-out and washroom) (1 motor 3-phase 380 volts, 1 HP),
- *Entlüftungsanlage* (de-aeration) for "*L-Raum*" (1 motor 3-phase 380 volts, 5.5 HP),[297]
- "*Plateauaufzug*" (flat-plate elevator).

Hence, the *non-existent* machines precluded the use of *Leichenkeller* 1 as a homicidal gas chamber. However, even if the limited use of the *existing* machines – i.e. those of the forced-draft and the blowers for the ovens – had permitted "incineration with simultaneous special treatment," then it is clear that this "special treatment" not only cannot have any connection with the alleged homicidal gas chamber in *Leichenkeller* 1, but would inevitably have a close relationship with the machines in

[294] Topf Versandanzeige (shipment notice) of June 18, 1942 for "Teile zu den 5 Topf-Dreimuffel-Öfen" (parts for 5 Topf triple-muffle ovens) for Crematorium II. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 165.

[295] Schluss-Rechnung (final invoice) of Topf for Zentralbauleitung concerning "BW 30 – Krematorium II." RGVA, 502-2-26, p. 230.

[296] Topf Versandanzeige (shipment notice) of April 16, 1942 for "Teile zu den 5 Topf-Dreimuffel-Öfen" (parts for 5 Topf triple-muffle ovens) for Crematorium II. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 167.

[297] Topf, Rechnung (invoice) Nr. 171 of February 22, 1943 concerning the ventilation equipment for Crematorium II. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 250-250a.

question, especially with the incineration itself: the "special treatment" referred to a treatment of corpses, not of people alive.

6.3.5. The Real Meaning of the Document

We will now look into the real meaning of the document. Van Pelt says, quite correctly, that "the real meaning of the word *Sonderbehandlung*" also enters into the historical context. Now, as I have already stated, it is an established fact that there are numerous Auschwitz documents in which this term has an irrefutable meaning belonging to the field of hygiene and sanitation (Mattogno 2004h., pp. 35-50), whereas van Pelt does not bring forth even a single document from which we can see that it was "an obvious synonym for killing."

Hence, considering the historical context, the meaning of the term special treatment/*Sonderbehandlung* in the *Aktenvermerk* of January 29, 1943, can only be an extension of its hygieno-sanitary significance mentioned above, i.e. the "available machines" would still have allowed, even under restricted circumstances, a cremation satisfactory from the point of view of sanitation and hygiene, that is to say a complete (incineration) and not only partial (carbonization) cremation.

The importance of the forced-draft units and of the furnace blowers to achieve an irreproachable cremation derives also from other sources. Prüfer himself, during his interrogation by the Soviet captain Shatanovski, declared (Graf 2002, p. 404):

> *"In the civilian crematoria preheated air is injected by means of special bellows, causing the corpse to burn more quickly and without smoke. The design of the crematoria in the concentration camps is different; it does not allow any preheating of air, which causes the corpse to burn more slowly and with production of smoke. A ventilation is used to reduce the smoke and the smell of the burning corpse."*

To reduce the production of smoke, it was believed in the 1940s that a better draft of the chimney (hence the inclusion of devices to increase the draft) and a higher combustion air feed (hence the installation of blowers for the muffles) were needed. The importance of the presence of these blowers is borne out by a Topf letter dated June 6, 1942, in which the company asked the Auschwitz ZBL to ship to Buchenwald "a blower with motor," otherwise it would not have been possible to start

up the triple-muffle crematorium oven which had just been built.[298] As I have explained above, Bischoff's request for 10 gas flue analyzers (*Gasprüfer*) for the crematoria ovens fits precisely into this context. The meaning of Swoboda's words, therefore, is that, even though the essential equipment for the cremations could be used only in a limited way, it was still possible to achieve an irreproachable incineration from the hygieno-sanitary point of view. This meaning also showed through in a document a few weeks older. On January 13, 1943, Bischoff wrote to *Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke* at Auschwitz a letter concerning "Execution of joinery for the local construction projects." In this letter he complained i.a. about delays in the supply of doors for Crematorium II:[299]

> *"We thus ask you to supply immediately the doors ordered as per our letter of October 16, 1942, Bftgb.Nr.17010/42/Ky/Pa for Crematorium I* [= II] *of the PoW camp which is needed urgently for carrying out the special measures, as construction progress would otherwise be put into jeopardy."*

Hence, "carrying out the special measures" had no criminal significance. It referred – on the contrary – to the construction of hygienic and sanitary installations, including the detainee hospital (*Häftlingslazarett*) in section B III of Birkenau.[300] Hence, if the crematorium was used for "carrying out the special measures," it means that it, too, was part of these installations, and its hygienic and sanitary function was exclusively the cremation of the corpses of detainees who had died in the camp.

On the other hand, Bischoff's letter of January 29, 1943 – as I have shown in chapter 2.1. above – demonstrates that "*Leichenkeller* 2" could not be used as a morgue and/or undressing room for the registered detainees who had died of "natural" causes, because it was not operational at that time, but that this was of no importance because the corpses could be deposited in the "*Vergasungskeller*." Therefore, the "incineration with simultaneous special treatment" in Crematorium II, as of January 29, 1943, could only concern corpses.

The explanation I have proposed above may not be completely satisfactory, but it is the only one that can be deduced from the historical context into which Swoboda's note fits. Like in the event of the *Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtungen*, the only thing we can say for certain

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[298] Letter from Topf to Zentralbauleitung at Auschwitz of June 6, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 52.
[299] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 78.
[300] Mattogno 2004h., pp. 56-60; 2004k; IV., "The Detainee Sick-Bay…at Birkenau," pp. 289-294.

is what this "*Sonderbehandlung*" was not, which is to say that van Pelt's interpretation is documentarily, historically and technically unfounded, hence the "incineration with simultaneous special treatment" is no "criminal trace" at all, and this is what counts.

For completeness' sake the hypothesis should also be examined whether "available machines" referred to the entire equipment supplied to the crematorium for its operation (and not just that present on January 29, 1943), i.e. all the machines eventually provided for this building, including the ventilation systems for Leichenkeller 1 and 2, for the oven rooms, the dissection room, the laying-out and washing room, and the freight elevator. In this case, as I explained above, no "overlap" of electricity use between cremations and hypothetical homicidal gassings in *Leichenkeller* 1 would have occurred. If this room, as Pressac says in relation to its original purpose, was "to take corpses several days old, beginning to decompose and thus requiring the room to be well-ventilated" (1989, p. 284), the ventilation system would have been designed for continuous operation. Hence its electricity consumption would inevitably have been "superimposed" on the crematoria oven's electricity supply. But if these bodies were infected (i.e. they were corpses of prisoners who had died of typhus) and hence were placed in the "*Sonderkeller*," they received already on that account alone a "special treatment," and an "incineration with simultaneous special treatment" occurs in the crematorium.

In conclusion, from whatever point of view we consider Swoboda's "special treatment" note of January 29, 1943, it refers to the treatment of corpses, not of living people.

7. Alleged "Criminal Traces" for the "Bunkers" of Birkenau

7.1. Some Remarks Concerning the Title

The "criminal traces" which I will examine in this chapter have been related by Pressac to the so-called "bunkers" of Birkenau. However, as opposed to the *traces* that have just been discussed and whose relations with the crematoria have been established beyond doubt by the documents containing them, there is not a single document mentioning the "bunkers." Therefore, in connection with these ghostlike installations there are no real "criminal traces," only alleged ones, as I have indicated in the title of this chapter.

7.2. "Special Treatment"

7.2.1. Pressac's Thesis

In his second book, Pressac addresses the problems connected with the term "special treatment" by sketching its evolution in the documents and its meaning and by placing it in its alleged historical context in the following way (1993, pp. 45f.):

> *"In a cowardly manner Himmler had passed an abominable task on to Höss who, hardened jail-keeper that he was, did not appreciate at all the dubious honor that had been conferred to him. To finance this 'program' and the extension of the camp, considerable funds were allocated. Immediately prior to the visit of the SS chief to the camp, by May 15* [1942], *Bischoff had prepared an extensive report covering the work to be done at the Stammlager, for a total estimated amount of 2,000,000 Reichsmarks. Himmler threw it all out. Bischoff redid his entire report to suit the wishes of the Reichsführer and the latter's grand design, a very Grand Design, converting it into 20 million Reichsmarks, ten times the original amount, a sum that was approved by the SS-WVHA on September 17th* […].
>
> *Encouraged by this unexpected bonanza and because Himmler had felt that the undressing activity of the Jews in the open air was not orderly, Bischoff, in a second report, requested four horse-stable barracks to be set up near the two bunkers, which were to be used as*

undressing barracks for the physically unfit. Each barrack was priced at 15,000 Reichsmarks. The request was worded in the following way: '4 Stück Baracken für Sonderbehandlung der Häftlinge in Birkenau' (4 pcs. barracks for special treatment of detainees at Birkenau).' This was absolutely the first time that the term 'special treatment' was used, at the end of July of 1942. But the group of people it concerned and its meaning were known in detail only to the SS in Berlin and Auschwitz.

Besides, what was needed for this 'special treatment' – also called 'resettlement of the Jewish population' – was Zyklon B. These agreed upon terms covered the liquidation by means of gas of the Birkenau Jews who were unfit for work.

In order to improve the 'resettlement,' the Auschwitz SS needed trucks. On September 14, five vehicles for 'special actions' were allocated by Berlin.

In this way, the actual killing was designated as 'special treatment' or 'resettlement of the Jewish population' whereas the overall operation, including the selection, the transportation of the unfit and their homicidal gassing, were designated as 'special action,' a term which was not specifically nefarious, as it could apply to a non-criminal action as well. Actually, the trucks were used to move the unfit Jews from the first 'ramp' of the Auschwitz goods depot – where the selection of the fit and the unfit took place – to bunkers 1 and 2."

Pressac returns to the question later (p. 61), stating:

"Mainly between December 10 and 18 [1942], *Bauleitung*[301] *set the requirements in terms of material (cement, lime, bricks, steel, non-ferrous metals, lumber, rocks, gravel) for all present and future construction projects at KGL Birkenau. Forty-one worksites were defined, very different from one another, such as barracks for the detainees, sanitary installations, sickbays, delousing units, the four crematoria, the barbed-wire fence and the watch-towers, the installations for the SS housing camp, its Kommandantur, the bakery, the barracks for the civilian workers, the roads and the railway spur which linked Birkenau to the Auschwitz depot. All the sites, including the SS sauna, were labeled as follows:*

Betrifft: Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz

[301] Recte: Zentralbauleitung.

(Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung)
Re: PoW camp Auschwitz
(Implementation of special treatment)
This amounted to an enormous 'administrative blunder' one hundred and twenty times over and confirms unequivocally that by the end of November / early December of 1942 the Birkenau PoW camp no longer was a camp for prisoners of war but had become, in its entirety, the place where 'special treatment' was implemented,"

which, as we have seen, signified for Pressac "the liquidation by means of gas of the Birkenau Jews who were unfit for work."

7.2.2. Bischoff's Explanatory Reports

The reconstruction of the historical framework into which Pressac places the origin of the "*Sonderbehandlung*" is infected from the start by a most serious mistake in interpretation. He supposes that Bischoff had prepared a first explanatory report on the Auschwitz camp with a cost estimate of 2 million RM, which was rejected by Himmler during the latter's visit to the camp on July 17 and 18, 1942, and that because of this the head of ZBL "redid his entire report to suit the wishes of the *Reichsführer*" and raised the project estimate to 20 million Reichsmarks. Actually, the first explanatory report drawn up by Bischoff referred to the work carried out during the first and second fiscal years of the war,[302] as is stated explicitly at the end of the document:[303]

"The enlargement of the concentration camp described above was implemented in the 1st and 2nd fiscal years of the war economy."

Bischoff's second report, the one allegedly "revised" according to Himmler's wishes, is instead simply the explanatory report covering also the third fiscal year of the war, as we can gather here, too, from the end of the document:[304]

"Already in the 2nd fiscal year of the war, a number of buildings were erected; the remainder will be started in the 3rd fiscal year of

[302] In keeping with the regulations of Amt II of Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten, the second fiscal year of the war economy ended on September 30, 1941.
[303] Erläuterungsbericht zum prov. Ausbau des Konzentrationslager Auschwitz O/S. RGVA, 502-1-223, pp. 1-22, here p. 9.
[304] Erläuterungsbericht zum Bauvorhaben Konzentrationslager Auschwitz O/S. 15 luglio 1942. RGVA, 502-1-220, pp. 1-52, here p. 19.

the war and carried out with the greatest possible effort on the part of the whole Bauleitung[305] *and of the means available to it."*

The fact that Pressac was not aware of this elementary difference is almost unbelievable. How little this explanatory report reflects Himmler's visit of July 17 and 18 can be judged by the fact that the program had been approved as to its general lines by *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* as early as June 1941: a letter from that office to the Auschwitz camp commander dated June 18, 1941, containing a list of the *Bauwerke* approved for the third fiscal year of the war economy (October 1, 1941, to September 30, 1942), already lists twenty such items.[306] Pressac thus commits an overt distortion of documents when he says that this report was "backdated to July 15, because it was drawn up at the end of July and mailed to Berlin on August 3, 1942" (1993, note 145, p. 103)

Actually, there is no document supporting the claim that the report was written at the end of July. The only document Pressac cites in this context is Bischoff's letter of August 3, 1942, to SS-WVHA by which the head of the Auschwitz ZBL forwarded to *Amt C V* "frame applications" (*Rahmenanträge*[307]) containing the explanatory report, the cost estimate, and the site map for the construction projects "Auschwitz concentration camp," "agricultural plants," and "Auschwitz materials yard" as requested by *Amt C V/1* of SS-WVHA by letter of June 3, 1942, to which Bischoff's letter refers explicitly.[308] But the fact that the explanatory report was sent to SS-WVHA on August 3 does not in the least prove that it was "drawn up at the end of July" and "backdated to July 15." Hence, "Himmler's visit" to Auschwitz "threw… out" practically nothing: Pressac has simply committed an enormous error.

Van Pelt and Dwork have this to say on this point (1996, pp. 215, 218):

"In response to IG Farben's unwillingness to support a 20.6 million operation, Bischoff proposed two plans. The first, budgeted at

[305] The Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz. K.L. Auschwitz und Landwirtschaft Auschwitz, which managed the Bauvorhaben SS-Unterkunft und Konzentrationslager Auschwitz and Landwirtschaftliche Betriebe Auschwitz.

[306] RGVA, 502-1-11, p. 37.

[307] The requests (Anträge) for the inclusion of the Bauvorhaben within the frame (Rahmen) of the volume and the relative expenses allocated by Der Generalbevollmächtigte für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft for the third fiscal year of the war. Cf. letter from Kammler to Zentralbauleitung of June 14, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-319, p. 189.

[308] Letter from Bischoff to SS-WVHA of August 3, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-22, illegible page number.

2.02 million marks, was called 'Provisional Expansion of the Concentration Camp Auschwitz O/S [Oberschlesien, or Upper Silesia]*,' which was to be built with construction material supplied through IG Farben. Its main purpose was to demonstrate responsibility to the corporation. The second plan, 'Building Project Auschwitz,' budgeted at 20.6 million marks, was Bischoff's real agenda."*

They too, just like Pressac, have grasped little or nothing in this matter.

7.2.3. The Four Barracks "for Special Treatment" and the Birkenau "Bunkers"

We will now examine the way Pressac interprets the passage concerning the four barracks "*für Sonderbehandlung*." He affirms that "Bischoff, in a second report, requested four horse-stable barracks to be set up *near the two bunkers* which were to be used as *undressing barracks for the physically unfit*." We should stress here that the parts of the quotation which I have set out in italics have nothing to do with the document but are mere conclusions on the part of the French historian. The entire text of the passage cited by Pressac is as follows:[309]

"BW 58 5 barracks for special treatment and housing of detainees, horse-stable barracks type 260/9 (army headquarters)
4 pcs. barracks for special treatment of detainees at Birkenau
1 pc. barracks for housing of detainees at Bor
Cost of 1 barrack: RM 15,000.–
Hence for 5 barracks: total cost approx. RM 75,000."

Pressac's interpretation thus appears clearly deceptive: this text does not only not support the thesis of the criminal aim of the four barracks "for special treatment" but excludes it: the reference to the barrack for housing detainees at Bor,[310] which is part of the same *Bauwerk* and is listed under the same heading as the other four barracks allegedly destined for the Jews unfit for work, demonstrates that the term "*Sonderbehandlung*" in this document has no criminal connotation. The correctness of this conclusion is borne out by other documents unknown to Pressac, such as the list of Auschwitz *Bauwerke*, planned and already

[309] Kostenvoranschlag für das Bauvorhaben Konzentrationslager Auschwitz O/S. RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 36. Mattogno 2004h, document 4 on p. 113.

[310] Within the area of Bor and Budy – two villages located some 4 km south of Birkenau – there was the so-called "Wirtschaftshof Budy," a Nebenlager in which mainly agricultural tasks were carried out. The camp as such (Männer- und Frauen-Nebenlager) was at Bor.

realized, written by Bischoff on March 31, 1942, in which we have "5 horse-stable barracks (special treatment), 4 at Birkenau, 1 at Budy."[311] R.I.P. Pressac's thesis that "this was absolutely the first time that the term 'special treatment' was used, at the end of July of 1942."

The erection of the four barracks for the "*Sonderbehandlung*" planned in the list of March 31 was requested by Bischoff on June 9, 1942. The respective letter to SS-WVHA, unknown to Pressac, states:[312]

> *"In connection with the special treatment of the Jews, camp commander of KL Auschwitz, SS-Sturmbannführer Höss, has orally applied for the erection of 4 horse-stable barracks for the storage of the goods. We request approval of the application, as the matter is extremely urgent and the goods must by all means be stored indoors."*

Hence, it was not a matter of "four horse-stable barracks" to be installed "near the *two* bunkers" as "undressing rooms for the physically unfit," but of storage room for the personal effects which were taken from the deported Jews. In addition, according to Pressac, the so-called "bunker 1" "went into operation probably at the end of May, 1942" (1993, p. 39) while "bunker 2" "became operational at the end of June, 1942" (*ibid*., p. 42). Seen in this light, Bischoff's list of March 31, 1942, would have provided for some alleged undressing rooms near the "bunkers," but without any "bunkers" in operation!

7.2.4. "Special Treatment" and "Disinfestation Plant"

On October 28, 1942, ZBL prepared a long list of all construction projects concerning "*Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz*" now included in the "*Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung*," as is mentioned in the list's title in parentheses. Pressac, as we have seen, interprets this document in a criminal sense, arguing that it contains an "administrative blunder" pointing to the alleged homicidal gassings. This interpretation is unfounded documentarily in that it is based, on the one hand, on the mere presence of the word "special treatment" and, on the other hand, on a serious omission. If the document in question really constituted a general construction project aimed at the extermination of the Jews, the

[311] Aufteilung der Bauwerke (BW) für die Bauten, Aussen- und Nebenanlagen des Bauvorhabens Konzentrationslager Auschwitz O/S of March 31, 1942.RGVA, 502-1-267, pp. 3-13, quoted on p. 8. Mattogno 2001b, document 5 on p. 157 (Engl.: 2004h).

[312] Letter from Zentralbauleitung to SS-WVHA, Amt V, of June 9, 1942.RGVA, 502-1-275, p. 56. Mattogno 2004h., document 7 on p. 118.

essential extermination installations – "bunkers" 1 and 2 and the four Birkenau crematoria – should figure prominently. Instead, the alleged gassing "bunkers" do not appear there at all, not even in a "veiled" manner, and the crematoria themselves take up only a small fraction of the total budget (23,760,000 RM), less than 5% at 1,153,250 RM.[313] Not only that: the only building to which the function of any "special treatment" is specifically attributed in the document is not a crematorium, but a disinfestation unit:[314]

> *"16a) Disinfestation plant – 1. for special treatment – 16b) 2. for the guard unit."*

The disinfestation plant for special treatment was nothing other than the *Zentralsauna*, the largest sanitary-hygienic installation in the entire Auschwitz-Birkenau complex. Therefore, the *only* site to which the designation "special treatment" applied in a specific sense was not an installation for "the liquidation by means of gas of the Birkenau Jews who were unfit for work," but a disinfestation and disinfection unit with showers for the healthcare of the Birkenau detainees – exactly the contrary of what Pressac's fanciful conjecture wants to make it!

7.3. "Bath Facilities for Special Actions"

7.3.1. Pressac's Explanations

On August 19, 1942, Prüfer had a meeting with *SS-Untersturmführer* Fritz Ertl, at the time head of *Abteilung Hochbau* (buildings) at ZBL on the subject of "Enlargement of incineration plants at PoW camp." On August 21 Ertl drew up an *Aktenvermerk* in which he noted the results of the meeting. Under item 2 of the document we have:[315]

> *"On the subject of the erection of 2 triple-muffle ovens at each of the 'bath facilities for special actions,' engineer Prüfer suggested to divert the ovens from an available shipment for Mogilev; the division head* [Bischoff] *presently at the SS-WVHA in Berlin was in-*

[313] Vorhaben: Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz (Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung). VHA, Prague, pp. 2, 8 and 9. The cost of the crematoria – 1,400,000 RM – includes 4 morgues the cost of which can be derived from the volume (4,935 m³) multiplied by the cost per cubic meter (50 RM): 246,750 RM, Therefore the cost of the crematoria results as (1,400,000 – 246,750 =) 1,153,250 RM.

[314] Vorhaben: Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz (Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung). VHA, Fond OT 31(2)/8, pp. 9-10. Mattogno 2004h., document 11 on p. 122.

[315] Aktenvermerk of SS-Untersturmführer Ertl of August 21, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 159.

formed of this by telephone and was asked to take the necessary steps."

Pressac comments (1993, p. 52):

"[…] *– concerning the Crematoria IV and V assigned to bunkers 1 and 2, Prüfer proposed to equip them with double ovens having four muffles each taken from a shipment under the Mogilev contract which stood ready to go, because the matter had already been looked at by Bischoff.* […] *In his report on the meeting, Ertl designated bunkers 1 and 2 as 'bathing installations for special actions.'"*

This interpretation, not supported by the documents, is actually the result of a masking of the documents on which Pressac relied in an effort to resolve the difficult problems caused by Ertl's above note. Above all, the text does not say that there were *two* "bath facilities for special actions" (bunkers 1 and 2). If one had wanted to set up two triple-muffle ovens at each of these "bath facilities," the two triple-muffle ovens originally ordered for the PoW camp[316] would have been sufficient for a single "bath facility," and no document mentions a further order of two triple-muffle ovens.

In his preceding book, Pressac wrote (1989, p. 204):

"Regarding the installation of <u>each</u> of the 2 3-muffle furnaces near the 'bathing installation for special actions' […]*"* (Emph. added).

But this English translation of Pressac's original French text does not make much sense and is wrong. A proper translation would have been:[317]

"Regarding the installation of the 2 triple-muffle ovens near each of the 'bathing installations for special actions,"

but this takes us back to the contradiction noted above, which Pressac has never been able to resolve.

The assertion that the Crematoria IV and V were originally meant to serve "bunkers" 1 and 2 is at variance with blueprint 1678 of "*Einäscherungsanlage im KGL*" (incineration plant at PoW camp) dated August 14, 1942 (Pressac 1989, p. 393). This drawing shows part of the future Crematorium IV, mainly the furnace hall which appears to be

[316] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Kostenanschlag auf Lieferung von 2 Stück Dreimuffel-Einäscherungs-Öfen und Herstellung des Schornsteinfutters mit Reinigung of February, 1942. APMO, BW 34, pp. 27-29.

[317] "En ce qui concerne l'implantation de 2 fours à trois moufles près de chacun des 'bains pour actions spéciales'… Pressac gave me this text in 1989. See Mattogno 2003e, pp. 432-435.

equipped with an 8-muffle incineration oven. Here we have a first problem: if the proposal to divert to Auschwitz the 8-muffle Topf ovens of the Mogilev contract was made by Prüfer on August 19, why is it that we already have a Topf 8-muffle oven shown on this drawing?

Whichever way this may be, if the blueprint of the future Crematorium IV existed already on August 14, and if on August 19 there still existed the project to install two ovens with three muffles at each one of the "bath facilities for special actions," it is obvious that neither these ovens nor the "bath facilities" had anything to do with the future Crematorium IV. For Pressac, as we have seen above, this blueprint of Crematorium IV already contained a homicidal gas chamber using hydrogen cyanide (deduced from the presence of the stove), but how could he assert that the crematorium was linked with "bunkers" 1 and 2?

We may say in conclusion that the future Crematorium IV had nothing to do with the "bunkers," because it was equipped with a large mortuary of 588.65 m² floor area, and because, finally, it was designed at a period of extremely high "natural" mortality among the detainees. It is therefore obvious that it was dedicated to the corpses of the detainees who had died during the typhus epidemic. We have already looked at this topic in chapter 5.2.

7.3.2. A Project not Implemented

Let us now consider the "bath facilities for special actions." Ertl's *Aktenvermerk* of August 21, 1942, was examined by the Soviet commission of inquiry which operated at Auschwitz in February/March 1945. At that time only item 2 of the document was translated, the passage concerning the "bath facilities for special actions" (which in Russian became "*ban' dlja osobovo naznacenija*" – baths for special purpose), as well as – quite surprisingly – the first paragraph of item 4, which refers to the erroneous shipment to Auschwitz of parts of a double-muffle oven that was supposed to go to Mauthausen.[318] The commission decided that the "bath facilities for special actions" had to be homicidal gas chambers and thus linked them to Crematoria IV and V. As a matter of fact, in a report about the alleged extermination facilities at Auschwitz-Birkenau dated February 14 to March 8, 1945, one can read, at the end of the section dedicated to these two crematoria:[319]

[318] GARF, 7021-108-14, p. 27.
[319] Minutes, city of Oświęcim, February 14 – March 8, 1945. GARF, 7021-108-14, p. 7.

"It is typical that, in the official correspondence, the Germans designated the gas chambers as 'baths for special purpose,' letter no. 12115/42/Er/Ha of August 21, 1942."

However, in August 1942, no *Bauwerk* ran under that name; none of the *Bauwerke* completed or under construction had anything to do with these "bath facilities," even though, for the month in question, we know precisely all *Bauwerke* then existing at Birkenau, we know when they were ordered to be built and when the work on them began, we know their number and their designation, and we know their degree of advancement and where they stood. These details are contained in the "*Baufristenplan 1942. Berichtsmonat August*"[320] and on the Birkenau map of August 15, 1942.[321] The "bath facilities" do not appear in any project of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, nor in any report about the construction of the camp or on any map or blueprint. They therefore existed only in an early planning stage, which is one more proof that they did not refer to "bunkers" 1 and 2, which allegedly were in operation by August 1942.

But did the plan have a criminal aim? Was "bath facilities" a codeword? There is a major topic in parallel which furnishes us with a very plausible alternative explanation. In chapter 4.2. I have shown that, as part of the "special measures for the improvement of hygiene installations" launched by Kammler in early May 1943, there was a plan, implemented up to a point, to install showers for the inmates of the camp in Crematoria II and III. This project thus brought together "bath facilities" and crematorium ovens under one roof in no nefarious way and even for hygienic and sanitary ends. Hence, there is no reason why the "bath facilities" of the document in question should not also be hygienic installations purely and simply. In fact, one can take the legitimate view that the project of "bath facilities" later merged into that of "water installations" of Crematoria IV and V (see chapter 5.11.).

The discussion of the two projects described above necessitates another historical exposé. In the month of August 1942 the mortality among the detainees was at an all-time high: 8,600 men and women met their death, primarily on account of a terrible typhus epidemic which ravaged the camp. At the beginning of the month the *Stammlager* crematorium was still out of action, because the old chimney had been torn

[320] RGVA, 502-1-22, pp. 40-41.

[321] Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers in Auschwitz O/S of August 15, 1942. Pressac 1989, p. 209.

down and the new one was not yet finished. This job would only be terminated on the 8th of the month.[322] On August 13 Bischoff, referring to a meeting with *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Robert Mulka the day before, sent the following letter to the camp commander:[323]

> *"On the basis of the a.m. telephone conversation, the Kommandantur was informed that on account of an overly rapid firing up of the new chimney of the crematorium (all three ovens are running) damage to the brickwork has already occurred. Because the start-up of the 3 cremation furnaces was done at full load before the complete hardening of the mortar in the brickwork of the chimney, all future responsibility for the building must be rejected."*

In practice, the crematorium had gone into operation as early as the 11th or 12th of the month, before the mortar had had time to set completely, and the remaining, rapidly evaporating moisture had cracked the brickwork. Such a haste in restarting the cremation activity can be explained with the excessively high mortality at that time: over four days, between the 8th and the 11th of that month, more than 970 detainees had died, roughly as many as had died during the seven previous days. On August 19 Kirschneck and the contractor Robert Koehler inspected the damage to the chimney. The results are described in the same document in which the "bath facilities for special actions" are mentioned.[324] Between August 12 and 19 the mortality among the detainees climbed further yet: over 3,100 detainees, 390 per day on average. In such a tragic situation, it is easy to see why ZBL was going for the installation of "bath facilities for special actions" and of the two triple-muffle ovens mentioned in the cost estimate of February 12, 1942, as emergency measures to fight the epidemic, both by a hygienic treatment of the living and by the cremation of the dead.

7.3.3. "Bath Facilities" and Crematorium Ovens

Ertl's *Aktenvermerk* cited above establishes a relationship between "bath facilities" and crematorium ovens; Pressac and van Pelt argue that those "bath facilities" were not real, the term being a "code-word" said

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[322] Handwritten note "Schornstein-Krematorium. BW 11 " of December 7, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-318, pp. 4-5. According to the Baufristenplan 1942. Berichtsmonat August (RGVA, 502-1-22, p.38) the job was finished on August 10.

[323] Letter from Bischoff "an die Kommandantur des K.L. Auschwitz" of August 13, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 27.

[324] Aktenvermerk of SS-Untersturmführer Ertl of August 21, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 160.

to have referred to the alleged homicidal gas chambers. Against this hypothesis, which is not supported by any documents, I have set the parallel case of the "bath facilities" planned in the Birkenau crematoria. The importance of this comparison stems from the fact that, while there are "concordant" documents which mention both "bath facilities" and crematoria in a sanitary context, there exists no document mentioning them jointly in a criminal context. As to the fact that the ovens were to be set up near the bathing installations – even if "near" were to mean within the same building, this is not strange in any way. Actually, Ertl's *Aktenvermerk* clearly indicates that the "bath facilities" were already being planned with two triple-muffle ovens. One may therefore not discard the idea that this union was due to the advantage of being able to make use of the heat of the combustion gases to heat the water for the showers. Nor was "special action" a code-word; instead this referred to the Jewish transports ("*Sondertransporte*") with all the usual procedures of reception, disinfestation, and sorting of the deportees ("*Sonderbehandlung*"; see Mattogno 2004h., pp. 66-75).

7.3.4. Van Pelt's Explanation

Van Pelt devotes only a couple of lines to the question. He cites a declaration by Ertl before a court in Vienna on January 21, 1972. Ertl declared that Bischoff had prohibited the use of the term "gassing" (*Vergasung*) and imposed the expressions "special action" (*Sonderaktion*) and "special measure" (*Sondermassnahme*; van Pelt 2002, p. 297). But these terms, as I have explained above, were no "code-words" of any kind and had nothing to do with the alleged homicidal gassings. In 1972, and for obvious reasons, Ertl had inevitably taken over the thesis of the "veiled language" invented by the Poles at the end of the war and by then *en vogue* for twenty-six years.

Van Pelt then goes on (p. 297-299):

> *"An important document in the archive confirms Ertl's statement about Bischoff's policy to use camouflage language. On August 19, 1942, Ertl chaired a meeting in which members of the Central Construction Office discussed with Engineer Kurt Prüfer of Topf & Sons the creation of four crematoria in Birkenau. Item 2 mentioned the construction of two triple-oven incinerators near 'bathhouses for special actions' – 'Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen.' These were the gas chambers also known as Bunkers 1 and 2. Ertl testified in*

court that when he wrote down the words 'bathhouses for special actions' he knew exactly what this euphemism meant. 'I knew at the time, that this concerned gassings spaces'."

But the "*Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen*" did not go beyond the planning stage, and a single statement of 1972 is certainly insufficient to "confirm" their existence and their identification with the alleged gassing "bunkers."

In conclusion we may say that Pressac's and van Pelt's assertions are empty conjectures without any back-up in history or in documents; the alleged "criminal traces" proffered have no value as evidence of any kind.

7.4. "*Sperrgebiet*" – Off-Limits Zone

Pressac speaks of this indication in a cursory manner, almost *en passant* (1993, p. 52):

> *"*[Prüfer] *was momentarily furious about this mistake, but then decided to use the situation to his advantage. On arrival he had been informed of the hygiene regulations and had learned about the typhus epidemic; he had also learned from chatting with the SS something which he was not supposed to know about what was going on in the 'off-limits' zone (Sperrgebiet) at Birkenwald*[325] *where bunkers 1 and 2 were located."*

He refers to his document 21, of which I present the Moscow original (see document 36). It is a "summary of survey data for the zone of interest of KL Auschwitz," dated June 2, 1943. However, the mere date of this map tells us that it cannot have anything to do with those mysterious Birkenau "bunkers." According to holocaust historiography, these "bunkers" were closed and the corresponding graves leveled once Crematorium II had become operational, i.e. in March/April 1943. Why should there still be an "off-limits zone" in that area on June 2, 1943?

The map in question was drawn for topographical and cartographical reasons. In this respect ZBL had already become active in late 1942.[326]

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[325] Translator's note: The term "*Birkenwald*" (birch wood), used here as a place name, is mysterious, because it is found nowhere else. It could be that someone derived it from Polish *brzezina* (birch wood), confusing it with the name *Brzezinka*, in German *Birkenau* (birch meadow).

[326] On October 12, 1942, a civilian employee of Zentralbauleitung went to Breslau on an official mission to discuss topographical and cartographical questions with the competent authorities. RGVA, 502-1-385, pp. 253-257.

Preliminary work on the survey grid of the zone had been done by January 13, 1943, but other work still remained to be done.[327] The map has a direct link with the enlargement of the zone of interest of KL Auschwitz which took place the day before the map was drawn. It was announced in the "*Amtsblatt der Regierung in Kattowitz*," the official journal of the Kattowitz region, which gave a detailed description of the new limits of the "area of interest" (*Interessengebiet*; cf. document 37). The "off-limits zone" had a clear relationship with the various *Lagersperren* (camp closures) decreed by Höss on account of the typhus epidemics.[328] For example, in 1943, on February 9, Höss gave a *Standortbefehl* (local order) in which he announced that the head of *Amtsgruppe D* of WVHA, *SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS* Glücks, had ordered the total closure of the camp ("*eine vollständige Lagersperre*") because of the spread of typhus cases (see chapter 2.6.3). In *Standortbefehl* no. 3 of February 14, Höss defined the limits of the "off-limits zone for the total camp closure":[329]

> *"In reference to garrison order 2/43* [of February 8, 1943] *cited in garrison order 25/42,*[330] *the former will be modified in the sense that the following area is defined as an off-limits zone for the total camp closure in accordance with indications in the map of KL Auschwitz area of interest: The off-limits zone is represented by the KL Auschwitz area of interest, limited in the north, west and east by the Vistula and/or Sola rivers* […]*."*

This having been clarified, let us now look at the map of June 2, 1943. The map shows, within an obliquely shaded area, a white zone labeled "off-limits zone" and "*Birkenau K.G.L.*" The latter zone corresponds more or less to the Birkenau camp, whereas the one labeled "off-limits zone" extends some 950 m toward the Vistula River, north-northwest from the left side of the camp. If the "off-limits zone" was no larger than this, it included neither the location of the alleged "bunkers" nor their mass graves. Document 39 is a superposition of the map of the Birkenau camp on the map of June 2, 1943. The zones marked by circles indicate

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[327] Report by SS-Schütze Fischer of the surveying team of Jan. 23, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-385, pp. 47-49.

[328] Lagersperre signified that no one was allowed to enter or leave the camp.

[329] Standortbefehl no. 3/43 of February 14, 1943. APMO, Standortbefehl, t. I, D-AuI-1, p. 48. Cf. document 38.

[330] An apparent mistake in the original document. Obviously, it is the (earlier) Standortbefehl 25/42 which is referred to in the (later) Standortbefehl 2/43.

B1: area of the alleged "bunker" 1 and its mass graves
B2: area of the alleged "bunker" 2
F: mass graves allegedly belonging to "bunker" 1, actually graves of registered detainees who died in 1942 which the crematorium of the main camp could not incinerate.[331]

As shown by the superposition, the areas of the "bunkers" fall outside of the "off-limits zone" (the area of "bunker" 1 lies even inside the shaded zone). The area of the "off-limits zone" is surrounded by a curved line which corresponds to the one appearing on the "map of the area of interest of KL Auschwitz" in which also the area of the Birkenau camp is indicated in a similar way.[332] Actually, in the above document, the "off-limits zone" refers to the entire unshaded area, hence also to the Birkenau camp. As early as October 24, 1942, *Kommandanturbefehl* no. 21/42 mentioned "off-limits zone Birkenau" and specified the following (Frei et al. 2000, p. 190):

> *"Effective immediately, the area around Birkenau will be off-limits for civilians. Entering this space is authorized only in connection with official matters."*

We may conclude that the off-limits zone of the map dated June 2, 1943, has no connection with the alleged Birkenau "bunkers," and thus this "criminal trace" breaks down as well.

7.5. Material for Special Treatment

Pressac writes (1993, 46f.):

> *"Apparently Höss had succeeded in hiding from Himmler the true sanitary conditions obtaining in the camp. However, as the typhus epidemic continued to spread and the situation became more and more alarming, a total camp closure was decreed on July 23rd. In order to stop the disease, its carriers, the lice, had to be eliminated. Everything had to be disinfested immediately, personal effects, barracks, buildings and workshops, and in order to save the camp, tons of Zyklon B were needed.*
>
> *Unfortunately, delousing in gas chambers had, for all intents and purposes, been prohibited since June of 1940 due to rationing of*

[331] In this respect cf. the appendices with documents and explanations in Mattogno 2004i and 2005c.
[332] Plan vom Interessengebiet des K.L. Auschwitz no. 3203 of October 1943. APMO, negative no. 6189.

steel and sealing materials and of certain other substances needed for such a treatment.

Only by way of activating the SS-WVHA could such large amounts of gas be procured. The subterfuge invented by the Auschwitz SS was to say that the epidemic had just broken out, whereas, in fact, it had been raging for a long time already.

On July 22, SS-WVHA authorized the dispatch of a truck to pick up, directly at the Dessau production site, a load of 2 to 2.5 tons of the agent 'to fight the disease which has broken out.' On the 29th, a second authorization was given to obtain at Dessau an equal amount of Zyklon B 'for the disinfestation of the camp.' On August 12 there occurred a slight poisoning of a person involved in the treatment of a building. On account of this incident, Höss reminded SS and civilian personnel of the safety precautions to be observed for the application of Zyklon B, as the product now contained less of the warning agent[333] *and had thus become almost odorless and hence more dangerous.*

Around August 20, the supply of Zyklon B had been nearly used up, but the epidemic had not been contained. A new request for the product would have forced the SS to admit that it had not yet succeeded in controlling the disease. A trick was invented: the need for such enormous quantities of gas was blamed on the murder of the Jews. A transport authorization was granted on August 26, the reason being indicated as Sonderbehandlung. Although the Berlin authorities were aware of the result of the Behandlung, they did not know about its implementation, i.e. about the quantities of poison needed. Thus it was possible to lead them to believe that the bulk of the agent was used for this purpose, whereas a mere 2-3% was, in fact, sufficient. In this way, 97-98% could be used for delousing."

Pressac thus undertakes to change the requests for Zyklon B by the camp administration at Auschwitz for its fight against the epidemic which ravaged the camp into evidence for the gassing of Jews in the alleged "bunkers"! His argumentation is based on a systematic deformation of facts and documents, though. Let me emphasize, first of all, that it has been established that on June 5, 1940, the head of *Amt II* at *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten, SS-Oberführer* Kammler, wrote a letter

[333] Ethyl bromoacetate, an aggressive lacrimatory chemical added to the Zyklon B as a warning agent in case of exposure.

to *SS-Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz on the subject of "delousing facility" in which he decreed that[334]

> *"for increased savings in steel, sealants, specialized workers etc., delousing units based on hydrogen cyanide are no longer to be built,* [they are to be abandoned] *in favor of hot-air units,"*

but *in practice*, at Auschwitz, this decree was not observed: in the summer of 1942 at least 27 gas chambers using Zyklon B[335] were under construction or in use there, as Pressac knows perfectly well, having described them in his earlier book (1989, pp. 23-62) – but then how can he assert that at Auschwitz "delousing in gas chambers had, for all intents and purposes, been prohibited since June of 1940"?

As far as the supply of Zyklon B is concerned, when he writes that "only by way of activating the SS-WVHA could such large amounts of gas be procured," Pressac shows his crass ignorance of the bureaucratic rules in force at the time. Actually, *any* request for Zyklon B was *necessarily* routed through SS-WVHA, as I have explained in chapter 2.6.4.

The weakness of Pressac's thesis that SS-WVHA was practically kept in the dark about the spread of the typhus epidemic becomes apparent when we realize that Bischoff had informed SS-WVHA (Kammler), as soon as the disease manifested itself, on July 3, 1942. On July 23, Bischoff wrote the following letter to SS-WVHA:[336]

> *"Referring to our letter dated July 3, 1942, Bftgb. Nr. 10158/42/ Bi/Th Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz informs you that the camp closure ordered in connection with typhus has now been extended to the whole camp by local order 19/42 of July 23, 1942."*

But we must stress the fact that Bischoff addressed his immediate superior, Kammler, who was head of *Amtsgruppe* C and as such responsible for construction (*Bauwesen*). The hygienic and sanitary conditions in the camp were, however, the competence of *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Lolling,[337] to whom the SS garrison surgeon at Auschwitz had to report. The camp closure of July 23, 1942, had been decreed by Höss himself, upon instructions from the head of *Amtsgruppe D, SS-Brigade-*

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[334] RGVA, 502-1-333, p. 145.

[335] The chambers were distributed as follows: 19 in Aufnahmegebäude, 1 in BW 5a, 1 in BW 5b (planned), 1in Kanada 1, 2 in Block 26 at Auschwitz, 2 in Block 3 and 1 in Block 1 (built).

[336] Letter from Bischoff "an das SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt – Der Chef des Amtes C V -" dated July 23, 1942 concerning "Lagersperre." RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 143.

[337] NO-111, organigram of SS-WVHA.

führer und Generalmajor Glücks. This results from *Standortbefehl* no. 2/43 of February 8, 1943, which states i.a.:[338]

> *"by order of the head of Amtsgruppe D, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen SS Glücks, a complete camp closure of KL Auschwitz has again been ordered."*

This was the second "total closure" in the history of the camp, and for that very reason the *Standortbefehl* reinstated all dispositions in force during the first such closure, as per *Standortbefehl* of July 23, 1942. Hence, if the second camp closure was "again" (*erneut*) decreed by Glücks, it is clear that the first had been ordered by him as well.

It is important to recall here that the supply of Zyklon B was also controlled by *Amtsgruppe D*, and for this reason the authorizations for picking up the product at Dessau given to Auschwitz by radio message from SS-WVHA were signed by *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Arthur Liebehenschel, assistant head and *Vertreter* (deputy) to Glücks. The authorization of July 29 was signed by Glücks personally.

Thus, Pressac's allegation that "Höss had succeeded in hiding from Himmler the true sanitary conditions obtaining in the camp" and that, therefore, SS-WVHA (and in particular its *Amtsgruppe D*) was kept uninformed of the extent of the typhus epidemic at Auschwitz is totally unfounded. Hence the alleged "subterfuge" used by the camp administration to blame "the need for such enormous quantities of gas […] on the murder of the Jews" is actually a subterfuge invented by Pressac in order to assign a meaning to the request for Zyklon B "*für Sonderbeh.*[andlung]" which is quite different from that of the other requests which were based on the requirements for disinfestation. Let us take a closer look at the sequence of events:

The first cases of typhus at Birkenau were noted on July 1, 1942. On July 23, 1942, KL Auschwitz received the following well-known radio message from WVHA:

> *"I hereby authorize the dispatch of a 5-ton truck from Auschwitz to Dessau and back to fetch gas for the gassing of the camp to fight the disease which has broken out."* (Kogon et al., p. 223)

On that same day Höss decreed the "total camp closure" (*vollständige Lagersperre*) to contain the typhus epidemic.[339] On July 29 another radio message by Glücks personally authorized the reception of gas for

[338] APMO, Standortbefehl, D-AuI-1, p. 46.
[339] Standortbefehl Nr. 19/42 dated July 23, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-66, p. 219.

the disinfection of the camp by means of a truck dispatched to Dessau:[340]

> *"Permission to employ a truck to go from Auschwitz to Dessau to fetch gas most urgently needed for the disinfection* [recte: disinfestation] *of the camp is hereby granted."*

On August 12 disinfestation by means of Zyklon B was started for the blocks of the former women's camp in the *Stammlager* after the transfer of the inmates to sector BIa at Birkenau (Czech 1989, p. 271). On the same day a mild case of hydrocyanic poisoning occurred during the gassing (*Vergasung*) of rooms[341] that were probably part of the blocks just mentioned. On August 26 a radio message from SS-WVHA about the reception of "*Material für Sonderbeh.*[andlung]" (materials for special tr.[eatment]) was dispatched, and on August 31st the disinfestation with Zyklon B of the *Stammlager* blocks began.

There is thus no reason whatsoever to doubt that the reception of Zyklon B for "special treatment" served the same purpose as the application of the same agent for "gassing" and "disinfestation" of the camp. But then, how can the use of the expression "for special tr.[eatment]" instead of *"zur Vergasung des Lagers*" or "*zur Desinfizierung des Lagers*" be explained?

As I have documented in chapter 7.2.4., the only building at the Birkenau camp destined for any "special treatment" was the *Zentralsauna*, i.e. a hygienic and sanitary installation which was also involved in the fight against typhus. On the other hand, no document contains the use of "special treatment" related in any way to homicidal gassings.

In such a context the use of the designation of Zyklon B as "materials for special tr.[eatment]" in Liebehenschel's authorization of August 26, 1942, loses any alleged connotation of a "criminal trace" and can be explained as the simple supply of Zyklon B for hygienic and sanitary purposes for use in the disinfestation gas chamber of the "*Entlausungs- und Effektenbaracken*" (BW 28). As the corresponding operations carried out in BW 28 were handled by a specific administrative entity, the "*Häftlings-Effekten-Verwaltung*"[342] (administration of personal effects of detainees), the expression "materials for special tr.[eatment]" concerned the Zyklon B ordered by the garrison surgeon on behalf of this

[340] Funk-Spruch Nr. 113. AGK, NTN, 94, p. 168.
[341] Sonderbefehl dated August 12, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-32, p. 300.
[342] This entity is mentioned in a letter from Grabner dated March 19, 1943, and addresses to six camp offices. AGK, NTN, 135, p. 217.

administration (for more details, cf. Mattogno 2004h, pp. 41-46). As I explained elsewhere, the gas-tight doors of this disinfestation plant had been ordered from the inmate carpentry as "doors for special Tr. [eatment] of J. [ews]."[343]

7.6. "Materials for Resettlement of Jews" and the "Franke-Gricksch Report"

7.6.1. "Materials for Resettlement of Jews"

Liebehenschel's radio message of October 2, 1942, which contains the term "*Judenumsiedlung*" (resettlement of Jews) that is said to be a code for mass assassination, also fits into this framework and finds its explanation there. The translation of the message is as follows:[344]

> *"Authorization is hereby granted for dispatch to Dessau and return of a 5t truck to fetch materials for resettlement of Jews."*

These "materials" are no doubt identical to the "materials for special tr.[eatment]" of the radio message of August 26, 1942: we are dealing here with Zyklon B. Pressac mentions this document in a manner which is somewhat enigmatic for non-specialists (1993, p. 46):

> *"Furthermore, the 'special treatment' just like 'Jewish resettlement' required Zyklon B. These conventional terms designated the liquidation by means of gas of those unfit for work in the Birkenau camp."*

Actually, the Zyklon B was utilized in the so-called "*Ostwanderung*" (see chapter 19.2.), the Jewish migration to the east via Auschwitz (see Mattogno 2004h., pp. 52-56). For some strange reason, Pressac overlooks a link with the Franke-Gricksch "report," which he has published and commented for the first time (1989, pp. 238f.). In his opinion, in fact, "the only real, and very important, merit" of this document lies in the fact that "it gives a clear and precise explanation of the term 'Jewish resettlement action/Umsiedlungsaktion der Juden,'" which, i.a. in his "Auschwitz Album," he places in parallel with the resettlement of the Hungarian Jews, hence it "can no longer give rise to any discussion, and covers the second type of 'resettlement'" (*ibid*., p. 239), i.e. assassination. And this is precisely said to be confirmed by the "materials for re-

[343] Auftrag Nr. 2143. Auschwitz, den 6. Oktober 1942. RGVA, 502-1-328, p. 71; Arbeitskarte. Auftrag Nr. 2143. Auschwitz, den 6. Oktober 1942. RGVA, 502-1-328, p. 72. See Mattogno 2004h, pp. 46-50.

[344] AGK, NTN, 94, p. 172.

settlement of Jews." Seen in this light, the Franke-Gricksch "report" should act as a means for decrypting this "conventional" expression. It is hence important for us to examine this document, not only to disprove such an interpretation, but first and foremost to demonstrate Pressac's unbelievable procedure.

7.6.2. The Franke-Gricksch "Report" and Pressac's Comments

Pressac introduces the document in the following manner (1989, p. 236):

> *"In the afternoon of the same day, SS Major Alfred FRANKE-Gricksch, adjutant to SS General Maximillian VON HERFF* […], *Head of the SS Central Personnel Office [SS Personal Hauptamt, 98 99 Wilmersdorferstraße, Berlin-Charlottenburg], accompanying the General on a tour of inspection in the 'General Government' [the half of the Polish territory occupied by the Germans and placed under the authority of Hans Frank], arrived in KL Auschwitz (although reported, the presence of General von Herff is doubtful). Franke-Gricksch visited Krematorium II and is supposed to have witnessed the gassing of those unfit for work from a convoy of 2,930 Greek Jews (from the Salonika ghetto). Following this visit, between the evening of 4th May and 16th May, he wrote a report on what he had seen at Auschwitz Birkenau for his chief, von Herff, and for Reichsführer SS Himmler. This report was entitled: 'JEWISH RESETTLEMENT ACTION'."* (emphases by Pressac)

On the origin of the document, Pressac has this to say (p. 238):

> *"This report was shown to Professor Charles W Sydnor of Hampton-Sydney College, Virginia (United States) in 1976 by a person from Richmond (Virginia) who had discovered it after the second world war. This man, apparently Eric M Lippmann* [sic] *according to the signature, was at the time employed by the US Army on collecting documents and seeking anything that might be used as evidence in the Nuremberg trials. He seems to remember finding carbon copy of the original report among a set of documents in a place he cannot recall exactly, somewhere in Bavaria. The original was not there. Having immediately realized the value of this report, which described the whole process of exterminating the Jews in Auschwitz, he made a typed copy for himself, as he had to hand the carbon over to the American Prosecutor at Nuremberg. He certified*

in longhand that he had made a true copy, and signed it 'Eric M Lipmann.' The two sheets that he typed are now preserved in the Tauber Estate of Brandeis University with other documents from the Third Reich."

Pressac publishes the document in question, drawn up in German; our translation is as follows:[345]

"Part of a report rendered by SS Sturmbannführer Franke-Gricksch on a trip through the General Government on 4 to 16 May 1943. [This heading is typed in English in Lipmann's typescript]

R e s e t t l e m e n t – A c t i o n
of the Jews

A special task in the arrangement of the Jewish question has [been given to] *the A u s c h w i t z camp. The most modern measures enable the Führer order to be carried out within the shortest possible time and without major commotion.*

The so-called 'resettlement action' of the Jews takes place in the following manner:

The Jews arrive, toward nightfall, in special trains (freight-cars) and are being routed on special tracks into dedicated enclosed areas of the camp. There, they are unloaded and examined, first of all, by a medical commission in the presence of the camp commander and several SS officers to determine their fitness for work. Here, all those who can be integrated into the work process in any way, will go[346] *into a special camp. The temporarily sick are moved immediately to the hospital camp and made healthy again by special food, the basic rule being: to maintain any kind of manpower for work. The former way of 'resettlement action' is refused in its entirety, as one cannot afford to continually destroy important work energies.*

Those unfit go into a larger house, into the basement rooms which have access from the outside. One goes down 5-6 steps and enters a longish, well built and aerated basement room which is equipped with benches on its right and left sides. It is brightly lit and

[345] Translator's note: our translation differs somewhat from Pressac's in its choice of words and its sentence structure. This was done in order to better reflect the sometimes journalistic and unmilitary style of Lipmann's text, but it also leads to slight differences in some of the words when passages from Pressac's text are quoted. The typed copy of the "original" has many spelling errors, some of them hinting at a native English or American typist.

[346] The verb "kommen" is used twice in this sentence, the second occurrence is faulty German, transl.

there are numbers above the benches. The prisoners are told that, for their new tasks, they will have to be disinfected and cleaned and must therefore undress completely to be bathed. In order to avoid any kind of panic or commotion they are ordered to fold their clothes properly and place them below the numbers they have been assigned in order to find them again after the bath. Everything proceeds in utter calmness. Then one passes through a small passage and enters a large basement room which is similar to a shower-bath. In this room, there are three large columns. From outside the basement room one can lower certain agents into these columns. Once 300-400 people are assembled in this space, the doors are closed and the containers with the substances are lowered into the columns. As soon as the containers touch the bottom of the column they generate particular substances which put the people to sleep within one minute. A few minutes later, the door at the other end which leads to a lift opens. The hair of the corpses is cut and other experts (Jews) break out the teeth (gold teeth). One has come to know that the Jews keep hidden in hollow teeth jewels, gold, platinum etc.

After that, the corpses are loaded into elevators and are taken to the first upper floor. There, there are 10 large crematorium ovens in which the corpses are burned. As fresh corpses burn particularly well, only ½ – 1 metric hundredweight [Zentner] *of coke are needed for the whole procedure. This work is carried out by Jewish detainees who will never leave this camp.*

Output of this 'resettlement action' to date: 500,000 Jews.

Present capacity of 'the resettlement action' ovens: 10,000 in 24 hours.

[Handwritten note:] *I affirm, that this* [is] *a true copy of the original report.*

Eric M. Lipmann"

Leaving aside the certainly not irrelevant question of the origin and the authenticity of the document – a retyped copy, appearing as late as 1976, of the carbon copy of an original that was never found, the carbon copy having been discovered at an unknown location and transmitted to an unknown person, with the carbon copy then disappearing as well – we will pass on immediately to Pressac's critical comment (p. 239):

"Franke-Gricksch reports that 'The unfit go to a BIGGISH HOUSE, into the basement…' without saying that it is a crematori-

um, or which one. Later in his account we learn that the 'house' is equipped with 'big cremation furnaces,' so it must have been a crematorium. Only Krematorien II and III had semi-basements, whereas Krematorien I, IV and V had none. On 4th May 1943, only Krematorium II was complete and operational, while Kr III was not yet ready. Franke-Gricksch's 'biggish house' can therefore be nothing other than Birkenau Krematorium II.

The errors in his report are:

[1] '5-6 steps' (for the access stairway at the western end of Leichenkeller 2) instead of 10. Simple lack of attention on the part of a man who used this stairway only once. The error would be more serious on the part of a Sonderkommando member, using it several times a day.

[2] 'three big pillars' [columns for pouring Zyklon B] instead of four. The explanation of this error is that Franke-Gricksch must have just gone a few paces into Leichenkeller 1, not down to the end, and thus noticed only three of the four columns.

[3] 'the doors [of Leichenkeller 1] are closed' instead of the door, singular. This is probably due to confusion with the double door of Leichenkeller 2 leading to the corridor, through which he had just come before having a quick look over the threshold of Leichenkeller 1.

[4] 'the door on the other side is opened, leading to a lift.' There was not an entrance door at one end and exit at the other, but only one door to Leichenkeller 1, through which the victims entered and from which the corpses were removed. This is the most glaring fault, but may be explained by the route taken during Franke-Gricksch's visit.

[5] 'go to the first floor' [are taken to the first upper floor; Ed.] *instead of the floor above, or ground floor. A common mistake made by many witnesses.*

[6] '10 large crematorium furnaces,' instead of 5 three muffle furnaces or 15 muffles. As with Leichenkeller 1, Franke-Gricksch probably did not go the whole length of the furnace room, but stood at the western entrance in front of the first furnace and listened to the explanations given. It could be that the figure ten was the total he was given for the capacity of Krematorien II and III together (10 three muffle furnaces).

[7] '500,000 Jews' [in May 1943], instead of a true figure of probably somewhere between 200,000 and 250,000. This figure would have been provided by the Auschwitz SS guide and Franke-Gricksch is merely repeating the inflated figure given to make the camp look efficient.

[8] '10,000 in 24 hours,' instead of the 'official' figure of 4,756 per day for the FIVE Krematorien (I, II, III, IV and V), itself a theoretical figure that was never achieved in 1943, as proved by the Krematorium coke consumption. The maximum daily throughput of the 4 Birkenau Krematorien was in the order of 3,000 incinerations. What is more, in May 1943, Kr III was not yet in service. This is simply another Auschwitz SS propaganda figure passed on by Franke-Gricksch."

Pressac then goes on to explain the error in connection with the two doors of *Leichenkeller* 1 which he touches upon under item 4 above (p. 239):

"The most striking and serious error in his report is his stating that the gas chamber (Leichenkeller 1) had a door at each end. This can be explained only if there was some kind of break in his visit to the crematorium that caused him to lose his bearings somewhat."

His mistake is claimed to become understandable if one assumes that he entered *Leichenkeller* 2 from the outside, then walked through it, into the corridor and the vestibule, then took a few steps into *Leichenkeller* 1, leaving the half-basement via the stairs on the north side (through the former *Leichenkeller* 3), then re-entering the ground floor of the crematorium through the door located on the north side, and viewing the furnace hall while listening in front of the first oven to the explanations of his guide and going down into the half-basement by means of the freight elevator thus arriving in front of the gas chamber,

"[…] *(where, not recognizing the vestibule he had passed through some time before, he thought this was ANOTHER door to the gas chamber). He probably went back up to the ground floor on the corpse hoist and left the Krematorium through the main, north, door. The 'break' thus occurred when he emerged from the basement by the northern stairway, instead of more logically taking the corpse hoist directly up to the furnace room."* (p. 239)

7.6.3. Critical Analysis of Pressac's Comments

Pressac's remarks are a good example of the way in which a scholar with a fine critical and sometimes even very sensitive mind can get lost in useless suppositions and sophistications. His whole reasoning is grounded on the assumption that the document in question is authentic, although there is no proof for this, and hence his analysis aims merely at explaining the "mistakes" in the "report," instead of checking into the veracity and, ultimately, the authenticity of the document itself. In other words, he pre-empts what he is going to find out.

Another serious error on Pressac's side is the fact that he attempts to attribute the erroneous figures in the documents at times to Franke-Gricksch's SS guide, at other times to Franke-Gricksch himself. The criterion for the one or the other is the alleged propagandistic exaggeration of the SS: wherever possible, the errors are to be ascribed to the SS guide – the 500,000 persons "resettled," the cremation capacity of 10,000 corpses per day. Where this cannot be done, the mistakes are attributed to Franke-Gricksch's faulty observations – the three columns instead of four,[347] the two doors instead of one, the non-existent door at the other end of the gas chamber, the ten crematorium ovens instead of five.

Actually, if it is unlikely that the guide had not correctly explained the equipment of the crematorium to Franke-Gricksch, it is altogether unbelievable that, when describing the alleged extermination of Jews, the guide would not have called things by their proper names, like dropping the very name of the installation, crematorium, which the document refers to as a "house." Not even Zyklon B is ever mentioned in this "report," according to which the killing was done with "certain agents" or "particular substances which made the people fall asleep within a minute," saying that "the containers with the substances are lowered into the columns." Pressac has nothing to say about this, dwelling instead on insignificant "mistakes," such as items 1 or 5 in his remarks, and explaining the others in a laboriously sophistic manner.

His explanation concerning the closure of the "doors" of *Leichenkeller* 1 (item 3) is quite obviously in error because we are clearly dealing here with the closure of the "doors" of a room which according to the document has precisely two doors. Pressac's explanation concerning the

[347] But, for some strange reason, the "report" does not mention the seven concrete pillars holding up the ceiling of the room.

existence of these two doors (item 4) is an elaboration which is not only unprovable but against common sense: the inspection of the crematorium would have been carried out methodically: *Leichenkeller* 2, corridor, vestibule, *Leichenkeller* 1, to be interrupted there – nobody knows why – for a tour of the ground floor, only to continue in the semi-basement later. But in the account there is no mention of any "interruption," the visit of the semi-basement having ended with the alleged look into *Leichenkeller* 1 and Franke-Gricksch having been led into the ground floor precisely via the flight of service stairs built for that purpose (see chapter 2.9.1.). It is extremely unlikely that an *SS-Sturmbannführer* would have been moved into the furnace hall by means of the freight elevator used for the corpses – which, in any case, would have been against safety rules. From the furnace hall, if we follow Pressac, Franke-Gricksch would have been taken back down into the semi-basement again via the freight elevator – what for? He had already gone through the basement earlier. Apparently this was claimed by Pressac only so that he could "explain" Franke-Gricksch's alleged mix-up of the gas chamber door with some other door!

To support this ludicrous thesis, Pressac has to make a moron out of the SS officer – someone unable to recognize a room he had inspected minutes earlier, simply because he was now entering it through a different entrance! Without even taking into account that Franke-Gricksch must have been aware of the arrangement and the orientation of *Leichenkeller* 1 – either because he had entered *Leichenkeller* 2 from the outside yard where one could see the upper part of *Leichenkeller* 1 emerging from the ground, or because in the "report" the introduction columns for the sleeping agent introduced "from above, from the outside of the basement" are mentioned. Hence Franke-Gricksch would never have imagined another door at the far end of that room where there was only a wall and soil!

The explanation of the 10 ovens (item 6) makes no sense either, because if Franke-Gricksch had not seen one or several of the ovens farthest away when standing near the first, then he would have given a figure less than 5 for the ovens, or, for the muffles, a multiple of 3, e.g. 9 or 12 (as each oven had 3 muffles), but certainly not ten. Actually, though, as we can see from the blueprints of the ground floor of the crematorium shown by Pressac such as no. 933(-934)(r) (p. 283), even standing one meter away from the first oven, he could have seen the other four ovens most distinctly. The other explanation, namely that the

number of ovens refers to Crematoria II and III together, does not hold water either, because the report speaks of the "present capacity" (*jetzige Kapazität*) of the ovens, hence only of Crematorium II, for, as Pressac correctly states, "only Crematorium II was terminated and operational whereas Crematorium III was not yet ready."

Just as silly is Pressac's explanation on the subject of the "three large columns": on the one hand, even taking only a few steps into *Leichenkeller* 1, Franke-Gricksch could not but see the four alleged columns, and on the other hand, his SS guide, when explaining their function, would certainly not have failed to tell him that there were four of them and why this was so.

When it comes to the cremation capacity of the ovens in Crematorium II – 10,000 corpses in 24 hours – Pressac falls back on what he calls propagandistic exaggerations by the camp SS. However, the capacity given for the alleged gas chamber – "300-400 persons" – clashes most violently with that figure. It would mean that, in order to have the ovens run flat out, there would have had to be 28 gassings per day on average. But then, for Pressac himself the gassing capacity was 1,000 to 1,500 persons at a time (p. 473), whereas for Tauber it was 3,000 to 4,000 persons (see chapter 10.3.3.).

Thus Pressac, by far-fetched arguments, pretends to explain gross mistakes which remain inexplicable, if one considers the document to be authentic. In order to accomplish this, he has to by-pass essential aspects of the "report" which do not fit into his interpretative framework.

I have already pointed out the omission, in his comments, of any details regarding the "substances" used in the alleged gas chamber. A further case in point is the coke consumption which the document ascribes to the ovens of Crematorium II and which is in glaring contrast with Pressac's conjectures (see chapter 9.4). The most serious matter, though, is the following statement:

> *"The Jews arrive, toward nightfall, in special trains (freight-cars) and are being routed on special tracks into dedicated enclosed areas of the camp."*

However, the only railroad tracks which went into the Birkenau camp were those which formed the so-called "ramp." Pressac himself tells us, though, that this ramp "did not become operational until May 1944 for the arrival of the Hungarian Jews" (1989, p. 253) In May 1943 the Jewish convoys were unloaded at the so-called "old ramp" or "Jewish ramp" of the Auschwitz railroad station (*ibid.*, p. 162). Then how

was Franke-Gricksch able to see tracks in May 1943 that were only laid a year later? This irresolvable conundrum demonstrates by itself that the Franke-Gricksch "report" cannot possibly be authentic, and precisely for that reason Pressac has said nothing about the matter.

This chronological impossibility, together with the gross mistakes of the "report" and its incredible ignorance of elementary terms such as "crematorium" or "Zyklon B" shows clearly that it is a fabrication using testimonies of former detainees, which even betray the propaganda effort (cf. Renk 1991, pp. 261-279). Another striking example for this is this statement:

> *"One has come to know that the Jews keep hidden in hollow teeth* [!] *jewels, gold, platinum etc."*

Part Two:
The Crematory Ovens of Auschwitz-Birkenau

Design, Operation, Technical Features
and Historiographic Implications

8. The First Scientific Treatment of Cremations at Auschwitz

8.1. Introduction

The problem of the cremations at Auschwitz – one of the most important and still unresolved questions in the historiography of that camp – had started to come out of the general hysteria, into which it had been relegated for decades, and had started to take on some scientific connotations only in 1989, thanks to Jean-Claude Pressac. The merits of the French researcher end there, however: while he did indeed try to approach the problem from a scientific standpoint, his argumentative procedure and his conclusions show his deplorable lack of technical training, which I shall discuss in chapter 9. A rigorous scientific treatment of the matter became an urgent need.

Since the early 1990s I have been working on such an opus, assisted by engineer Dr. Franco Deana.[348] This treatment has not yet been published for a variety of minor vicissitudes, but it is presented here along its main lines. Its publication has become ever more pressing, because over the last ten years the problem of the Auschwitz cremations has relapsed into the propagandistic hysteria of the immediate post-war years.[349]

As I have explained above, the question of the crematorium furnaces of Auschwitz-Birkenau is one of the three pillars which support the en-

[348] Its Italian title is *I forni crematori di Auschwitz. Studio storico-tecnico con la collaborazione del dott. ing. Franco Deana*. An English translation is in preparation and is slated for publication in 2011.

[349] Aside from van Pelt's silly contribution in his 2002 book, the collective work by Assmann et al. (2002) has absolutely no technical or scientific character and does not provide any new elements on the Topf ovens at Auschwitz. Likewise, the recent *Encyclopedia of Cremation* (Davies/Mates), though claiming to be scientific in its general conception, dedicates to "Auschwitz" one purely propagandistic page (p. 66) founded on the works of Czech, Piper, and Pressac!

tire argumentative structure of van Pelt's book. One could even go so far as to say that it is the most important pillar, because the reliability of the witness testimonies is closely linked to the reliability of their statements in respect of the crematorium ovens. If the latter breaks down, the "convergence of proof" between witnesses and documents will follow, and thus van Pelt's entire argumentative structure crumbles.

The problem is hence of prime importance. I will therefore offer the reader in the present part of this book first and foremost a synthesis of the conclusions of the work in question and of an article I wrote on the Auschwitz ovens (1994c, pp. 281-320, updated in Rudolf 2000 and 2003a) with its major historiographic implications, adjusted here with minor modifications to my final results of the study of cremation. The first version of said article has been criticized by a certain John C. Zimmerman in a text entitled *Body Disposal at Auschwitz: The End of Holocaust Denial*, which appeared on a website in 1999 and was partly incorporated into his book a year later. My reply to Zimmerman's historically wrong and technically nonsensical arguments has definitely silenced this would-be critic (Rudolf/Mattogno 2005, pp. 87-194).

8.2. Structure of the Work

The crematorium ovens of Auschwitz, heated by means of coke-fed gasifiers, constituted a development or rather a simplification of the civilian type. However, it is difficult to obtain detailed information on these ovens even in the specialized literature. I therefore decided to place, at the head of the specific topic of my described study, a rigorous introductory treatment of those ovens as the *First Part* of the first volume of the work.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that crematorium ovens are simple combustion devices, I think that it would be helpful for the reader to be acquainted, on the one hand, with the general principles of combustion technology and of the chemical processes which come into play during a cremation, and on the other hand with the theoretical and structural principles of a crematorium oven with a coke-fed gasifier, supplemented by a detailed description of its structure and its operation. In this way, the reader will come to a better understanding of cremation technology.

Finally, as the Auschwitz crematorium ovens were products of the technology of their era, I considered it useful to present an overview of

the history of cremation in modern times with a particular emphasis on ovens with coke-fed gasifiers such as those at Auschwitz, but without leaving aside systems based on other types of energy – gas, naphtha,[350] or electricity. In this way, the reader can appreciate the technological development of these combustion devices from the latter decades of the 19th century through the Second World War, with all the technical problems which had to be solved. This historical presentation of crematorium ovens is complemented by a parallel study of devices for mass cremations for sanitary and hygienic reasons (in connection with wars or epidemics) and finds its conclusion in a brief analysis of the crematorium ovens of today.

The scientific cremation experiments carried out in Germany (and in Switzerland) at the end of the 1920s provide us with a solid experimental basis in order to resolve the essential questions of the duration of a cremation and of the corresponding fuel consumption of a cremation oven with a coke-fed gasifier; these aspects will be analyzed in detail in two specific chapters.

Aiming for a comprehensive presentation of the subject of this book, I have not by-passed the legal and statistical aspects of cremation, especially for the case of Germany. The above topics are presented in the *First Part* of the first volume.

In the Second Part I have primarily outlined the activities of the Topf company in the area of the design and construction of civilian crematorium ovens and other combustion devices, describing in detail the structure and the operation of the Topf crematorium ovens heated by means of coke, gas, or electricity, and presenting the numerous patents (and patent applications) granted, acquired, or filed between the 1920s and the 1950s.

After this general introduction concerning the Topf line of crematorium ovens for civilian use, I have addressed the cremation devices which the company supplied to, or designed for, the concentration camps, starting with those for Dachau and Gusen (a subcamp of Mauthausen). At this point we enter the core topic of the described work, which begins with a documented history of the construction of crematorium ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is followed by a detailed technical description of the structure and the operation of these devices –

[350] A fraction of hydrocarbons in petroleum boiling between 30°C and 200°C, today still used as lighter fuel and for camp stoves.

the ovens with two, three, and eight muffles – and a survey of the Topf projects for mass incineration in that camp.

The three fundamental questions – the duration of the cremation process, the capacity of the ovens, and the fuel consumption of the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau – are then treated in a scientifically rigorous fashion on the basis of a wide variety of documents.

For the determination of the duration of the cremation process I have based myself primarily on experimental data, in particular those resulting from the cremation experiments with a coke-fired oven undertaken by the engineer R. Kessler in Germany at the end of the 1920s and those stemming from the experiments with a gas-fired oven done by Dr. E. Jones in England in the 1970s. I have also taken into account a fragmentary list of cremations at Gusen and the nearly complete list of cremations at the Westerbork crematorium. The name lists of cremations in the Terezín crematorium (a vast sampling of 717 cremations carried out between October 3 and November 15th, 1943, over 41 operating days) furnish us with a most useful means of comparison in the sense that the average duration which results for these cases constitutes the lower documented limit that could be achieved in the cremation devices of that period.

The result of the study – that the average duration of the cremation process was one hour – is confirmed also by the statements given by the Topf engineers Kurt Prüfer, the designer of the ovens with three and with eight muffles, and Karl Schultze, the man who designed the blowers for the double and triple-muffle ovens.

The section dealing with the capacity of the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau contains a preliminary evaluation of the limits to the continuous operation of the devices (imposed by the inevitable formation and the necessary removal of slag from the hearth) and to the loading of the muffles, i.e. an evaluation of the possibility of incinerating more than one corpse at a time in one muffle in an economically advantageous way. This possibility is ruled out on the basis of experimental data (tests run in the crematoria at Westerbork and Gusen as well as in ovens for slaughter-houses). The Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau were designed for individual cremations, and pushing their thermal limits provided no advantage with respect to the economy of the cremation. The Soviet technical expert reports about the coke-fired Kori crematorium ovens of the Lublin-Majdanek, Sachsenhausen, and Stutthof con-

centration camps, disconnected from their propagandistic embellishments, supply us with an indirect confirmation.

In the described treatise I have not limited myself to the mere verification of numerical data, but have also examined the historical question of the purpose of the design and the construction of the crematoria ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The heat balance – i.e. the calculation of the coke consumption of the ovens – is set on a secure experimental footing: the consumption of the Topf double-muffle oven in the crematorium at Gusen with its average consumption of 30.6 kg of coke for each of 677 individual cremations. This chapter analyzes and explains this consumption in a scientific way. The calculation takes into account the technical data concerning the coke, the ovens (with a detailed computation of the hourly heat loss of the Gusen oven and of the double and triple-muffle ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau) and the corpses, which are divided into three types: normal, average and lean. The fuel consumption (including total combustion air, theoretical air consumption and excess air) is computed for each type of oven and for each type of corpse.

The analysis of the thermal balance of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens moreover evidences a design error for the triple-muffle oven, on account of which the combustion gases fed into, or forming in, the central muffle did not have enough residence time to burn completely, but were sucked up by the chimney draft and finished burning in the flue ducts. In March 1943 this phenomenon caused serious damage to the refractory lining of the flue ducts and of the chimney of Crematorium II at Birkenau. But could this surge of flames also show on the outside and produce the phenomenon of flaming chimneys as reported by various witnesses? On the basis of calculations one can say that these flames should have exhausted themselves within the smoke ducts of the crematoria. However, in order to verify this experimentally, I have conducted two experiments with animal grease in a simple oven I built for the purpose. The experimental results fully bore out the theoretical data.

For a better judgment regarding the Topf crematorium ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau I have also made an extensive analysis of the naphtha and coke-fired ovens supplied to the concentration camps by Topf's most serious competitor, the Hans Kori Co. of Berlin, as well as those installed at the Terezín camp by Ignis-Hüttenbau Co., undoubtedly the most efficient devices built anywhere in Europe in the 1940s.

The final problem dealt with in the Second Part concerns the legal requirements regarding the cremations in the concentration camps and the compliance of the ovens in use there with those requirements. In that context, I have quoted *in extenso* the important "Decree concerning the implementation of cremations in the crematorium of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp" issued by Himmler on February 28th, 1940, showing that – initially at least – the normal use of coffins, and urns for the ashes, was the rule in the crematoria of the concentration camps.

To make the text more easily readable, I have added an Appendix which contains the long lists of cremation statistics for Westerbork and Terezín (altogether 41 tables), a synopsis of the activities of the Topf Co. at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and a list of the patents as well as the patent applications and patent descriptions of the Topf Co. I have moreover compiled a glossary of over 300 German technical terms with the necessary explanations. The described work is based on strict and irreproachable first-hand sources.

I have primarily brought together the most significant German historical and technical literature which exists on this subject, reinforcing it with the patents concerning civilian ovens to the extent that such documents still exist (many have been lost on account of Allied bombardments). At the same time, I have been in touch with various producers of crematorium ovens and have personally visited several crematoria in Italy and France.

For a better understanding of the functioning of the Topf and the Kori ovens, I have studied the available German documents, especially those of ZBL of Auschwitz as well as other documents preserved in various European archives. I have furthermore inspected and taken photographs of devices still existing in German concentration camps at:

- Auschwitz: 2 double-muffle Topf ovens poorly rebuilt by the Poles; the mobile naphtha-fired Kori oven;
- Buchenwald: 2 coke-fired triple-muffle Topf ovens (one also adapted for use with naphtha) identical to those installed in Crematoria II and III at Birkenau;
- Dachau: 1 double-muffle coke-fired Topf oven, originally a mobile oven fired with naphtha; 4 coke-fired Kori ovens;
- Gusen: 1 double-muffle coke-fired Topf oven, originally a mobile oven fired with naphtha;

- Mauthausen: 1 double-muffle coke-fired oven identical to the 3 double-muffle ovens installed at crematorium 1 of the Auschwitz main camp: 1 coke-fired Kori oven;
- Groß-Rosen: 1 mobile naphtha-fired Kori oven;
- Lublin-Majdanek: 5 coke-fired Kori ovens; 1 mobile naphtha-fired Kori oven;
- Stutthof: 2 coke-fired Kori ovens; 1 mobile naphtha-fired Kori oven;
- Terezín: 4 stationary naphtha-fired Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens.

In the second volume of the described work I have amply illustrated the description of these devices with 360 photographs divided into 11 sections, each one corresponding to a specific device. This collection contains illustrations of devices heretofore unknown (the ovens of the Terezín crematorium) or unfamiliar even to specialists, such as the photographs of the ovens at Gusen, Groß-Rosen, Stutthof and Lublin-Majdanek. However, even the photographs of the well-known devices constitute a not irrelevant contribution inasmuch as they depict, for the first time, the essential components of these units, which are indispensable for an understanding of their structure and their way of operation.

The second volume furthermore contains some 300 document reproductions, many of which heretofore unpublished or unknown even to specialists. The first ca. 100 documents concern civilian crematorium ovens. The next ca. 40 documents refer to the civilian activities of the Topf Co., while the rest is a selection of the most important documents regarding the Topf crematorium ovens at Mauthausen, Gusen, Buchenwald and Auschwitz-Birkenau (blueprints, drawings, proposals, cost estimates, shipping documents, invoices, operating instructions, diagrams etc.), regarding the Kori ovens in the camps mentioned (especially original drawings and very accurate drawings prepared by the Soviet experts), regarding technical and administrative questions, and on the bureaucratic formalities for cremations in the concentration camps.

8.3. The Modern Cremation

8.3.1. Crematorium Furnace Technology up to the End of the First World War

Corpse cremation was practiced in Europe as early as a thousand years before Homer (Schuchhardt, p. 502) and continued to be practiced up to the year A.D. 785, when it was prohibited under pain of death by the Paderborn Decree of Charlemagne (*Capitulare Paderbrunnense*;

Pauly, p. 8). Over the following centuries the cremation of corpses fell completely into disuse as a funerary habit throughout Christian Europe. The idea of a cremation of corpses resurfaced during the French Revolution (Reber, pp. 26-29) but did not take hold before the second half of the 19th century. The birth of the movement for the cremation of corpses can be traced back to 1849, when the philologist Jakob Grimm gave a memorable speech on this subject at the Berlin Academy of Sciences.[351] The idea was immediately picked up and spread by untiring pioneers such as army surgeon J.P. Trusen, professor Moleschott, professor Richter, professor Reclam, and professor Küchenmeister.

The first cremation in a crematorium oven in modern Europe took place at Dresden on October 9, 1874, in an experimental oven built by Siemens; it was followed by a few others, before such experimental incinerations were stopped by the government of Saxony (Pauly, p. 18).

Italy soon placed herself in the vanguard of the modern cremation movement from both the legal and the technical point of view. The principle of corpse cremation was recognized in that country by the sanitary regulations of September 6, 1874 (Pini, p. 16). This period saw a massive amount of work being done in this field, theoretical as well as experimental, and various types of ovens were built. Modern cremation had to fulfill numerous ethical, esthetic and economical requirements. The general congress on cremations which was held at Dresden on June 7, 1876, specified their principles (Pauly, pp. 14f.).

The first European crematorium was built in Milan in 1875. It was equipped with a *Polli-Clericetti* oven inaugurated on January 22, 1876, with the cremation of the corpse of Alberto Keller (Pini, p. 30) who had been a promoter of cremation throughout his life. The first crematorium in Germany went into service at Gotha on December 10, 1878. The first types of cremation equipment used in Italy employed muffles. The corpse had to be placed into a metal cylinder heated on the outside by coke (*Du Jardin* design, 1867) or town-gas (*Polli* apparatus).[352]

Brunetti's device (1873) consisted of four little walls of ordinary brick, making up the hearth, upon which was placed a thin sheet of steel which covered only a small part of the hearth; above, there was a large hood linked to the chimney. The corpse was tied to the steel plate with

[351] The speech, entitled "Ueber das Verbrennen der Leichen" (On the cremation of corpses), was published the same year.

[352] Pini, pp. 130f. A detailed description is given by Wegmann-Ercolani, pp. 30-33.

wire and was exposed to the flames of the hearth located underneath. Cremation took about 6 hours.[353]

The *Polli-Clericetti* oven consisted of a cremation chamber with a horizontal grid on which the corpse was placed. It had 217 nozzles for air and gas, the jet-like flames of which impinged directly on the corpse and heated the chamber to a temperature of 1,100°C. This oven was set up in the Milan crematorium and was used for the cremation of Alberto Keller and for two more cremations. After that, on account of its excessively high costs, it was dismantled and replaced by a *Betti-Terruzzi* furnace in 1877. This device was a muffle oven consisting of a cast-iron cylinder located in the center of a large coke-fired furnace. When the cylinder started to glow, the corpse was introduced along a kind of steel guide-rail. Cremation was fairly complete, but the process took at least 5 hours, and the costs were high. After nine cremations, this type, too, was demolished.

The *Muller-Fichet* oven, shown at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878, consisted of a muffle made of refractory brick into which the coffin was placed. It was lined below and on the sides with refractory bricks which acted as heat accumulators. The muffle was made white-hot by means of the combustion products coming from a large gasifier with a stepped grid, and then the coffin was introduced.

The *Kopp* oven was based on the same principle as the *Betti-Terruzzi* type, but had a muffle made of refractory brick. It was set up in the Washington, D.C., crematorium; 6 hours were needed for a complete cremation.

The *Gorini* furnace was based on the principle of direct combustion with live flames. The prototype of this furnace was inaugurated in the Riolo crematorium on September 6, 1877. The duration of one cremation was generally between one and a half and two hours, with a wood consumption of 100-150 kg.

The *Venini* device was the first Italian crematorium oven using a gasifier. The cremation was brought about by the flames coming from a mobile gasifier and reaching the cremation chamber after having passed through a connecting duct; they struck the corpse directly. The introduction temperature was 800°C, and the duration of a cremation was normally one hour and a quarter.

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[353] Pini, p. 132. The following derives from this work, unless otherwise stated (pp. 128-171). Cf. also: Cristoforis, pp. 56-135; de Pietra Santa/Nansouty; Maccone, pp. 102-124; Schumacher, pp. 18-32.

The *Guzzi* furnace brought together the principles of direct cremation by means of live flames and of indirect cremation by means of clean hot air, of which we shall speak later. In this device, the cremation chamber was heated either by the combustion products coming from the hearth or by hot air heated in the regenerator.[354]

The *Spasciani-Mesmer* furnace, used at Livorno and Venice, was a device with a gasifier having a horizontal grid and a feeding chute for the fuel. It took 8-10 hours to heat the oven and some 2,000 kg of coke were needed for this phase; one cremation then consumed 200-300 kg of coke.

The *Toisoul-Fradet* oven was a device using a gasifier and having three levels: the gasifier was in the basement, the recuperator[355] at ground level and the cremation chamber on the floor above. Cremation took about one hour and coke consumption was 100 kg.

The ovens considered so far operated on the basis of the principle of total direct combustion, i.e. the corpse was struck directly by the flames generated on a hearth (as in the Gorini oven) or by the products of a gasifier (as in the Venini oven). The system invented by Friedrich Siemens introduced the process of totally indirect combustion by means of clean hot air, which dominated in Germany unchallenged until 1924. This new process, as we have seen, rested on the principle that the cremation was effected by clean air heated to 1,000°C in a regenerator or recuperator. The experimental prototype was used only for the destruction of animal carcasses (Küchenmeister, pp. 70f.). The *Siemens* oven was installed in 1878, with some modifications, only at the Gotha crematorium. A cremation in that oven generally took two and a quarter hours. 1,500 kg of lignite were needed for a first cremation, and 250-300 kg for each subsequent one.[356]

The *Klingenstierna* oven was an essential improvement over the Siemens model. It had a main hearth and a secondary hearth, which served mainly as an after-burner for the fumes. The combustion air was heated in a recuperator made of metal tubes. The corpse was introduced

[354] A heat regenerator transfers heat from hot exhaust gas to incoming cold air by filling a dedicated space alternately with either; hence it operates discontinuously and inefficiently.

[355] A heat recuperator continuously transfers heat from hot exhaust gas to incoming cold air, both flowing in separated but intertwined spaces.

[356] Heepke 1905b, p. 20. This work contains a very detailed description of the Siemens, Klingenstierna, and Schneider ovens with highly detailed drawings (pp. 41-58). On the subject of these ovens cf. also Beutinger.

into the cremation chamber by means of a cart which stayed in the chamber throughout the duration of the process.

In Germany this Swedish design was perfected by the engineer E. Dorovius and built by the *Gebrüder Beck* Co. of Offenbach. The first models, installed at Heidelberg in 1891 and at Jena in 1898, still had the trolley for the introduction of the coffin, but for the oven set up at Offenbach in 1899 this detail was eliminated. The cremation chamber was given a grid made of refractory clay, below which two V-shaped inclined planes were arranged for the ashes to move into the ash receptacle. The Mainz version of 1903 had a single inclined plane beneath the grid, as did all the later ovens, but was still equipped with a recuperator having metal tubes (Heepke 1905b, pp. 45-55). Subsequently, this type of recuperator was replaced by one of refractory brickwork, and the oven took on the typical shape of German crematorium ovens with coke-fed gasifiers.

The prototype of the *Schneider* oven was built for the Hamburg crematorium in 1892. Its structure was very similar to that of the Klingenstierna-Beck model. The most significant innovations concerned the hearth which had a horizontal grid and a primary combustion[357] air vent below it. The gasifier was placed vertically above the grid and had a coke-feeding chute in the upper part of the furnace. Preheating the oven took about three and a half hours. Some 45-90 minutes were needed for one cremation, with a coke consumption of 250-300 kg for a single cremation and 50-100 kg for any succeeding ones.

The *Ruppmann* oven already had the design typical of a modern crematorium furnace with a coke-fed gasifier (H. Keller 1928). From the experimental data collected at the Stuttgart crematorium and covering 48 cremations carried out between July 20 and September 15, 1909, we have an average duration of 1 hr 33 min.; the minimum time was 1 hr 10 min., the maximum 2 hrs 30 min. (Nagel, p. 36.).

The Swedish *Knös* oven brought along more improvements on the Klingenstierna-Beck oven. Coke consumption was about 300 kg for the preheating phase and the first cremation, and 50-90 kg for any subsequent ones. The rights to this furnace for Germany belonged to the Gebrüder Beck Co. of Offenbach.

[357] In the technical terminology, the primary air was the combustion air fed to the hearth, and the secondary air was the air for the combustion of the corpse.

8.3.2. Technical Developments of German Crematorium Ovens in the 1930s

After the end of the First World War, the reduction in coal production due to the loss of major coal producing territories and the supply of coal to the victorious states imposed by the treaty of Versailles made it imperative for Germany to use its remaining coal resources with great prudence. For that reason, in the years following the war, German industry strove to optimize, in terms of heat technology, all of its installations consuming coal or coal derivatives in an effort to obtain the greatest possible efficiency. The demands for a rational utilization of heat concerned also the field of crematorium ovens and even influenced the respective legislation. The original law on cremations of September 14, 1911, had permitted only a completely indirect cremation with the ensuing enormous loss of heat. It was amended on October 24, 1924, and the semi-direct process was authorized (Kori 1924, pp. 115-120). The manufacturers of (theoretically) totally indirect crematorium ovens felt threatened by the new cremation system which would lead – as it actually did – to great technological changes.[358] A controversy thus ensued. The general question of the economy of cremation furnaces could only be resolved by scientific cremation experiments. The most important experiments of that period were run in the Dessau crematorium in 1926 and 1927 by the engineer Richard Kessler who wrote a long scientific paper about them.[359] We will examine the results of these experiments one by one.

The design of the new models of the 1930s took due notice of the determining factors for a rational heat economy as identified by Kessler in the course of his experiments. This resulted in a substantial increase in efficiency. Among the most important technical innovations of that period one may cite the reduction of the horizontal cross-sectional area of the gasifier, the installation of a post-combustion grid, an improved air-feed, more efficient recuperators and, finally, appropriate control instruments (Hellwig 1930, pp. 56f.; A. Peters, pp. 56f.).

At the beginning of the 1930s, coke-fired crematorium ovens with a gasifier had reached the pinnacle of their technical perfection but also

[358] "Amtliches" 1925b, pp. 107f.; 1926, pp. 9-12; 1927, p. 51; Tilly 1926c, pp. 143ff.; Peters/Tilly, pp. 176ff.

[359] Kessler 1927. Abbrev. version: Kessler 1930. It is also worth mentioning the experiments which engineer H. Keller performed in 1927 in the crematorium of Biel, Switzerland with an oven with coke-fired gas generator: H. Keller 1928, also H. Keller 1929.

started on their inexorable decline: they began to be replaced by the new generation of ovens, heated more efficiently by gas or electricity. From this point on, the existing coke-fired ovens were either torn down[360] or revamped to accommodate gas heating (Repky, pp. 506-509). The new heating systems necessitated additional studies on the structure of the ovens as well as on the phenomenon of cremation *per se*, and these studies were presented in significant technical publications.[361]

In the area of gas heating, the most notable innovation was the new design of the *Volckmann-Ludwig* furnace, patented on October 30, 1928. An exclusive license for this patent was granted to the firm H.R. Heinicke of Chemnitz.[362] The first electrically heated oven went into operation at Biel (Switzerland) on August 31, 1933. It was built by the firm Brown, Boveri & Co. of Baden, Switzerland, under the supervision of the engineer Hans Keller.[363]

8.3.3. Legislation and Statistical Data Concerning Cremation in Germany

Although the first German crematorium was built as early as 1878 (in Gotha), cremation in Germany was not legally recognized for quite some time. In Prussia it became a legal option only with the law on cremation of September 14, 1911. In the other parts of the *Reich* it was accepted between 1899 and 1925, albeit with rather divergent regulations. Legislation was unified only in the 1930s: the first "*Gesetz über die Feuerbestattung*" (Law on Cremation) as such was promulgated on May 15th, 1934. It contained 11 articles that concerned in particular the medical and legal aspects of cremation as well as the supervisory role of the police in the matter. Shortly thereafter specific ordinances concerning the crematorium ovens and the cremation process were issued: "*Be-*

[360] For example, the old coke ovens at the Hamburg crematorium were replaced by an experimental Volckmann-Ludwig gas oven already in 1928 (Manskopf), and the old coke oven of the crematorium at Dortmund was dismantled in 1937/38 and replaced with two new ovens of the Volckmann-Ludwig system: Kämper 1941, pp. 171-176.

[361] Of the most important technical articles, we would cite: Hellwig 1930, in abbreviated form Hellwig 1932, pp. 8-14; Schläpfer 1937, 1938; Kessler 1931, pp. 83-89; Kessler 1935, pp. 21-26; Quehl 1936, pp. 559ff.

[362] Regarding the Volckmann-Ludwig oven cf. Volckmann 1931a, 1931b, 1934; Wolfer 1932.

[363] H. Keller 1934; H. Keller 1935. This experimental oven was gradually perfected by the firm of BBC Brown Boveri, which did not have a large market in Germany; cf. G. Keller 1942.

triebsordnung für Feuerbestattungsanlagen" (Service regulation for cremation devices) on November 5th, 1935, and "*Verordnung zur Durchführung des Feuerbestattungsgesetzes*" (Decree concerning the application of the law on cremation) on August 10, 1938.[364]

Between 1878 and 1939 a total of 122 crematoria were built in Germany, as shown by the following table:[365]

Table 2: History of Crematory Construction in Germany

Year	#	Total	Year	#	Total	Year	#	Total
1878	1	1	1910	4	23	1925	4	69
1891	1	2	1911	6	29	1926	7	76
1892	1	3	1912	5	34	1927	5	81
1898	1	4	1913	6	40	1928	7	88
1899	1	5	1914	3	43	1929	5	93
1901	1	6	1915	5	48	1930	11	104
1902	1	7	1916	1	49	1931	3	107
1903	1	8	1917	2	51	1932	2	109
1904	1	9	1918	2	53	1934	3	112
1905	1	10	1920	1	54	1935	2	114
1906	2	12	1921	1	55	1936	1	115
1907	3	15	1922	2	57	1937	3	118
1908	1	16	1923	4	61	1938	3	121
1909	3	19	1924	4	65	1939	1	122

In those same years a total of 1,202,813 cremations were carried out in Germany with the following distribution over time:

Table 3: Number of Cremations in Germany

Period	Number of cremations	Cremations/year (ave.)
1878	1	1
1879	17	17
1880-1889	701	70
1890-1899	2,903	290
1900-1909	20,271	2,027
1910-1919	111,671	11,167
1920-1929	355,836	35,583
1930-1939	711,413	71,141
Total	1,202,813	

[364] Cf. in this respect Lohmann 1912; Marcuse 1930, pp. 121-133; "Betriebsordnung für Feuerbestattungsanlagen" of Nov. 5, 1935, as well as the "Verordnung zur Durchführung des Feuerbestattungsgesetzes" of August 10, 1938, reprinted in Schumacher 1939, pp. 116-121; Richtlinien 1932. These guidelines were also published in Zentralblatt für Feuerbestattung, vol. 5, no. 6, 1933, pp. 87-92; Richtlinien 1937.

[365] Verbandsvorstand, 82-87; Phoenix 1939, p. 7; Phoenix 1940, pp. 20, 29; Helbig 1940, pp. 28-31.

In the Sudeten territory there were 4 crematoria: in Reichenberg (1918), Aussig (1933), Brüx (1924), and Karlsbad (1933); in Austria, there were 5 crematoria: in Vienna (1923), Steyr (1927), Linz (1929), Salzburg (1931), and Graz (1923). Thus, there were altogether 131 crematoria in *Großdeutschland* in 1939. In 1940 there were 108,630 cremations, in 1941: 107,103 and in 1942: 114,184 (Weinisch, p. 17).

At the end of 1938 Germany counted 130 crematoria, England 47, Italy 37 (with 8 out of service), in Sweden and Switzerland there were 22 each, in Denmark 16, in Norway 10, in Czechoslovakia 9, in France 6, in Russia 2, and in Belgium, Finland, Holland, Portugal, and Rumania one each. Behind Germany, the countries with the greatest number of cremations were England (16,312 cremations), Switzerland (7,071), the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (5,535), Sweden (4,434), Denmark (4,031), Norway (2,262) and France (1,340) (Statistisches, p. 41).

Both by number of crematoria and cremations, the list was topped by Japan, which could boast of 36,723 cremation installations as early as 1912. In 1929 this country alone cremated 622,492 corpses (Pallester, p. 28; Maccone, p. 92).

8.3.4. The Firm J.A. Topf & Söhne of Erfurt

In the field of crematorium ovens, Topf began its activity in the year of the outbreak of the First World War. The first Topf oven with a coke-fired gasifier was erected at the Freiburg crematorium and was started up on April 15, 1914 (Phoenix 1915 & 1916). Over the 1920s Topf became the largest company, commercially speaking, in this sector in Germany: out of the 24 ovens installed in the country between 1922 and 1927, a total of 18 came from Topf (Verbandsvorstand, p. 84).

At the beginning of the 1930s, thanks to its technological advance, Topf's lead had been consolidated. The firm could claim to have built the first gas-fired crematorium oven on German soil at Dresden in 1927, which had performed faultlessly, as well as the first electrically heated oven in Germany which went into operation at Erfurt in 1933.[366] Topf's activity in research and development is furthermore borne out by the numerous patents it obtained, especially in the 1930s. Some of them in-

[366] Regarding the electric Topf oven see K. Weiss 1934, pp. 453-457; "Elektrisch betriebener…," 1935, pp. 88ff.; K. Weiss 1937, pp. 159-162; Schumacher, pp. 28ff.; Jakobskötter, pp. 579-587.

troduced highly significant innovations into the field of cremation, such as the post-combustion grid and the revolving grid.

Topf responded to the competition of the gas-fired Volckmann-Ludwig oven with the "High-efficiency oven with revolving ash-grid, D.R.P." (German patent), model 1934. In this device the operating system was still indirect, with air being heated in metal tubes above the muffle. The post-combustion chamber was equipped with a revolving grate, but overall the oven was of a more massive and decidedly more voluminous appearance than the Volckmann-Ludwig model. It still preserved the two-tier design of the coke oven, with a total height of some 5 meters. On the lower level were located the controls of the revolving grate as well as the ash extraction device. The part located in the furnace hall, too, with its size of 3.70 by 2.60 meters, was much larger than the Volckmann-Ludwig oven (3.10 by 1.70 meters).[367]

The first crematorium oven with a coke-fired gasifier built by Topf – while retaining more or less the design principles of earlier ovens – brought along several innovations derived from previous ideas, but it did so in a novel manner. In particular, the Topf oven presented a system of heating the muffle from the outside, controlled by a fire-clay trap located in front of the gasifier outlet; by preventing the gases from entering the muffle, it allowed for a completely indirect cremation (Reichenwallner, pp. 28f.).

8.3.5. Crematory Ovens with Coke-Fed Gasifier in the 1930s

This type of oven consisted of a gasifier (*Generator*), the cremation chamber or muffle (*Verbrennungsraum*; *Muffel*) with the post-combustion chamber (*Nachglühraum*) and the recuperator (*Rekuperator*) below. The gasifier was a vertical chamber lined with refractory material on the inside. The hearth was situated in the lower portion; it consisted of a grid and a door for the primary combustion air and for the removal of ash and slag. In its upper part it narrowed on one side into a duct (gasifier neck) through which the combustion products of the coke entered the muffle, and on the other side into a vertical or slanted shaft which opened up on the outside of the oven and constituted the coke feeding chute.

The specific function of the gasifier was to gasify the coke, i.e. to bring about its transformation into combustible gases (generator gas or

[367] Etzbach, pp. 3ff. Regarding the gas-fired Topf oven cf. also Schumacher, pp. 25ff.

producer gas, a gas mixture mainly consisting of nitrogen and carbon monoxide plus minor amounts of carbon dioxide). The muffle was a horizontal combustion chamber with a vaulted ceiling, made of fire-brick, closed in front by a sliding, fire-clay closure which moved on a suitably slanted frame. In front of the closure was a metal door. In its rear part the muffle was connected with the gasifier via the gasifier neck. The floor consisted of a fire-clay grid, usually with bars lengthwise and across, on which the coffin was placed. Below this grid was an inclined plane for the ash, on which the parts of the corpse which fell through the grid burned out completely. The plane ended at the front in a receptacle for the ashes which were raked into it by means of a suitable tool.

In the 1930s a post-combustion grid was arranged at the end of the inclined plane for the ash. Below the fire-clay grid, the walls of the muffle were inclined toward the inside, so as to form a small chamber which received the remains of the corpse. Openings in the walls of this chamber led to the discharge channels through which the spent gases flowed into the recuperator.

The recuperator was a heat exchanger made of refractory material. It consisted of adjoining channels arranged in the lower part of the oven. The channels had upper openings into the muffle and lower openings to the outside. The spent gases coming from the muffle flowed downwards, countercurrently to the combustion air which flowed upwards from the outside in neighboring channels. In this process the spent gasses transferred their heat to the walls; the heat spread by conduction through all parts of the recuperator, which heated up to a temperature varying between 400 and 600°C or higher.

The oven was usually arranged on two levels: the hearth and the recuperator stood in the basement, the cremation chamber on the ground floor. In the direct process the operation of the device was as follows: before starting up the gasifier, the smoke trap was opened and a small fire of wood and some coke was lit on the gasifier hearth. When the coke started to glow, more fuel was added through the feeding chute. The resulting gases were led from the gasifier to the muffle via the neck of the gasifier, then passed through the post-combustion chamber and the recuperator and left the oven through the flue duct. When the oven had reached its operating temperature, the muffle door was opened and the coffin was introduced into the muffle, resting on the refractory grid. The high temperature in the muffle caused the coffin to ignite as soon as

it entered the chamber; it burned away rapidly and left the corpse exposed to the combustion products coming from the gasifier, which moved through the muffle at a high temperature. At this point evaporation of the corpse's water set in, followed by the incineration as such. The combustion residues fell through the grid openings onto the inclined plane of the post-combustion chamber below where they burned out completely.

When flame generation had ended, the glowing embers were raked forward on the inclined plane by way of the ash-chamber door into a suitable container, where they burned out altogether. Control of the oven was accomplished by means of the control devices (air inlet, hearth door, and vane of the flue).[368]

8.3.6. Chimney Draft and Hearth Loading

In a crematorium oven with a coke-fed gasifier, the chimney not only removed the spent gases, it also served to feed the necessary air to the gasifier hearth. The highest resistance the combustion air encountered was, in fact, the resistance of the hearth grid and the layer of coke above it. The chimney draft could be natural or forced. The natural draft is due to the difference of the densities – and hence to the temperature difference – of the gases at the bottom of the chimney and the outside air. It also depends on the height of the chimney and its cross-sectional area. Draft was measured in terms of mm of water column.[369]

Forced draft or suction draft was obtained by means of a blower at the base of the chimney, which drew in a portion of the spent gasses and ejected them into the chimney at a high velocity. In crematorium ovens with a coke-fired gasifier, the minimum required draft was 10 mm; the maximum was 30 mm of water column.

The draft had a direct effect on the loading of the hearth grid, i.e. on the amount of coke which burned on the grid in a unit of time, usually expressed as kilograms of coke per square meter. With a natural draft and a normal chimney, this loading was about 120 kg per hour and square meter. The corresponding draft was about 10 mm of water column. With a forced draft, the amount of air passing through the hearth per unit of time was increased, and coke combustion increased likewise,

[368] Weigt, p. 46; H. Keller 1927, Kessler 1927, pp. 148-151.
[369] In German "Wassersäule," abbreviated WS. 10 mm of water column is equivalent to 1 mbar = 0.0145 psi.

leading to a higher loading of the grid. Some experimental data are shown in the table below:

Draft [water col. (mbar)]	10 mm (1)	20 mm (2)	30 mm (3)
Grid loading [per m²][370]	120 kg/h	150 kg/h	180 kg/h

8.3.7. Coke Consumption of a Crematory Oven with Gasifier

Fuel consumption in a crematorium oven depended primarily on the design of the oven, on the cremation process, on the frequency of cremations, on the composition of the corpses, and on the operation of the oven. The design of the oven was important, because a greater mass of refractory material absorbed more heat during the first cremation runs. The cremation system, likewise, had an influence on coke consumption in the sense that the muffle could be heated indirectly, semi-directly or directly; indirect heating was the most wasteful.

The frequency of incinerations had an overriding effect on the fuel consumption. If, in fact, only one cremation was carried out on a given day, the fuel needed to bring the oven up to its operating temperature would all be debited to it. If, on the other hand, several incinerations were carried out in succession, the initial fuel needed was averaged out over all of them, and the individual consumption decreased accordingly; beyond a certain number of cremations it tended to stabilize.

The constitution of the corpse, too, had an effect on the cremation and hence on the fuel consumption, because it could contribute more or less heat to the process, depending on its composition in terms of proteins and fat. Experiments carried out in German crematoria in the 1930s showed that 65% of the corpses burned normally, 25% poorly, and 10% with difficulty (Jakobskötter, p. 587).

The operation of the oven, finally, had an extremely strong effect on the heat economy: a wrong way of operation or an inattentive one could actually double the fuel consumption. The coke consumption for an individual cremation was not known, as the crematoria only kept track of the average values which covered also the initial heating of the oven and thus varied depending on the number of consecutive cremations. A theoretical solution of the problem was thus required.

The heat balance around a crematorium oven with a coke-fired gasifier is, however, very difficult to establish theoretically, because many

[370] Heepke 1905b, pp. 71-75; Labrasseur 1922, pp. 56-57 (review); Cantagalli 1940, p. 86; Salvi 1972, pp. 617-822; Colombo, pp. 399f.

variable factors exist in practice, which cannot be handled theoretically in advance and which require changes in the operation of the oven from time to time.

In the 1920s the problem was discussed among engineering specialists like Fichtl and Tilly and the engineer Peters,[371] but the major contribution to its solution came from the engineer Wilhelm Heepke in a fundamental article published in 1933.[372] The result of his calculations for one incineration in an oven at its thermal equilibrium (i.e. when the heat absorbed by the muffle had stabilized) was 30 kg of coke (plus the heat contribution of a 40 kg coffin). A revision of the calculation, however (Heepke's method contained some errors of attribution), brought the consumption down to 20.5 kg of coke per corpse. This result was in good agreement with experimental data. Kessler's cremation experiment of January 5, 1927 (8 consecutive cremations in a coke-fired oven, Kessler 1927, pp. 148-159) showed the following results:

	Total	Firing up	8 Cremations	Total÷8	Cremations÷8
Coke [kg]	436	200	236	54.5	29.5

The consumption for the 8 cremations without firing up a cold oven still contained the heat absorbed by the oven brickwork up to the point of thermal equilibrium, an effect of some 22%, and the effective consumption then became 23 kg of coke (plus the heat supplied by the coffin).

8.3.8. Duration of the Cremation Process in Ovens with Coke-Fed Gasifiers

Cremation is a physico-chemical process which for its completion requires a duration that may be called natural in the sense that it is not possible to shorten it at will, whatever the oven system used. This duration depends essentially upon the chemical composition of the human body whose protein structure strongly resists combustion, as has been confirmed by the specific scientific experiments run in England in the 1970s, which we will discuss later. This is due to the body's relatively high nitrogen content, to its elevated autoignition temperature,[373] and to

[371] Fichtl 1924, pp. 394-397; Tilly 1926a, pp. 190f.; Tilly 1926b, pp. 134ff.; Tilly 1927, pp. 19-25; Peters/Tilly, pp. 176ff.

[372] Heepke 1933, no. 8, pp. 109ff., and no. 9, pp. 123-128. This is a consolidated version of the study on thermal equilibrium in Heepke 1905b, pp. 60-63.

[373] The autoignition temperature of a substance is the lowest temperature at which it will spontaneously ignite in a normal atmosphere without an external source of ignition.

the chemical changes which the proteins undergo at higher temperatures. All of these effects contribute to a corpse's strong resistance to combustion.[374]

In other words, a cremation which takes place under optimum conditions cannot proceed more quickly than the natural time needed for the progression of the combustion. In the same way, a cremation takes longer the more it moves away from its optimum conditions, be it because of a negligent operation of the oven, or be it because of inadequacies in the design of the unit. In present-day gas-fired ovens this lower limit is about one hour.

In the 1970s scientific experiments were done in England with the aim of identifying the most important factors having an influence on the cremation process. The results were read at the annual convention of the Cremation Society of Great Britain in July 1975. The experiments were done along two lines: a preliminary investigation in the Breakspear crematorium at Ruislip and a full investigation in the Chanderlands crematorium at Hull. The researchers conducting the experiments initially selected the following factors: fuel, type of oven, dimensions of the coffin (and of the corpse), hygienic treatment (embalming) of the corpse, cause of death, oven operator and use of different ovens. The effects of technical factors were evened out by adopting the same gas-fired oven (Dowson & Mason Twin Reflux Cremator) and the same oven operator.

Taking into account these factors, 200 to 300 cremations were observed, and the data gathered were handed to the statistician of the group for a preliminary report. This analysis showed that, out of the factors considered initially, only four were significant: the age and sex of the deceased, the cause of death, and the temperature of the oven. On the basis of these findings, the research was continued at the Hull crematorium. Here it was found that the really decisive factors were the maximum temperature of the oven and the sex of the deceased. The results obtained were incorporated into a graph by the statistician, which one of the researchers, Dr. E. W. Jones, comments on as follows (Jones/ Williamson, p. 81):

> *"From his graph he* [the statistician] *was able to tell us (we thought this rather interesting) that there is a maximum point, or ra-*

[374] Fleck, pp. 163f.; Kraupner/Puls; Löffler, pp. 3f; BR Deutschland. Deutsches Patentamt. Patentschrift Nr. 861731. Klasse 24d. Gruppe 1. Issued on Jan. 5, 1953, filed by Martin Klettner, Recklinghausen.

ther a minimum point of incineration time, below which it is impossible to go, and our statistician defined this as a thermal barrier that, because of the make[up], *the nature of human tissues, you cannot incinerate them at a rate which is below round about 63 minutes."*

The graph shows that the duration which comes closest to the thermal barrier, set at 60 minutes, corresponds to a temperature of 800°C. When the temperature is raised to 1,000°C, the duration of the cremation counterintuitively rises to 67 minutes, and then drops again to 65 minutes at 1,100°C. At higher temperatures, which were not investigated, the duration should eventually fall and should drop below the thermal barrier at super-high temperatures. If one wanted to reduce the cremation time to 20 or 15 minutes – according to Dr. Jones – it would be necessary to build an oven capable of running at 2,000°C (*ibid*.). But for technical reasons the cremation process must take place between well-defined thermal limits, because at temperatures beyond some 1,100 to 1,200°C sintering takes place, i.e. the bones and the refractory material both soften and fuse together, whereas below 700 to 600°C the corpse merely carbonizes. Experiments have shown that the optimum temperature for the introduction of the coffin is around 850 to 900°C (Kessler 1930, pp. 136f.).

Dr. Jones added the following observation (Jones/Williamson, p. 81):

"Our statistician colleague did some work, he looked into the records of crematoria in Germany during the last war, and it would appear that the authorities there were presented with a similar problem – that they came up against a thermal barrier. They could not design a furnace that reduced the mean incineration time to a very practical effective level. So we started to look at why there is this thermal barrier with human tissues."

The conclusion of the researchers is that the proteins of the human body undergo a chemical change when heated to 800 to 900°C, dissociating and recombining to form "something one can only describe as a hard shell" which resists the process of cremation (*ibid*.).

It is obvious that the duration of the incineration process in the crematorium ovens with coke-fed gasifiers of the 1930s was even longer. The data found in the literature are not entirely reliable. As an objective and irrefutable benchmark I have therefore adopted the data which derive from a series of diagrams for cremations, established by meas-

urement instruments installed in the ovens. The diagrams concerning Kessler's experiments are of prime importance in this respect. The optimum design of the oven (Gedrüder Beck, Offenbach), the procedures used by Kessler to reduce false air,[375] the presence of instruments permitting the operator to follow the cremation process through all its phases, the operation of the oven under the supervision of a specialist, all converge to allow us to say that these cremations were conducted under optimum conditions.

The average duration of a cremation was 1 hour 26 minutes. In the run of January 12, 1927, in which eight corpses were incinerated using lignite briquettes as fuel, the average duration was 1 hour 22 minutes (Kessler 1927, pp. 150f., 154-157).

8.4. The Topf Crematorium Ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau

8.4.1. The Topf Crematorium Ovens for the Concentration Camps

The German concentration camps were set up at a time when cremation could look back on many decades of growth, as described in chapter 8.3.3. At the time the concentration camps received their first occupants, the respective SS authorities in the Third Reich did not expect the high level of mortality which would be reached in later years. Corpses of detainees were normally sent to civilian crematoria, and only when, against their expectations, mortality began to get out of control did the SS authorities decide to set up crematoria within the camps.

Along these lines, KL Buchenwald initially made use of the crematorium at Weimar. Between September 5, 1938, and May 3, 1940, the deceased detainees of KL Mauthausen were sent to the municipal crematorium at Steyr. KL Wewelsburg relied on the Bielefeld crematorium at least until December 1941, whereas the Groß-Rosen camp used the Liegnitz crematorium between August 21, 1940, and January 28, 1943. Initially even KL Auschwitz dealt with a civilian crematorium, the municipal institution at Gleiwitz (Gliwice in Polish).[376]

When the first crematoria began to operate within the concentration camps, they were subject to severe regulations perfectly analogous to

[375] This is the designation for the air which seeped into the oven through invisible cracks in the refractory brickwork and around the doors and closures.

[376] Letter from Bauleitung if KL Buchenwald to SS-Gruppenführer Eicke dated June 18, 1938. NO-4353; ÖDMM, Archiv, 7, 4; SB, Einäscherungslisten; Czuj/Kempisty, pp. 106-119; Piper 1994, p. 158.

those applying to civilian crematoria. This results from the "Decree concerning the implementation of incinerations in the crematorium of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp" signed by Himmler on February 28, 1940.[377] According to this decree, the urns containing ashes of incinerated detainees could be buried in the cemetery of the detainee's home town. Later, due to the tragic deterioration of the sanitary conditions in the camps, the crematoria became an indispensable hygienic and sanitary instrument, and the cremations were carried out with less respect of the legal dispositions.

From the end of the 1930s onwards, the Topf Co. and other German firms, in particular Hans Kori and Didier-Werke AG in Berlin, began to plan crematoria for the concentration camps with a design simpler than what was the rule for civilian use.

Topf designed – and built in part – six oven models of the following types:

1) Crematorium oven with one coke-fired muffle, never built.[378]
2) Mobile crematorium oven with two muffles heated with naphtha (later modified into a stationary coke-fired oven). This model was installed at the Gusen camp (a subcamp of KL Mauthausen) and at KL Dachau.[379] The former was ordered from Topf by the *SS-Neubauleitung* of KL Mauthausen as a mobile naphtha-heated oven (*fahrbarer Ofen mit Ölbeheizung*) on March 21, 1940, but on October 9, 1940, it was decided to change the naphtha heating system to coke. The two gasifiers for coke were installed during the construction of the oven, which was started up at the end of January 1941.[380] The Dachau oven had been put into operation even earlier, as can be seen from a Topf letter addressed to *SS-Neubauleitung* of this camp,

[377] Erlass über die Durchführung von Einäscherungen im Krematorium des Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen. BAK, NS 3/425.

[378] Drawing by J.A. Topf & Söhne D 58173 of January 6, 1941 "Einmuffel-Einäscherungsofen" coke-fired, for SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen. Source: BAK, NS 4/Ma 54; Kosten-Anschlag of Topf dated January 6, 1941 for SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen concerning a coke-fired single or double-muffle crematorium oven. BAK, NS 4/Ma 54.

[379] Letter from Topf dated February 26, 1941 to SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen. BAK, NS 4 Ma/54; telegram from SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen to Topf dated December 19, 1940, *ibid.*; Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen dated December 23, 1940, *ibid.*; Topf, Bescheinigung über gegen besondere Berechnung geleistete Tagelohn-Arbeiten für Firma: SS-Neubauleitung d. Kz.L. Mauthausen, *ibid.*; Letter from SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen to Topf dated February 14, 1941, *ibid.*

[380] Letter from SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen to Topf dated February 14, 1941. BAK, NS 4 Ma/54.

dated July 25, 1940.[381] The SS authorities at KL Dachau opted for a modification of the heating system as well and had two coke gasifiers installed instead of the naphtha burners. Both of these modified ovens still existed in the former camps at the end of WWII.

3) Crematorium oven with two muffles, using coke, built at KL Buchenwald (1940-1941).[382]
4) Crematorium oven with two muffles, using coke, Auschwitz model. Three such ovens were built at Auschwitz between 1940 and 1942, one was built in 1945 at the Mauthausen crematorium.[383]
5) Crematorium oven with three muffles, using coke. Two ovens of this type (one with optional use of naphtha) were installed at the Buchenwald crematorium in 1942, two in the Groß-Rosen crematorium in 1942,[384] and ten in Crematoria II and III at Birkenau in 1942-1943.
6) Crematorium oven with eight muffles, using coke. Two ovens of this type were built in Crematoria IV and V at Birkenau in 1942-1943, half an oven (4 muffles) was sent to Mogilev (Byelorussia) in 1942.

In the chapter below we will examine the crematorium ovens installed at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

8.4.2. Coke-Fired Crematory Oven with Two Muffles

Three ovens of this type were set up in the old crematorium, also called Crematorium I, at Auschwitz. Work on the construction of the first oven began in early July 1940. It went into operation on August 15 with a test cremation of the first corpse.[385] The second oven was com-

[381] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen dated July 25, 1940. BAK, NS 4 Ma/54.

[382] Letter from Bauleitung of KL Buchenwald to SS-Gruppenführer Eicke dated June 18, 1938. NO-4353; Kosten-Anschlag by J.A. Topf & Söhne dated December 21, 1939 for SS-Neubauleitung of KL Buchenwald concerning a double-muffle crematorium oven heated by naphtha or coke. NO-4448; Baubeschreibung zum Neubau eines Not-Krematoriums im Häftlingslager K.L. Buchenwald. NO-4401; Drawing by J.A. Topf & Söhne D 56570 dated December 21, 1939 "Doppelmuffel-Einäscherungsofen mit Ölbrenner" for KL Buchenwald. NO-4444.

[383] Letters from the Topf firm to the SS Construction Office of the concentration camp Mauthausen, November 23, 1940 and October 16, 1941.BAK, NS 4 Ma/54. The letter of October 16, 1941 expressly mentions the delivery of a "Doppelmuffeleinäscherungsofen – Modell Auschwitz" (double-muffle cremation oven – Auschwitz model).

[384] No documents have been preserved for these ovens; however, in 1948, the Soviet counter-espionage service (Smersh) was in possession of a drawing of the Groß-Rosen crematorium done by Topf and showing 2 crematorium ovens with 3 muffles. Kurt Prüfer confirmed that these had been built in 1942. FSBRF, Fond N-19262, p. 183. Graf 2002, p. 412.

[385] Tätigkeitsbericht of Bauleiter Schlachter dated July 12, 1940, for the period of July 5-11.RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 97; Tätigkeitsbericht of Bauleiter Schlachter dated August 17,

pleted at the end of February 1941,[386] and the third oven was added in March 1942.[387] The crematorium remained in operation until July 1943,[388] after which the three ovens were knocked down. The two Topf ovens with two muffles which are now on view in the Auschwitz crematorium were sloppily rebuilt by the Poles in the years after the war using original parts dismantled by the SS. However, the Mauthausen oven, which has remained intact, and a wealth of documents such as shipment notes listing the various elements, allow us to give an accurate description of the design of the Topf double-muffle device, Auschwitz type, which can be summarized as follows:[389]

Dimensions

Height: 1,850 mm; Width: 2,500 mm
Length (w/o gasifiers): 2,780 mm; Length (with gasifiers): 3,380 mm
Surface area (w/o gasifiers): 25 m²; Surface area of gasifiers: 7 m²
Surface area, total (m²): 32 m²

The oven had two cremation chambers or muffles, each of which had the following dimensions:

Height: 700 mm; Width: 700 mm; Length: 2,000 mm
Surface area (without grid): 4.5 m²
Volume (including ash chamber): 1.4 m³

1940, for the period of August 9-15. RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 92; Letter from SS-Neubauleitung to HHB, Amt II, dated September16, 1940. RGVA, 502-1-327, p. 216.

386 Drawing by Topf D 57999, November 30, 1940: RGVA, 502-1-312, p.134; Tätigkeitsbericht of Bauleiter Schlachter dated March 1, 1941, for the period of February 23 – March 1: RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 67.

387 Baufristenplan of April 15, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 11; Baubericht über den Stand der Bauarbeiten of April 15, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 320; Bestandplan des Gebäude Nr.47a B.W.11. Krematorium. Drawing no. 1241 dated April 10, 1942. RGVA, 502-2-146, p. 21.

388 Letter from Bischoff to head of SS-Standortverwaltung, SS-Obersturmbannführer Möckel dated July 16, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-324, p. 1.

389 Kosten-Anschlag by J.A. Topf & Söhne dated November 13, 1940, for the second Topf coke-fired double-muffle crematorium oven for Crematorium I at Auschwitz. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 168-172; Kostenanschlag by J.A. Topf & Söhne dated October 31, 1941 for a coke-fired Topf double-muffle crematorium oven for SS-Bauleitung of KL Mauthausen. BAK, NS 4/Ma 54; Kostenanschlag by J.A. Topf & Söhne dated September 25, 1941 for the third coke-fired Topf double-muffle oven for Crematorium I at Auschwitz. RGVA, 502-2-23, pp.264-267; Versandanzeige by J.A. Topf & Söhne to SS-Neubauleitung of Auschwitz dated January 17, 1941, for parts of the second Topf coke-fired double-muffle crematorium oven of Crematorium I of Auschwitz. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp.201-203; Versandanzeige by J.A. Topf & Söhne to SS-Neubauleitung of Auschwitz dated October 21, 1941, for parts of the third coke-fired Topf double-muffle crematorium oven of Crematorium I at Auschwitz. RGVA, 502-1-312, pp.104-105; drawing by J.A. Topf & Söhne D 57253 "Koksbeheizter Einäscherungsofen u. Fundamentplan" dated June 10, 1940, for the first oven of Crematorium I of Auschwitz. BAK, NS 4/Ma 54.

Combustion air feeding system:

The sidewalls of the muffles had four rectangular openings connected to two air-feed channels (*Luftkanäle*) which ran lengthwise through the brickwork parallel to the muffle and had two air-feed holes (*Lufteintritte*) open to the outside, closed in front by two cast-iron doors moving vertically (*Luftkanalverschlüsse*) measuring 108 by 128 mm and situated on either side of the muffle door. These channels provided the muffle with the secondary combustion air.

At the top of the vault of each muffle, along the longitudinal axis, were the outlets of four pipes connected to the pipework (*Druckluftleitung*) coming from the blower (*Druckluftgebläse*). The function of this feature was to provide the muffle with the required amount of combustion air, especially when a coffin was used in the cremation.

Muffles

The two inner walls of the muffles had three rectangular openings 210 by 270 mm in size. These openings served to exchange heat between the two muffles. The thickness of the refractory walls was 260 mm. The muffles were closed in front by two cast-iron doors for the introduction of the corpse (*Einführ(ungs)türen*) measuring 600 by 600 mm. The inside of the doors was covered with refractory material. In the lower portion of the doors, on the central axis, was an air-hole which could be closed on the outside by means of a movable cast-iron cover of a standard kind, which constituted a round inspection hole (*Schauluke*) 45 mm in diameter. At the rear, over the neck of the gasifier, the muffles were closed by means of refractory brick.

Grid of the muffle

The muffles had a partly open floor (grid) of refractory clay (*Schamotterost*) consisting of five transverse bars of refractory material (*Schamotteroststeine*) on which the corpse was placed.

Post-combustion chamber

Beneath each grid was a V-shaped inclined ash plane (*Aschenschräge*) which ended in a narrower (340 mm) chamber in which the post-combustion (*Nachverbrennung*) of the corpse residues occurred which had fallen through the bars of the grid; it thus had the function of a post-combustion chamber.

The front portion of the post-combustion chamber constituted the ash chamber (*Ascheraum*). The glowing ash was removed by means of

suitable rakes (*Kratzer*) through cast-iron doors for the ash recovery (*Ascheentnahmetüren*) measuring 280 by 350 mm, located in the front of the oven below the muffle doors.

Discharge of the spent gases

In the front part of the oven, two rectangular discharge vents were set into the sidewalls of the post-combustion chamber through which the gases escaped into the two lateral underground flue ducts (*Rauchkanäle*). The flue ducts had a cross-section of 350 by 600 mm. Each of them could be closed by means of suitable vane (*Rauchkanalschieber*) made of refractory material which had the same size as the duct and moved vertically in a wrought-iron frame (*Rauchkanalschieberrahmen*) controlled by a steel cable (*Drahtseil*) passing over two rollers (*Seilrollen*). The rollers were welded to an anchor bar.

The two flue ducts came together before entering the chimney (*Schornstein*). They merged into a common duct which could be closed by means of a main vane (*Hauptkanalschieber*) which worked the same way as those of the individual ducts.

Two fresh-air vents in the sidewalls of the oven could be closed by two normal cast-iron gate-valves which could be raised. The vents were connected to two air-ducts which opened up on the outside of the post-combustion chambers as two small rectangular apertures and provided combustion air to those chambers.

Gasifiers

The two gasifiers were housed in a brick structure measuring 2,500 (width) by 600 (depth) by 1,400 (height) millimeters. On the inclined plane of this brick structure were located the two doors of the feeding shafts (*Generatorfülltüren*); the shafts themselves (*Generatorschächte*) opened into the gasifiers.

Gasifier hearths

The gasifiers (*Generatoren*) had a bottom constituted by a horizontal grid (*Planrost*) made of eight steel bars (*Vierkanteisen*) 40 by 40 by 630 mm and four sustaining bars (*Auflager-Eisen*) of the same cross-section, but 740 mm long. The grid measured 500×500 mm = 0.250 m² for a load of 30 kg/hr of coke. At their upper end the gasifiers narrowed toward the inside of the oven forming the neck of the gasifier (*Generatorhals*) which opened into the muffle below the bars of its grid. Up to

the top of the neck (*Feuerbrücke*), the gasifier had a volume of some 0.175 cubic meters.

Weight of the refractory material

The total weight of the refractory material was about 10,000 kg, distributed as follows: Two muffles with 3,000 kg each and two gasifiers with 2,000 kg each. The weight of the post-combustion chamber is included in the weight of the muffle.

Introduction device

The coffin loading device consisted of a cart for the coffin, running on suitable rails, and of a semi-cylindrical cart running above it. These parts still exist at Auschwitz. The operation of this device will be discussed in the next chapter as well as in chapter 10.2.3.

8.4.3. Coke-Fired Crematory Oven with Three Muffles

Five ovens of this type were set up in each of the Crematoria II and III at Birkenau. On October 22, 1941, *SS-Neubauleitung*, as it was then called, ordered from the Topf firm five Topf three-muffle ovens with forced-air blower for the new crematorium which the construction office intended to build in the Main Camp. These ovens were later installed in Crematorium II of Birkenau. The final bill for this order was dated January 27, 1943, and the cost per oven was RM 6,378.[390]

The five three-muffle cremation ovens for Crematorium III were first ordered by the ZBL on September 25, 1942, by telephone, and on September 30 by registered letter.[391] On October 28 Topf sent to ZBL diagram D 59394 for the construction of the ovens in Crematoria II and III. This diagram has been lost.[392] The final bill for the five three-muffle cremation ovens for Crematorium III of Birkenau is dated May 27, 1943. The cost per oven was RM 7,830.[393]

The ovens of Crematorium II were built between September 1942 and January 1943, those of Crematorium III between March and June

[390] Letter from Kurt Prüfer to Ludwig and Ernst Topf, December 6, 1941. APMO, BW 30/46, p. 6; bill no. 69, January 27, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 10-10a.
[391] Letter from Topf to Auschwitz Zentralbauleitung dated September 30, 1942. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 114 and BW30/27, p. 30.
[392] Letter from Topf to Auschwitz Zentralbauleitung, October 28, 1942. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 96.
[393] Invoice no. 728 of May 27, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 19-19a.

1943.[394] Both installations were destroyed by the SS in November 1944. The individual elements for the five triple-muffle ovens of Crematorium II are listed in the shipping papers of Topf dated April 16 and June 18, 1942. These documents, backed up by an inspection of the two triple-muffle ovens Topf built at Buchenwald to the same design, allow an accurate description of the device to be given, as set forth below:[395]

Dimensions

Height: 2,000 mm; Width: 3,460 mm
Depth (w/o gasifiers): 2,780 mm; Depth (with gasifiers): 3,400 mm
Oven surface area w/o gasifiers: 33 m²
Surface area of gasifiers: 10 m²
Total surface area: 43 m²

The oven was connected to three cremation chambers or muffles, each of which had the following dimensions:

Height: 800 mm; Width: 700 mm; Depth: 2,000 mm
Surface area (without grid): 5 m²
Volume (including ash chamber): 1.5 m³

Combustion air feed system

Four rectangular openings, 100 by 80 mm, were set along the apex line of the chamber vault and linked, by means of a vertical conduit, to the piping of the blower set into the brickwork of the oven above the muffles, lengthwise and parallel to the latter. The three pipes ended in a common transverse manifold at the rear of the oven which opened up to the outside and was connected to a blower. The openings in the vault of the chamber brought combustion air into the muffle, especially in cases of incinerations with a coffin. Each oven had its own blower.

The sidewalls of the outer muffles had four rectangular openings, 110 by 130 mm, linked to two air channels which ran lengthwise through the brickwork of the oven, parallel to the muffles, and ended in two air-feed openings at the front; the openings could be closed by means of movable cast-iron doors of standard shape and size (108 by

[394] Baubericht für Monat September 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 138; Prüfbericht des Ing. Prüfer for Zentralbauleitung dated January 29, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 101; Tätigkeitsbericht des SS-Ustuf. (F) Kirschneck, – Bauleiter für das Schutzhaftlager und für landwirtschafltiche Bauvorhaben. Zeit 1. Januar 1943 bis 31. März 1943 dated March 29, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 61; letter from Zentralbauleitung dated June 28, 1943 concerning "Fertigstellung d. Krematoriums III." RGVA, 502-1-314, p. 14a.

[395] Topf, Versandanzeige of April 16, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, pp.167-170; Topf, Versandanzeige of June 18, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, pp.165-166; Topf, Schluss-Rechnung Nr. 69 of January 27, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-26, pp.230-230a.

128 mm). The air channel for the central muffle, on the other hand, was set into the brickwork at the back of the oven.

Muffles

The central muffle was linked to the outer two via three large rectangular openings of about 200 by 300 mm set into its sidewalls; the openings traversed, on both sides, the brickwork of the inner walls of the outer muffles, some 250 mm thick. These openings were part and parcel of the spent gas discharge system and were, therefore, indispensable for the operation of this oven, as opposed to the double-muffle oven.

At the front, the muffles were closed by three cast-iron doors which allowed the corpses to be loaded and which measured about 600 by 600 millimeters. The inside of the doors were lined with refractory. In the lower portion of the doors, on the central axis, there was an air-hole which could be closed on the outside by means of a movable cast-iron cover of a standard kind with a round inspection hole 45 mm in diameter in the center; the hole could be closed by a round cast-iron plate attached to the door by means of a peg.

Grid of the muffle

The bottom of the muffle consisted of a horizontal grid made up of five refractory bars some 90 mm wide at the top and spaced at about 210 mm from one another; the corpse was laid onto them.

Post-combustion chamber

Beneath each refractory grid was located the inclined V-shaped ash plane which ended in a narrower combustion chamber in which the remains of the corpse falling through the bars of the grid burned out completely; this was the post-combustion chamber. The front part of this chamber constituted the actual ash receptacle. The glowing ashes were removed by means of appropriate rakes through the ash extraction doors located in the front of the oven, below the loading door of the muffle, and fell into ash containers placed below them on the floor of the furnace hall.

Discharge of the spent gases

The two large rectangular discharge openings were set into the sidewalls of the post-combustion chamber of the central muffle, toward the front. The spent gases then flowed downwards through two short verti-

cal channels which ended in a flue duct arranged underneath the oven. It linked the oven to the chimney and could be closed by means of an appropriate plate of refractory clay which moved vertically in a guide-frame.

The gases produced in the gasifier entered into the outer muffles through the necks of the gasifiers, then flowed into the central muffle through the six openings between the muffles, travelled downwards into the central post-combustion chamber, flowed out through the two openings in the sidewalls of this chamber, and entered the flue duct. The latter had a cross-sectional area 600 by 700 mm and was set into the floor below the oven. Each flue duct had a smoke valve, also 600 by 700 mm, at the outlet of the oven, moving vertically along the rear wall of the central muffle.

The crematorium had altogether six flue ducts, five for the five furnaces and a sixth for the garbage incinerator (*Müllverbrennungsofen*). Groups of two flue ducts merged into one duct which then fed into one of the three chimney ducts (*Züge*). At the juncture, the cross-sectional area widened from 600 by 700 to 800 by 1,200 millimeters (the cross-sectional area of one chimney duct) to allow for the increased volume of the gases from two ovens.

Each of the three chimney ducts was linked via a short vertical shunt to a forced-draft device (*Saugzuganlage*); at the top of each of these vertical ducts, below the respective blower, there was a movable slide (*Schieberplatte*) measuring 1,250 by 840 mm which, when closed, allowed the chimney to operate in natural draft. The blower aspirated part of the flue gases and ejected them at a high velocity through a suitable opening into one of the three chimney ducts, thus creating a strong depression which then sucked the spent gases from the flue duct into the chimney duct. Each of the blowers was rated at 40,000 m³ per hour of spent gases at a total pressure of 30 mm of water column. At its base the chimney was equipped with three vertical gate valves, 800 by 1200 mm, which enabled the respective chimney duct to be blocked. The chimney was 15.46 m high; each of its three ducts measured 0.80 by 1.20 meters.

Gasifiers

Each oven had two gasifiers, each one housed in a separate brick structure located behind the outer two muffles, 1,380 mm wide and some 1,280 mm high up to the onset of the inclined plane. The latter

was some 900 mm long and had a door about 270 by 340 mm over the loading shaft opening up into the upper part of the gasifier.

Gasifier hearths

Each gasifier had a hearth with a horizontal grid consisting of twelve square bars measuring 40 by 40 by 630 mm maintained by two more bars of the same cross-sectional area but 740 mm long. The grid measured 600×500 = 0.3 m²; the rated load was 35 kg of coke per hour.

Introduction device

Loading of corpses was accomplished by a device (*Leicheneinführungs-Vorrichtung*) which consisted of a coffin cart (*Sargeinführungswagen*) running on rails (*Laufschienen*) along the entire length of the oven room, hence servicing all fifteen muffles. At its top it was equipped with a mobile unit (*Verschiebwagen*) of semi-cylindrical shape allowing the corpse to be moved into the muffle. The latter had, in its front part, a metal stretcher some 2,700 mm long on which the corpse was placed and which was moved into the muffle. It ran on a pair of rollers (*Laufrollen* or *Einführrollen*) attached to a folding frame hinged on a round bar (*Befestigungs-Eisen*) which was welded to the anchors of the oven below the muffle gate.

Weight of the refractory brickwork

The total weight of the refractory brickwork of the oven was about 13,000 kg (9,000 kg for the three muffles and 4,000 kg for the two gasifiers).

Subsequent modifications

Crematorium I at Auschwitz originally possessed a forced-draft unit rated at 4,000 m³ of gas per hour. When the old chimney was demolished, the forced-draft unit was dismantled and not re-installed when the new chimney was built in July-August 1942.

The three forced-draft devices of Crematorium II were damaged beyond repair at the end of March 1943 and were then dismantled. Neither forced-draft devices nor rails for the loading of the corpses were installed in Crematorium III. The introduction carts of the corpses were replaced by standard stretchers. This latter system (*Trage* or *Einführtrage*), also used in Crematorium II, consisted of two parallel metal tubes to which was welded, in its front part (the portion introduced into the muffle), a slightly concave metal plate on which the corpse was

placed. The tubes were spaced at the same distance as the guide rolls (*Führungsrollen*) so that they could easily run on them.

8.4.4. Coke-Fired Crematory Oven with Eight Muffles

An oven of this type was installed in each of Crematoria IV and V at Birkenau. Building of Crematorium IV began on September 23, 1942; the unit was handed over to the camp command on March 19, 1943.[396] Construction of Crematorium V started on November 20, 1942, hand-over took place on April 4, 1943.[397] Crematorium IV was destroyed in October 1944, Crematorium V in January 1945.

The installation of these ovens was decided by SS-WVHA on August 26, 1942; they were taken from an order of four 8-muffle ovens that had been placed with Topf by *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* on December 4, 1941.[398] The parts making up the two 8-muffle ovens are listed in Topf's shipment notice dated September 8, 1942.[399]

The available documents, including the blueprints of Crematorium IV at Birkenau showing the foundations and the vertical section of the 8-muffle oven, the photographs taken by the Poles in 1945 of the ruins of Crematorium V, and a direct inspection of these ruins allow the structure of this oven to be deduced with sufficient precision, as set forth below.

Dimensions

From the list of the anchor bolts of the 8-muffle oven drawn up by Topf on September 4, 1942, the following dimensions of the installation may be recalculated for one group of 4 muffles:

height: 2,450 mm; depth: 4,430 mm; width: 2,545 mm
length of upper floor: 2,990 mm
length of upper brick structure (location of muffle gate): 720 mm
Gasifiers: height: 2,060 mm; depth: 3,225 mm; width: 2,290 mm

The oven, including the gasifiers, thus had a floor area of 4.43 by [(2.545×2) + 2.290 =] 7.38 meters.

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[396] Baufristenplan dated October 2, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-320, p. 7; Übergabeverhandlung for Crematorium IV. March 19, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-54, p. 25.
[397] Baufristenplan dated October 2 1943. RGVA, 502-1-320, p. 7; APMO, BW 30/25, p. 14.
[398] Handwritten note in Aktenvermerk of SS-Untersturmführer Ertl dated August 21, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, pp. 159-160.
[399] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Versandanzeige for Zentralbauleitung dated September 8, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, pp. 143-144.

Structure of the oven

Topf's coke-fired 8-muffle oven consisted of eight single-muffle ovens as per Topf drawing D 58173 (crematorium oven with one coke-fired muffle) arranged in two groups of four ovens each; each group consisted of two pairs of ovens set in opposite directions in such a way that each pair shared the two walls between its muffles and also shared its two rear walls with the pair opposite. The two groups of ovens were connected to four gasifiers paired in the same way, the large 8-muffle oven thus formed came to be called "*Großraum-Einäscherungsofen*." The oven was held in a solid brick structure by a system of steel bars and anchors clearly visible on the Polish photographs of 1945, which show the ruins of Crematorium V, and is still extant today.

Muffles

The muffles had gates (*Muffelabsperrschieber*) weighing 46 kg each and running vertically in a frame set into a brick structure located above each pair of muffles at the front of the ovens. The gates were moved by metal cables with counterweights running over rollers attached to the beams of the ceiling. The central wall of each pair of muffles had openings, probably two or three as in the ovens with two and three muffles.

Discharge of the spent gases

The outer wall of each of the four lateral muffles, at the rear part of the muffle, had an outlet for the spent gases opening into a vertical duct, thus forming two pairs of parallel ducts – one pair for each group of four muffles – each pair being enclosed in a brick structure located at either side of the oven.

The two pairs of conduits opened separately into two horizontal ducts which merged into a single one having a gate valve with metal cable, roller, and counterweight. Each valve measured 0.8 by 0.7 m and weighed 85.5 kilograms. The two ducts ran horizontally in opposite directions beneath the floor of the furnace hall and each fed into a chimney having a square cross-section 0.80 by 0.80 m and a height of 16.87 meters. The flue ducts did not have manholes. The chimneys had no forced-draft devices.

Refractory grid of the muffle

The bottom of the muffles was constituted by a grid of refractory clay, probably having five crossbars as in the oven with a single muffle.

The grid, and hence the muffle, was 700 mm wide, as in the 2-muffle oven; it had bars of the same length. Beneath the refractory grid was located the post-combustion chamber (ash receptacle), closed in front by the ash extraction door. This type of door, 280 by 350 mm in size, was the same as those used for the gasifier hearths.

Combustion air feed system

Combustion air was brought to the individual ovens and the gasifiers through 20 air channels having as many hinged doors, twelve of standard size (108 by 126 mm, weight 7.5 kg) and eight large ones (weight 14.5 kg). these doors were distributed in the following way:

- one each, standard type, next to the ash chamber door (= eight doors)
- one each, large size, next to the muffle gate, as in the Topf oven for Mauthausen (= eight doors)
- four, standard type, next to the hearth door of the gasifiers (= four doors).

The use of air channels, larger than those in the design of the 2- and 3-muffle ovens, to feed the muffles was probably meant to compensate for the absence of blowers.

Gasifiers

The oven was equipped with two pairs of gasifiers arranged in opposite directions between the two groups of four muffles. Each gasifier fed the pair of muffles next to it. In this type of oven, the gasifier neck did not open up into the rear wall of the muffle, as in the 2 and 3-muffle ovens, but into a sidewall, as in the Topf ovens at Dachau and Gusen. Hence, the combustion products passed through the muffle from side to side. The service shafts giving access to the loading doors, to the gasifier, and to the hearths were located in front of the gasifiers. The hearth frames were attached to the anchor bolts of the gasifiers by means of two bars still visible in the ruins of the oven. The hourly load of the hearth grid was 35 kg of coke.

Corpse introduction device

The corpse loading device consisted of stretchers for the corpses such as those described above and of pairs of rollers of a simplified design.

Weight of the refractory brickwork

The refractory brickwork of an 8-muffle oven consisted of:

- 1,600 wedge-shaped bricks ≈ 5,300 kg
- 4,500 standard bricks ≈ 15,800 kg
- refractory mortar ≈ 3,000 kg

This results in a total of some 24,100 kilograms. Assuming a total weight of 8,000 kg for the four gasifiers, the brickwork of each muffle weighed about 2,000 kilograms.

8.4.5. Operation of the Topf Crematory Ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau

The Topf ovens functioned in the following manner. Some straw and kindling wood was piled on the hearth of the gasifier and then lit. Then a small amount of coke was introduced through the coke feeding doors and caught fire in turn. Then the entire space of the gasifier was filled with coke. When the coke started to glow, the gasifier produced gas with a high content of carbon monoxide which started to burn in the neck of the gasifier. The current of gas and flames advanced into the muffle and struck the grid and the refractory material of the muffle, heating them to a high temperature. The combustion products followed the course described above for the various furnace types.

When the oven had reached its operating temperature of about 800°C (indicated by the color of the glowing refractory brickwork), the muffle gate was opened and the first corpse introduced by laying it on the refractory grid. Then the gate was closed. The corpse was exposed to the hot gases and the flames coming from the gasifier which struck it from above and from below. Drying and the main phase of the combustion of the corpse took place in the muffle. In the final stage the remains of the corpse were usually small enough to fall through the grid into the ash space below. As soon as this had occurred, another corpse was introduced.[400]

In the meantime, according to the instructions from Topf for the double and triple-muffle ovens, the remains of the preceding corpse stayed in the ash space for another 20 minutes, burning out completely (post-combustion), then the ash was removed through the ash chamber door by means of a rake.

The temperature was not to exceed 1,100°C in double-muffle ovens, or 1,000°C in triple-muffle ovens. This was due to the thermal load of

[400] Contrary to common belief, even bones and teeth are readily reduced to ashes, if the cremation conditions are right (sufficient temperature, time and oxygen supply).

the ovens and depended on the weight and the quality of the refractory used. At higher temperatures there was a risk of softening and of fusion of bones and refractory.[401]

The combustion control system of the triple-muffle oven was rather inefficient. It relied on a single damper for the gases coming from all three muffles and on a single uncontrollable blower for each muffle. Therefore, the cremation of the three corpses in the muffles could not be controlled individually, which reduced the efficiency of the operation. Furthermore, the triple-muffle oven contained a design error which becomes obvious when analyzing the discharge system for the spent gases. The central muffle received the gases coming from the two outer muffles, to which the gases generated by the gasification of the corpse in the central muffle were added. Thus, the gas volume which flowed through it was more than twice that for a lateral muffle. In order to maintain the normal flow rate of the gas, it would have been necessary to at least double the cross-section of the inner muffle in the same way as the spent gases of Crematoria II and III, merging into one conduit from each pair of flue ducts coming from two ovens, saw the cross-section of the duct increasing from $0.6 \times 0.7 = 0.42$ m² to more than twice the size, $0.8 \times 1.2 = 0.96$ square meters.[402]

For this reason, the combustible gases stemming from the cremation of the corpse in the central muffle and those coming from the outer muffles did not have enough residence time in the inner muffle to burn completely, and hence entered the flue ducts partly uncombusted. This led to a loss of part of the heat supplied by the corpses, which translated into higher coke consumption and a longer time needed for the cremation of the corpse in the central muffle.

The double-muffle oven was more efficient, as it had a damper and a blower for each muffle. The 8-muffle oven was the least efficient, as it had only one damper for the spent gases from four muffles and no blower.

The Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau did not have a recuperator for preheating the combustion air and had no instruments for the control of the combustion, such as electric pyrometers, spent gas analyzers, or pressure gauges for measuring the draft in the chimney.

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[401] Topf, Betriebsvorschrift des koksbeheizten Topf-Dreimuffel-Einäscherungsofen. March 1943, in: Pressac 1989, p. 222.

[402] Bauleitung Drawings 932 and 934, in: Pressac 1989, pp. 284-285 and 288-289.

8.4.6. Crematory Ovens by H. Kori/Berlin and Ignis-Hüttenbau/Teplitz

As far as the supply of cremation ovens to German concentration camps is concerned, the Berlin manufacturer H. Kori was Topf's major competitor. Kori's coke or oil-fired ovens were installed at Dachau, Mauthausen, Majdanek, Stutthof near Danzig, Natzweiler-Struthof, Ravensbrück, Groß-Rosen, Bergen-Belsen, Neuengamme, Dora-Mittelbau, Flossenbürg, and Westerbork, among other places.

Strictly speaking, these ovens have no immediate significance to a study of the crematoria at Auschwitz and Birkenau. However, since we shall eventually use some data from Kori ovens to draw certain conclusions about characteristics also present in the Birkenau ovens, we have also analyzed these Kori ovens in detail. Since these analyses would go beyond the scope of the present study, we refer the reader to the relevant sources.[403]

In 1942 a crematorium was built at Terezín, then called Theresienstadt, for the local ghetto. On the subject of this crematorium we have a detailed cost estimate that was drawn up on April 2, 1942, by the firm Ignis-Hüttenbau A.G. of Teplitz-Schönau, presently Teplice in the Czech Republic, yet during the war part of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.[404] Due to the rapid increase in mortality which occurred in the Theresienstadt ghetto – from 256 deaths in April 1942 to 2,237 in May and 3,941 in June (Kárný, vol. I, p. 33) – the crematorium was equipped with four naphtha-fired Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens.

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[403] Cf. the following documents: letter from Didier-Werke, August 25, 1943, to Herrn Boriwoje Palitsch, Belgrade, regarding SS cremation facility in Belgrade. USSR-64; plan of Didier-Werke no. 0.913 "Feuerbestattunganalage für die SS Belgrad" dated 28.9.1943. GARF, 7445-2-125, p. 92; letter from the firm of H. Kori, May 18, 1943, to certified engineer Waller of Department CIII of the SS-WVHA, regarding the delivery of one or two Kori cremation ovens. KfSD, 5732; Kori drawing J. Nr. 9122 dated 12.5.1942 concerning the crematorium ovens at KL Dachau. GARF, 7445-2-125, p. 91; Kori drawing J. Nr. 8998 dated 6.2.1941 concerning the crematorium at Neuengamme. GARF, 7445-2-125, p. 90; letter from the firm of H. Kori, October 23, 1941, to SS-Sturmbannführer Lenzer, Lublin. APMM, sygn. VI-9a, v. 1; letter from the firm of H. Kori to the Headquarters of the Waffen-SS and Police POW camp Lublin dated 8.1.1943. APMM, sygn. VI-9a, v. 1; Kori drawing J. Nr. 9098 dated 31.3.1943 concerning the crematorium at KL Majdanek. GARF, 7445-2-125, p. 89.

[404] Letter and cost estimate from Ignis-Hüttenbau A.G. of Teplitz- Schönau dated April 2, 1942 "An die Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderer, z.H. des Kommandos der Waffen-SS in Theresienstadt" concerning "Errichtung eines Krematoriums in Theresienstadt." PT, A 7-856.

8.5. Coke Consumption of the Topf Ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau

8.5.1. Heat Balance of the Double-Muffle Topf Oven at Gusen Crematorium

The determining factor affecting the fuel consumption of a crematorium oven with a coke-fired gasifier was the frequency of cremations: the higher the frequency the lower the consumption for an individual cremation. For example, the diagram "*Einäscherungen hintereinander*" (consecutive incinerations) published by Prof. Paul Schläpfer in 1937, established on the basis of practical experiments, shows a consumption of over 400 kg of coke for the first cremation in a cold oven, of some 200 kg for the second one and of little more than 100 kg for the fourth (Schläpfer 1937, p. 36). Beyond the eighth cremation, the curve of the coke consumption tends to flatten out, and for the twentieth and last cremation considered the coke consumption comes out as about 37.5 kilograms.[405] This means that twenty cremations done discontinuously at several days' intervals would have required (400×20 =) 8,000 kg of coke as opposed to only (37.5×20 =) 750 for 20 cremations within a series of many. From the tenth cremation onward, coke consumption stabilized, because then the brickwork was close to thermal equilibrium with the surroundings and absorbed very little additional heat. For that reason, a heat balance around the crematoria ovens at Auschwitz must be made for a time when the brickwork no longer required additional calories to increase its temperature and the oven operated at minimum fuel consumption.

Among the rare documents to have survived on the subject of the Gusen crematorium, there is a list, compiled by *SS-Unterscharführer* Wassner, head of the crematorium, which gives the number of cremated detainees and the respective consumption of coke for the period of September 26 through November 12, 1941. The document tells us that 677 corpses were incinerated in succession at the Gusen crematorium between October 31 and November 12, 1941. On average 52 corpses per day were cremated in the two muffles over an operating time of 18 hours each day. The total coke consumption was 20,700 kg, hence the average consumption per corpse was about 30.6 kilograms (see chapter 8.6.4.). As these data were established under practical operating condi-

[405] The heat generated by the combustion of the coffin must always be added.

tions, they constitute a most valuable point of departure for the calculation of the heat balance of the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The heat balance is an equation in which the heat losses from the oven are equal to the heat input to the oven. The theoretical calculation of the heat balance on the basis of W. Heepke's method takes into account the individual amounts of heat going in and out; they depend on the various factors affecting the cremation process (e.g. the heat supplied by the corpse itself or the heat lost in the flue gases). All of these factors are amenable to a theoretical determination, except for the volume of combustion air. However, for the case in question we know the amount of heat stemming from the combustion of the coke, and it is therefore possible to determine also this latter value. The basic equation for the Gusen oven, giving the average consumption for one cremation, is the following:[406]

$$\frac{L + W_2 + W_{2a} + W_3 + V_{ls} - W_7}{\eta H_u} = 30.6 \qquad (1)$$

8.5.2. Heat Balance for the Topf Double-Muffle Oven at Auschwitz

The heat balance for the Topf double-muffle oven at Auschwitz has been established on the basis of the above equation, but taking into account the effects of differences in the operating temperature, in the duration of the cremation, and in the surface area of the oven, which mainly affect the heat losses by radiation and conduction as well as the efficiency of the coke.

Furthermore, from the combustion air parameter L several minor heat losses have been subtracted which were not taken into account by W. Heepke (incombustibles of the corpse, heating of the dry residue of the corpse to autoignition temperature, heating of the coke to autoignition temperature, heating of the corpse loading device). The combustion air and the excess air coefficient have thus been determined with greater accuracy.

[406] Symbols used in Heepke's article: L = combustion air + minor losses; W_2 = heat of evaporation of corpse water; W_{2a} = heat for raising to the flue gas temperature the water vapor formed by the combustion of the hydrogen contained in the dry residue of the corpse; W_3 = heat needed for heating the corpse ashes to the extraction temperature; V_{ls} = heat loss from the oven by radiation and conduction; W_7 = upper heating value of the corpse; ηH_u = coke efficiency.

The heat balance has been established for three types of corpses: normal, medium and emaciated[407] (called "*Muselmänner*" in the camp lingo). The result is an average consumption of 23.5 kg of coke for a normal corpse, 28 kg for a medium corpse and 32.5 kg for an emaciated one.

8.5.3. Heat Balance for Topf Triple-Muffle and 8-Muffle Ovens

The triple muffle oven was essentially a double-muffle model with an additional muffle in the middle. The two outer muffles behaved like a double-muffle oven but fed their spent gases into the central muffle. Because the oven operated with a rather high excess air coefficient, these gases contained a certain amount of unspent oxygen which could be used for the cremation of the corpse in the central muffle, thus leading to a certain savings in coke consumption.

For that reason, the combustion air was not proportional to that of a double-muffle oven, and therefore the above equation cannot be used to determine the coke consumption of the triple-muffle model because the combustion air parameter is unknown.

However, the coke consumption for the two outer muffles could not be lower than in a double-muffle oven; rather, it should be slightly higher because their heat losses through radiation and conduction were higher. Hence, the coke consumption for three corpses in a triple-muffle oven could not be lower than that of the two outer muffles, therefore we may assume for the minimum theoretical limit of the coke consumption the value given by the following equation:[408]

$$C_2 + \frac{V_{ls3} - V_{ls2}}{2 \times \eta H_u} \times {}^2/_3 = C_3 \qquad (2)$$

in which the coke consumption corresponds to $^2/_3$ of the coke consumption for the cremation of a corpse in a double-muffle oven plus the coke needed to make up for the greater heat loss through radiation and conduction of a triple-muffle device. Thus, we obtain a minimal coke

[407] A weight of 70 kg is assumed for the normal corpses; a weight of 55 kg for the medium corpses with loss of 25% of proteins and 30% of fat; a weight of 40 kg for the emaciated corpses with loss of 50% of proteins and 60% of fat.

[408] C_2 = coke consumption for the cremation of one corpse in a 2 muffle oven; $V_{ls3} - V_{ls2}$ = difference in heat loss through radiation and conduction between a triple and a double-muffle oven; C_3 = coke consumption for the cremation of one corpse in a triple-muffle oven; ηH_u = coke efficiency.

consumption of 16 kg for a normal corpse, of 19 kg for a medium corpse and of 22 kg for an emaciated corpse.

The 8-muffle oven was made up of four pairs of independent muffles with a linkage between the two muffles of each pair. Because the combustion products of the first muffle passed through the second one, what has been said for the triple-muffle oven applies here as well: the gases from the first muffle contained a quantity of oxygen theoretically sufficient for the combustion of the corpse in the second muffle. Hence, one may assume for this type of oven a minimum theoretical consumption equal to half of that of a double-muffle oven:

Table 4: Summary of Coke Consumption by Oven Type (rounded)

Type of corpse	2 muffle oven	3 muffle oven	8 muffle oven
normal	23.5 kg	16 kg	12 kg
medium	28.0 kg	19 kg	14 kg
emaciated	32.5 kg	22 kg	16 kg

For comparison, the Kori ovens claimed to have a coke consumption of 25 kg for one cremation.

8.5.4. Remarks on the Consumption of 3- and 8-Muffle Ovens

The note for the file (*Aktenvermerk*) dated March 17, 1943, written by the civilian employee Jährling "on indications from the firm Topf & Söhne" (we shall return to this point in chapter 8.8.3.) considers the coke consumption of the four Birkenau crematoria.[409] Coke consumption for twelve hours of activity is given in this document as 4,200 kg for Crematorium II and III, and 1,680 kg for Crematorium IV and V.

The calculation is based on a hearth load of 35 kg of coke per hour; the five triple-muffle ovens at Crematoria II and III had ten hearths, hence 10×35×12 = 4,200 kg, the 8-muffle ovens at Crematoria IV and V each had four hearths, hence 4×35×12 = 1,680 kilograms. The document adds that "*bei Dauerbetrieb*" (in continuous operation) consumption went down by $^1/_3$, dropping to 2,800 kg for Crematoria II and III and to 1,120 kg for Crematoria IV and V. This decrease is due to the fact that the amount of coke needed in a given period of continuous operation for keeping the ovens hot was considerably lower than what was needed in discontinuous operation.

Hence, the reduction in the coke consumption by one third for twelve hours of operation – from 4,200 to 2,800 kg – can only mean

[409] APMO, BW 30/7/34, p. 54.

that in the case of discontinuous operation (4,200 – 2,800 =) 1,400 kg of coke were for heating the five ovens and the remaining 2,800 kg for the cremations. The drop by one third in the normal consumption corresponds to the combustion of the following amounts of coke:

Table 5: Hourly Coke Consumption of Birkenau Crematory Ovens

oven type	hearths	coke/hearth	coke/muffle (12h/d)	coke/muffle (24h/d)
3 muffles	2	70 kg/hr	23.3 kg/hr	15.5 kg/hr
8 muffles	4	140 kg/hr	17.5 kg/hr	11.7 kg/hr

These data are almost identical to those derived above for normal corpses[410] and confirm the validity of the heat balance presented above also for the case of triple and 8-muffle ovens.

8.6. Duration of Cremation Process in the Topf Ovens at Birkenau

8.6.1. The Documents

There are four documents dealing with the controversial question of the duration of the cremations in the Topf ovens of the concentration camps; their data are, however, very divergent:

1) a letter from Topf to *SS-Neubauleitung* of KL Mauthausen dated Nov. 1, 1940;[411]
2) a letter from Topf to *SS-Neubauleitung* of KL Mauthausen dated July 14, 1941;[412]
3) an internal memo by engineer Prüfer dated September 8, 1942 (see chapter 12.3.);
4) a letter addressed on June 28, 1943, by the head of ZBL Auschwitz (*SS-Sturmbannführer* Karl Bischoff) to the head of *Amtsgruppe C* of SS-WVHA (*SS-Brigadeführer* Hans Kammler; see chapter 12.2.).

In Table 6 I have summarized the data yielded by these documents as far as the duration of the cremation and the theoretical cremation capacity in 24 hours of operation for each type of furnace are concerned.

[410] As the consumptions for a double-muffle oven – and for the two outer muffles of a triple-muffle oven – have been ascertained, the consumption of 15.5 kg per hour and per muffle can only refer to a normal corpse; if it referred to a medium corpse, the central muffle would not only not consume any coke, but would even save about 11 kg; if it referred to a lean body, the savings would be nearly 20 kg of coke. Both hypotheses are unrealistic.

[411] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung of the Mauthausen concentration camp, November 1, 1940. BAK, NS 4 Ma/54.

[412] Letter from Topf firm to the SS-Neubauleitung of the Mauthausen concentration camp, July 14, 1941; Weimar State Archives, LK 4651.

Table 6 : Documented Cremation Times and Capacities of Auschwitz Ovens

Oven type	Document 1		Document 2		Document 3		Document 4	
	Time [min]	Corpses per 24 h	Time [min]	Corpses per 24 h	Time [min]	Corpses per 24 h	Time [min]	Corpses per 24 h
2 muffles	~60	~24	~33-40	~72-86	~34-35	~83	~25	~113
3 muffles	/	/	/	/	~27	~160	~15	~288
8 muffles	/	/		/	~14-15	~800	~15	~768

To judge the technical validity of these data and to find the average duration of the cremations in the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau, I have used three main objective criteria, all based on practical considerations, and three secondary ones, also based on practice:

1) The results of Kessler's cremation experiments with coke of January 5, 1927.
2) A fragment of the list of cremations in the Gusen crematorium.
3) Numerous fragments of the lists concerning the Westerbork crematorium.
4) The practical results achieved in the operation of Kori ovens for slaughter-houses constitute another valuable criterion.
5) The Soviet and Polish technical expert reports about the Kori crematorium ovens at Majdanek (August 1944) Stutthof (May 1945) and Sachsenhausen (June 1945) supply further useful indications.
6) Finally, the lists of the cremations in the Terezín crematorium – which had four naphtha-fired Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens, no doubt the most efficient ovens built during the Second World War – constitute an essential criterion for the minimum duration of the cremation process as obtainable in the installations existing in German concentration camps in the 1940s.

8.6.2. Kessler's Cremation Experiments

As already explained, the duration of the cremation process of a corpse depends primarily on the structure and the chemical composition of the human body, but also in a non-negligible way on the design and the operation of the crematorium oven. The Auschwitz-Birkenau crematorium ovens being of a type with a coke-fired gasifier, we may use Kessler's cremation experiments run in the Dessau crematorium on January 5, 1927, for comparison. They provide us with a good understanding of the way the cremation process operated in such ovens (Kessler 1927, p. 154f.).

In this context we must remember, however, that the Gebrüder Beck oven used by Kessler was technically superior to the Topf equipment at Auschwitz-Birkenau for a number of reasons: the higher weight of the refractory brickwork reduced temperature fluctuations in the various phases of the cremation, the presence of a recuperator allowed the combustion air to be preheated, and the oven possessed modern instruments which allowed the recording and control of the operation in any phase of the cremation process. Furthermore, the cremations were carried out under the guidance of a specialized engineer; the oven was therefore operated under optimum conditions. This having been stated, we will now summarize the results of Kessler's experiments.

On average, the initial cremation temperature was about 800°C, the maximum temperature at the combustion of the coffin was around 1,000°C, the temperature at the onset of the combustion of the corpses was around 780°C and the maximum temperature during the combustion of the corpses was about 900°C.

As far as the time sequence was concerned, the average duration of the combustion of the coffin up to the greatest generation of heat was about 12 minutes, the average duration of the evaporation of the body water stood at 27 minutes and, finally, the time needed for the combustion of the corpses up to the point of maximum heat generation was about 28 minutes. The duration of the entire process came to 55 minutes.

This latter duration refers to the apex of the main cremation phase in the muffle, after which combustion died down gradually, finishing after another 31 minutes: the average duration of one complete cremation was thus actually 86 minutes.

This clarification is significant because the system of cremation in the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau, or more precisely the operational system of these ovens, was different from Kessler's: in line with existing regulations, Kessler waited until the ashes of the corpse no longer emitted any flames before moving them into the ash chamber. In the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau, on the other hand, a fresh corpse was introduced into the muffle as soon as the residues of the preceding one fell through the grid into the post-combustion chamber (ash chamber), where the combustion process came to completion. This means that in the Topf furnaces the duration of the cremation had as its endpoint the moment at which the remains of the first corpse fell through the grid into the post-combustion chamber, where they continued to

burn for another 20 minutes. In both cases, though, the main combustion phase of the bodies took place in the muffle.

In Kessler's experiments the corpses were still in the muffle when the maximum temperature of the body combustion had been reached after 55 minutes, as is shown by the rise of the muffle temperature to nearly 900°C. Hence, the duration of the cremation process in the muffle up to the time at which the remains of the corpse dropped through the grid into the ash chamber was necessarily higher than 55 minutes. For obvious reasons these experiments were done with the corpse enclosed in a coffin. The maximum temperature of the coffin's combustion occurred about 12 minutes after its introduction into the oven. One may therefore say that vaporization of the corpse's water began after some five to six minutes, during which the coffin shielded the corpse from the heat to a certain extent. Still, it is also true that the heat contribution by the coffin accelerated the process later on.

In conclusion, for a cremation oven with a coke-fed gasifier we may retain as a benchmark an average time for the main phase of the combustion without a coffin not below 50 minutes.

8.6.3. List of Cremations at the Westerbork Crematorium

The crematorium at the Westerbork camp in the Netherlands had a coke-fired Kori oven which went into operation on March 15, 1943, at a time when the mortality, although quite low, increased strongly. The number of deaths had been 108 in the second half of 1942; it increased to 593 in 1943 and then dropped drastically to 50 in 1944 and 4 in 1945.[413] A number of documents concerning this crematorium have come down to us, the most important ones of which are:

- a large fragment of the "*Crematorium Betriebsbuch*" containing the names of the deceased for the period of June 23, 1943, through March 31, 1944, with the dates of birth and death and the respective entry number (277 through 510), to which corresponded the number of the urn for the ashes;[414]
- numerous cremation lists giving the number of bodies cremated, the duration of each cremation, and the total coke consumption.[414]

There exists also a "Name list of Jewish persons having died in the concentration camps of Westerbork and Buchenwald, buried in Dutch

[413] Rapport over de sterfte in het Kamp Westerbork in het tijdvak van 15 Juli 1942 tot 12 April 1945. ROD, C[64] 514, p. 1

[414] ROD, C[64] 292.

cemeteries," established by the Dutch Red Cross, which lists the names of all Jews who died at Westerbork in alphabetical order, giving i.a. the dates of birth, death, and cremation as well as the number of the urn.[415] Cremations were not carried out every day, but only when a sufficiently large number of corpses had accumulated in the morgue. This procedure aimed at saving fuel. At the Westerbork camp the mortality of new-born babies was very high, with peaks of 25% in May and June 1943 and even 40% in August.[416] In general they were a few months old, even a few days, and were usually cremated in groups of two together in one muffle or one baby together with one adult corpse.

A few baby bodies were introduced into the oven staggered between two cremations of adult corpses; their cremation coincided with the final phase of the cremation of the preceding and the initial phase of the cremation of the subsequent body. The average duration of the cremations of adult corpses incinerated individually was 50 minutes. In the case of small children (average age 1 year) incinerated together with the body of an adult (average age 70 years) the average duration rose to 57 minutes.

In the Westerbork Kori oven, as in the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the final point of the cremation was taken to be the moment when the body residues dropped through the grid into the ash chamber and the muffle was ready to receive another corpse.

8.6.4. List of Cremations at the Gusen Crematorium

This list is divided into four columns.[417] The first (*"Uhr"*) indicates the time and the number of carts of coke, the second column (*"Datum"*) indicates the date of the cremations, the third (*"Leichen"*) the number of corpses cremated, the fourth (*"Karren Koks 1 K. = 60 kg"*) the total number of carts of coke (1 cart = 60 kg) which were entered individually in the first column; hence, the last figure in the first column corresponds to the entry in the fourth. However, the first column ("hour") does not refer to the cremation as such but to the time of pick-up of the corresponding number of cartloads of coke at the coke store and their delivery to the oven.

[415] ROD, C[64] 314.
[416] Rapport over de sterfte in het Kamp Westerbork in het tijdvak van 15 Juli 1942 tot 12 April 1945. ROD, C[64] 514, p. 2.
[417] ÖDMM, B 12/31.

The only objective criterion which allows a good approximation to be made for the duration of the cremation process is the combustion capacity of the hearth grids, i.e. the amount of coke which could be burnt in one hour on one hearth grid. The calculation is similar to the one used in the note for the file of March 17, 1943.

The combustion capacity of the hearth grids with natural draft was some 120 kg of carbon per hour and square meter; the "*Aktenvermerk*" dated March 17, 1943,[418] gives the capacity of the grids in the ovens with three and with eight muffles as 35 kg of coke per hour. The grids of the triple-muffle device had a surface area of 0.3 m², which translates into a capacity of (35÷0.3 =) 116.7 or roughly 120 kg per hour and square meter.

However, the combustion capacity of a grid is influenced – within certain limits – by the draft of the chimney which draws air through the grid openings and provides the fuel with the oxygen needed for its combustion. For coke-fired crematoria, the maximum allowable draft with a forced-draft device (*Saugzug-Anlage*) was 30 mm of water column (Heepke 1905b, p. 71), which resulted in the combustion of 180 kg of coke per hour and m² of grid area (Colombo, p. 398; see chapter 8.6.3.). As each one of the Gusen grids had a surface area of (0.5×0.5 =) 0.25 m², the maximum grid load, for a draft of 30 mm of water column, was (180×0.25 =) 45 kg of coke per hour or 90 kg for the grids of the two gasifiers together.

The forced-draft units initially installed at Crematorium II of Birkenau also provided for a draft of 30 mm of water column at a volumetric flow rate of 40,000 m³ of flue gas per hour with a 15 HP motor running at 380 volts assigned to each chimney duct. The forced-draft unit at Gusen was the standard model also installed at the Auschwitz main camp, with a flow rate of 4,000 m³ per hour and a motor of 3 HP. The operating draft is unknown, but could not have been higher than 30 mm of water column.

Let us now consider the duration of the cremations. Assuming that they began at 7 a.m. on October 31 (the first date mentioned in the document) and ended at 11 p.m. on November 12 (the last date), we have a total of 304 hours ($12^2/_3$ days) or 18,240 minutes. The time needed for the combustion of the 20,700 kg of coke actually supplied depends of course on the combustion capacity of the hearth grids. As the duration

[418] APMO, BW 30/7/34, p. 54.

of the coke combustion is inversely proportional to the combustion capacity of the grid, the lowest duration corresponds to the highest combustion capacity.

Starting from a maximum capacity of 90 kg of coke per hour obtainable with a forced draft of 30 mm of water column for this oven, we find:

- total combustion time of the coke: 20,700÷90 = 230 hours or 13,800 minutes
- average daily activity of the oven: 230÷12.67 = ca. 18 hours
- average duration of the combustion of coke for each corpse: (30.6÷45)×60 = ca. 41 minutes

This is the minimum theoretical value. According to Topf's operating instructions for the double and triple-muffle ovens, the post-combustion of the body residues extended over some 20 minutes. If we add to this time the duration of the main phase – 40 minutes – we obtain a theoretical total period of 60 minutes for the overall cremation. This corresponds to the "*thermal barrier*" defined by Dr. Jones, i.e. the minimum cremation time below which it is impossible to go. This duration, as I will explain later, is valid for the Gusen oven and cannot be applied directly to the Auschwitz double-muffle model, to which the Topf letter of July 14, 1941, refers explicitly.

The duration depended upon the fact that not only the post-combustion took place in the ash compartment, but also the final phase of the main combustion, which means that the muffle emptied itself first, and the combustion process in the ash compartment thus lasted longer than the 20 minutes mentioned above.

8.6.5. List of Cremations in the Ignis-Hüttenbau Ovens in Terezín

The cremation devices built by Ignis-Hüttenbau A.G. for the crematorium at Terezín were by far the most modern and the most efficient of all crematorium ovens installed in the German concentration camps. They were clearly derived from the gas-fired Volckmann-Ludwig oven, having taken over from it the combustion air feed system (the air from a blower was brought to the muffle through 16 jets with control valves), the shape of the muffle with its elliptical vault, and the base of the muffle which did not consist of a grid but was a solid floor of refractory material. The Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens at Terezín were moreover equipped with a powerful forced-draft system and a naphtha burner with a con-

trollable output. Finally, they had a particular design and their own way of operation, which will be described in the chapter below.

From a sample of 717 cremations carried out in those ovens over 41 days of activity between October 3 and November 15, 1943, we may note the following: The average duration of the cremations was 36 minutes. For the 682 cremations where the duration is indicated, a full 491 or some 72% took 35 minutes or less, 148 or 22% lasted between 40 and 45 minutes, 42 took 50 to 60 minutes and 1 more than 60 minutes. To save fuel, the cremations were done in one oven at a time which thus remained always hot. After so many cremations, another oven was used and so on in a cyclical manner.

8.6.6. Conclusions

1) The minimum duration of the cremation process based on experimental data described in this chapter was achieved by the Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens in the Terezín crematorium – some 36 minutes. We must, however, look more closely at the definition of this duration and at the factors which made it possible.

The Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens had a much larger and much more massive structure than the Topf ovens. In particular, the muffle was 100 cm high, 90 cm wide and 260 cm long, whereas the corresponding dimensions for the triple-muffle Topf oven were 80, 70, and 200 centimeters. This allowed for an operation of the oven which could not be equaled by the Topf ovens: a light-weight coffin of raw boards containing the body was introduced into the front part of the muffle where it was struck by combustion air coming from eight nozzles located there and by the flame of the burner; it burned rapidly.

At the same time, desiccation of the corpse began. When the desiccation of the body had advanced far enough or had even come to completion, generally within half an hour, the desiccated and disarticulated body was moved by means of a rake, 4 m long and manipulated through an opening on the other side of the oven, to the rear part of the muffle, in front of the burner where the main phase of the cremation took place. In this phase, the body was exposed to the controllable flame of the burner and to the combustion air ejected from the nozzles located here.

Once the main phase of the combustion had ended, the remains of the corpse were moved, via a suitable trap, into the post-combustion chamber where they burned out completely, and then through the trap

of the post-combustion chamber into the ash receptacle where they cooled down.

By running this process in a continuous cycle, there were always two corpses in the oven, one in desiccation, the other in combustion, and the duration of the operation was generally controlled by the desiccation phase of a corpse.

2) Such a procedure was impossible in the Topf crematorium ovens, both because they were coke-fired and because the dimensions of the muffle precluded it.

In the double-muffle Topf oven at Gusen, the theoretical minimum duration of 40 minutes depended primarily on the particular structure of the grid of the muffle with its longitudinal and transverse bars which formed eight rectangular openings 30×25 cm[419] in size and allowed larger portions of the corpse to fall into the ash chamber. In this way the main phase of the combustion did not terminate in the muffle, but went on in the ash chamber. In addition, the duration depended on the presence of the forced-draft system which was more efficient than the one used in Crematorium I at Auschwitz where the same device served six muffles as compared to only two at Gusen. The Birkenau furnaces operated without any forced-draft system.

The cremation capacity data given in the Topf letter of July 14, 1941, were based on practical results previously obtained with the Gusen oven and not with those at Auschwitz: a rate of 30 corpses in about ten hours (or 40 minutes for a cremation in each of the two muffles) can be considered to be the maximum possible that can be attained in practice under forced-draft conditions. The capacity of 36 corpses in ten hours (or 33 minutes for one such cremation)[420] as an *average rate* is absolutely unrealistic. In the light of the operational results achieved with the Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens, such a duration can only be valid in very exceptional cases. Thus, even a duration of some 40 minutes would be an unachievable lower limit for the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

3) The average duration of the cremations performed at Westerbork was 50 minutes. But this Kori oven had a greater heat input than the Topf ovens on account of its main hearth with a grid 0.8 by 0.6 meters,

[419] The muffles of the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau had transverse bars spaced at a distance of 21 centimeters.

[420] These data are mentioned in the letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen dated July 14, 1941. Cf. chapter 9.6.2.

its grid loading of some 58 kg of coke per hour, and the secondary hearth located beneath the grid of the muffle; hence, this duration cannot be applied either to the Topf ovens at Birkenau.

4) In the initial phase of the cremation, the Topf ovens thus had a much lower heat input than Kori's; actually, the triple-muffle oven had a specific input per muffle of (70÷3 =) 23.3 kg of coke per hour, the 8-muffle oven (140÷8 =) 17.5 kg of coke per hour as against 58 kg of coke per hour for the Kori oven.[421]

In Kessler's cremation experiments, apart from the heat supplied by the gasifier, the heat generated by the coffin, too, was available during the initial phase of the cremation. This means that the evaporation of the water in the corpses occurred at temperatures fluctuating between 800°C, 1,000°C, and 780°C. In a cremation without a coffin, on the other hand, the heat coming from the generators was insufficient to maintain the temperature at such levels, and the evaporation of the water from the corpses caused a rapid drop in the temperature of the muffle which slowed down the incineration process (see chapter 8.7.2.). Its duration was therefore greater than that in Kessler's experiments or what was achieved in the Kori oven at Westerbork.

5) The effective duration of the cremation of a single corpse in the Birkenau crematoria was hence the time indicated in document 1: about one hour. It was confirmed by the Topf engineers Karl Schultze and Kurt Prüfer during their interrogations by the officers of the Soviet counter-espionage. During this interrogation, which took place on March 5, 1946, the Soviet investigator Schatanowski asked Prüfer the following question: "How many corpses could be burned in a crematorium at Auschwitz within one hour?" The Topf engineer replied:[422]

> *"In a crematorium with five ovens or 15 openings (muffles), fifteen corpses could be cremated in one hour."*

This corresponds to the cremation of one corpse per hour in each muffle. The Topf engineer Karl Schultze, who was fully familiar with the triple-muffle ovens for having designed and built their blowers, had declared the day before:[423]

> *"In two crematoria there were five ovens each and into each oven three corpses were introduced at one time, i.e. in one oven there*

[421] H. Kori drawing J. Nr. 9239.
[422] Interrogation of K. Prüfer on March 5, 1946. FSBRS, N-19262, pp. 33-34.
[423] Interrogation of K. Schultze on March 4, 1946. *Ibid.*, p. 52. Cf. Graf 2002, pp. 404 and 413f.

were three openings (muffles). In one hour, in a crematorium with five ovens fifteen corpses could be cremated."

These men, too, thus confirmed the cremation capacity of one corpse per muffle per hour. Now that we have established a duration of about one hour for cremations in these ovens, we must look into the question whether there were economic advantages to the simultaneous cremation of several corpses in one muffle in the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau. This problem will be dealt with in the next chapter.

8.7. Cremation Capacity of the Ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau

8.7.1. The Continued Operation of the Ovens

The duration of the cremation process certainly is an important factor with respect to the capacity of a crematorium oven, but it is far from being the only one, because it is controlled in an essential manner by two other factors: by the duration of the continuous operation of the installation and by the corpse load of the oven.

The output of coke-fired crematorium ovens or of any combustion device using solid fuel (on a stationary hearth) depends on the performance of the hearth grid, which drops inevitably over time because of the formation of slag. For that reason Topf's rules of operation for the double and triple-muffle ovens specified:[424]

"Every night the slag must be removed from the gasifier grids and the ash must be taken out."

a) The formation of slag

The formation of slag on gasifier hearths was an inevitable phenomenon, because any solid fuel contains incombustibles which melt at high temperatures and flow down through the layers of fuel and then, because of the cooling effect of the combustion air, solidify on the grid and block its openings (Schulze-Manitius, p. 89).

The melting point of the slag depends on the coal type and can vary between 1,000 and 1,500°C, but is usually 1,100 – 1,200°C (ter Linden, p. 14) whereas the temperature of the hearth is around 1,500°C (H. Keller 1928, p. 3). For an appreciation of the amount of slag which could

[424] Topf, Betriebsvorschrift des koksbeheizten Topf-Doppelmuffel-Einäscherungsofens, September 26, 1941. APMO, BW 11/1/3, p.2-3; Topf, Betriebsvorschrift des koksbeheizten Topf-Dreimuffel-Einäscherungsofens. March 1943, in: Pressac 1989, p. 222.

form on a hearth grid, we can see that in Kessler's cremation experiments of January 5, 1927, a full 21 kg (or 4.8%) of the 436 kg of coke employed was "incombustible" in the form of slag (Kessler 1927, p. 154).

b) The removal of the slag

Two tools were used to remove the slag from the grid: the stoker to loosen the slag and the ash-rake to brush out the slag fragments. This cleaning system demanded that the grid was exposed (and that, therefore, the gasifier was down), because cleaning was done from above and from below. In order to carry out the operation, the ash-gate was opened after the coke had burned out on the grid. The coke remnants were raked from the grid, the slag incrustations were loosened from above with the stoker and possibly from below with a curved tool to free the openings, and the pieces were raked off the grid. The down-time depended not only on the cleaning operation as such, but also on the time needed to run down and restart the oven.

c) The duration of the continued operation of the ovens

In a letter to the PoW camp at Lublin-Majdanek dated October 23, 1941, Hans Kori bases the production of hot water for the continuous operation of 50 showers – heated by the exhaust gases of the Kori 5-muffle cremation furnace – on a daily operation of 20 hours.[425] As Kori was trying to obtain the highest production possible, it is clear that he reckoned with a down-time of 4 hours each day for the ovens and that this down-time could have no other reason than the cleaning of the hearth grids.

One may thus assume that the continued operation of the ovens was normally some 20 hours per day. Obviously, this does not mean that the ovens could not be run for more than 20 hours at a time, but rather that their efficiency was best when operated over this span of time; after this period, the performance of the grids gradually dropped and diminished the operability of the device, eventually to the point of stopping it altogether.

In his expert report for the Höss trial, the engineer Roman Dawidowski assumed a period "of three hours of stoppage per day for the removal of the slag of the gasifiers and for other minor jobs" (see chapter

[425] APMM, sygn. VI-9a, vol. 1.

16.6.1.), basing himself on a specific statement by the witness Henryk Tauber (see chapter 9.2.5.).

8.7.2. Simultaneous Cremation of Several Bodies in one Muffle

To bring this study of the cremation capacity of Topf ovens to completion, we must still examine whether, and if so within what limits, it was possible to raise the capacity of the ovens by increasing the loading, i.e. by introducing two or more adult bodies into one muffle.

In civilian installations this practice was prohibited by law; in the Westerbork crematorium the practice was adopted only in cases of the joint incineration of the body of a small child together with that of an adult (or of two baby bodies together).

In the Terezín crematorium with its four naphtha-fired ovens the presence of two bodies in one muffle was the rule, but they were introduced in a staggered manner.

a) Experience with incinerators for slaughter-houses

From an experimental point of view, what comes technically closest to the simultaneous cremation of several bodies in one muffle is the operation of incinerators for slaughter-houses. Animal parts from slaughter-houses were also used for the test run of a new crematorium oven performed by the authorities in charge of verifying that the installation fulfilled all legal requirements (Beutinger, pp. 127f.). In Table 7 the operational results of eight such oven models built by Kori are summarized (Heepke 1905a, p. 43.).

These data are valid as reference points also for the topic of this chapter, because the simultaneous incineration of several animal carcasses or parts thereof in the same combustion chamber was actually done in these ovens.

The combustion chamber of oven 2b had a floor area of 1.38 m², practically equal to that of the triple-muffle Topf oven (1.4 m²). In this device, the cremation of several carcasses of a total weight equal to the maximum load (450 kg) corresponded to a specific floor loading of 326 kg per m²; in comparison, a body of 70 kg would have required a combustion time of ([60×70]÷56.2) = 75 minutes as against 60 minutes for the Topf triple-muffle oven.

Table 7: Capacity and Efficiency of Slaughter-House Incineration Ovens

oven type	max. load (offal)	coal required	time	coal/kg of organic substance	organic substance/hour
1a	250 kg	110 kg	5 hr	0.440 kg	50.0 kg
1b	310 kg	130 kg	6 hr	0.419 kg	51.7 kg
2a	370 kg	150 kg	7 hr	0.405 kg	52.8 kg
2b	450 kg	170 kg	8 hr	0.377 kg	56.2 kg
3a	540 kg	200 kg	9.5 hr	0.370 kg	56.8 kg
3b	650 kg	225 kg	10.5 hr	0.346 kg	61.9 kg
4a	750 kg	265 kg	12 hr	0.353 kg	62.5 kg
4b	900 kg	300 kg	13.5 hr	0.333 kg	66.7 kg

In the oven with the highest output, model 4b, the simultaneous cremation of 13 bodies of 70 kg each, the equivalent of the maximum load of 900 kg, would have required an average of ([60×70]÷66.7) = 63 minutes per corpse, practically equal to an individual cremation in the Topf ovens.

Therefore, even if multiple cremations had been possible in the ovens of Auschwitz-Birkenau, they would not have led to any gain in time or in fuel.

I stress the words "if multiple cremations had been possible," because the design of the triple-muffle and 8-muffle ovens did not allow multiple cremations. Actually, if two or three bodies had been introduced into one muffle, the corpses would have blocked the three openings between the outer muffles and the central one in the triple-muffle oven or those linking the inner to the outer muffles in the 8-muffle model, thus obstructing the passage of the combustion products coming from the gasifiers. The pile of bodies on the floor grid of the central muffle in a triple-muffle oven or of the outer muffles in the 8-muffle model would furthermore have blocked the open spaces of the grid, thus obstructing the flow of the gases from the gasifier into the flues. This effect would have reduced the draft in the chimney and that on the hearth with a corresponding drop in the heat input to the muffle. Multiple cremations of any kind would therefore have caused further serious problems of heat management.

While in the case of a cremation with a coffin the temperature of the muffle initially rose because of the heat contribution from the wood, there was a drop in the temperature when no coffin was used because of the vaporization of the water contained in the corpse. The importance of this effect was underlined by Kessler in his report on the experimental

cremations performed with single corpses and a coffin in a Ruppmann oven in 1927 (H. Keller 1929, p. 2):

> *"After the introduction of the corpse, the coffin catches fire immediately and the temperature rises by about 100 to 150 degrees. After some 5 to 19 minutes it decreases again by 100 to 200 degrees, even though not even the lid of the coffin has burned completely and the temperature of the combustion gases is 1,000 degrees or higher. Hence, the heat contribution of the coffin and the heat brought in from the hearth are insufficient to maintain the temperature at this level. This shows how strong the evaporation is."*

In the case of Topf ovens, the evaporation of water from several corpses in one muffle during the initial stages of the cremation process would have brought along a drastic drop in the temperature of the oven – much higher than Kessler's 100 to 200°C – with a corresponding drop in the temperature of the flues gases and a reduction in the draft of the chimney. This would, in turn, have lowered the draft on the hearth and the combustion rate of the gasifier grid at a moment when heat input was essential. The unavoidable drop in the temperature of the muffle below 700-600°C would have resulted in a mere carbonization of the corpses instead of a cremation (see chapter 10.2.5.).

b) Experience with the Westerbork crematorium

The practical results of the cremations at Westerbork fully confirm this conclusion. From the usual cremations of one adult corpse together with the body of one baby it can, in fact, be seen that these small bodies did have a significant effect on the cremation process; they extended the average duration by 14% (from 50 to 57 minutes) over that for the cremation of a single adult. This confirms in tendency that the simultaneous cremation of two normal adult corpses would have practically doubled the duration of the cremation (see chapter 8.6.3.).

c) A historical confirmation of single cremations

On June 3, 1940, Topf presented to *SS-Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz on the occasion of the start-up of the crematorium "500 ash capsules and as many refractory markers" (*500 Aschekapseln und Schamottemarken in gleicher Anzahl*)[426]), i.e. small numbered ceramic discs normally placed on the coffins (or directly on the corpses) in civilian crematoria for the identification of the ashes. In 1946 some of these

[426] RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 226-227.

discs were found in the vicinity of Crematorium II. They were collected by judge Jan Sehn who, to my knowledge, never mentioned them in the findings of his investigations concerning Auschwitz, though.[427] This confirms that, as a rule, not only at Auschwitz, but also in the Birkenau crematoria, only individual and no multiple cremations were carried out.

8.7.3. Soviet Assessments of Ovens at Majdanek, Sachsenhausen, Stutthof

After the liberation of the concentration camps in the East, the Soviets set up a number of "Commissions of investigation" which elaborated, among other things, technical assessments of the crematorium ovens at KL Stutthof (May 1945),[428] KL Sachsenhausen (June 1945),[429] and KL Majdanek (August 1944).[430] The Soviet experts established the duration of the cremations on the basis of an "Indicative diagram for the determination of the combustion time of corpses in various crematorium ovens as a function of temperature," which set out the following relationship between temperature and duration of a cremation:

800°C:	120 min.	1. (Klingenstierna oven)
900°C :	105 min.	
1,000°C:	90 min.	2. (Siemens oven)
1,100°C:	75 min.	
1,200°C:	60 min.	3. (Schneider oven)
1,300°C:	45 min.	
1,400°C:	30 min.	
1,500°C:	15 min.	

It is not known what sources were used for the diagram, but it is certain that, as far as temperatures in excess of 1,000°C are concerned, they were nothing but completely unrealistic extrapolations (see Kessler 1930, p. 136). As we have seen in chapter 8.3.1., the three ovens mentioned in the above table operated indirectly using hot air at 1,000°C and (according to the literature) needed 45 to 90 minutes for one cremation.

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[427] Account of A. Żłobnicki dated November 18, 1981. APMO, Oświadczenia (Declarations), vol. 96, p. 63a and 70.

[428] "Minutes of the technical expertise in the SS concentration camp Stutthof," May 14, 1945. GARF, 7021-106-216, pp. 5-6.

[429] GARF, 7021-104-3, pp. 26-31.

[430] GARF, 7021-107-9, pp. 245-249. For the original see Graf/Mattogno 2003b, p. 284.

The Soviet experts performed a further inacceptable extrapolation with respect to the load on the ovens. As the cremation of several corpses in one muffle was prohibited in civilian crematoria and as, consequently, there were no experimental data in this respect, the Soviet diagram was necessarily based on data obtained for individual cremations, hence the Soviet experts illegitimately attributed such data to an imaginary loading of two to twelve corpses in one muffle. However, in the preceding chapter we have seen that an increase in the loading of a cremation chamber would have entrained an increase in the time needed for the incineration and that, for a crematorium oven designed for individual cremations, this would not have brought along any practical advantage.

We may therefore say that, as no crematorium oven operated at an average temperature higher than 1,000°C and as any increase in the number of corpses loaded into the same cremation chamber would have multiplied the duration of the cremation at least by a factor equal to the number of corpses, the diagram prepared by the Soviet experts lacks any scientific foundation.

Assuming an average operating temperature of 800°C and a duration of 50 minutes for a single cremation (as in the Kori oven at Westerbork), the coke-fired Kori ovens at Majdanek, Sachsenhausen, and Stutthof had respective cremation capacities of 144, 115 and 58 corpses in 24 hours, which means that the Soviet experts underhandedly came up with cremation capacities five times the actual figures at Sachsenhausen, 13 times those of Majdanek and 15 times those of Stutthof!

What is important in this connection, however, is that not even the Soviet experts dared attribute to the actual cremation temperatures a cremation time of less than 60 minutes and that, to the highest temperature used for only a short time, 1,100°C, they assigned a duration of 75 minutes for the cremation process.

8.7.4. Cremation Capacity of the Crematory Ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau

What is left for us to do now is to present the conclusions with respect to the cremation capacity of the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Assuming an average continuous operating time of 20 hours per day, the maximum capacity of these installations was the following:

Table 8: Maximum Theoretical Capacity of the Birkenau Crematories		
Crematorium I (6 muffles)	20×6	120 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium II (15 muffles)	20×15	300 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium III (15 muffles)	20×15	300 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium IV (8 muffles)	20×8	160 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium V (8 muffles)	20×8	160 Normal corpses per day
	Total:	1,040 Normal corpses per day

This cremation capacity is, however, purely theoretical in the sense that it does not take into account an important fact: The note for the file of March 17, 1943, mentioned above, specified a normal activity of the crematoria of 12 hours per day, but the first hour was needed for the preheating of the ovens so that for the cremations themselves only 11 hours were available. Hence the respective capacities of the installations were the following:

Table 9: Maximum 11 hrs/day Capacity of the Birkenau Crematories		
Crematorium I (6 muffles)	11×6	66 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium II (15 muffles)	11×15	165 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium III (15 muffles)	11×15	165 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium IV (8 muffles)	11×8	88 Normal corpses per day
Crematorium V (8 muffles)	11×8	88 Normal corpses per day
	Total:	572 Normal corpses per day

8.7.5. Increase of Cremation Capacity at Birkenau

The cremation capacity presented above was of course a function of the number of muffles available at Auschwitz-Birkenau: 52. But why were they all deemed necessary? Initially, the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex relied only on the Auschwitz crematorium with its three ovens of two muffles each. The creation of a camp for Soviet PoWs at Birkenau led to the planning of a new crematorium with five ovens of three muffles each, which was to be built in the Auschwitz camp next to the old crematorium. The project was later moved to Birkenau and became Crematorium II. In August 1942 the construction of three more crematoria – numbered III to V – was decided.

The increase in cremation units at Birkenau depended on two concomitant factors. The first was the order given by Himmler during his visit of Auschwitz on July 17 and 18, 1942, to bring the camp capacity up to 200,000 detainees.[431] The second was the mortality of the detain-

[431] Letters from Bischoff to Amt CV of SS-WVHA dated August 3, and August 27, 1942. GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 37 and 41.

ees. August 1942 was the month with the highest death rate in the history of the Auschwitz camp, caused by a terrible typhus epidemic. Some 8,600 detainees[432] died during that month, almost twice as many as had died the month before (about 4,400 deaths); there were peaks of 500 deaths per day. The average strength of the camp at the time was little more than 40,000 inmates. Just imagine what could have occurred with a strength of 200,000 detainees! The ovens would therefore have to be able to cope with any future emergencies.

For the normal use of the ovens, however, the SS was much more pragmatic. On July 10, 1942, the head of the Auschwitz ZBL sent to the *Bauleitung* of KL Stutthof the blueprints of Crematorium II stating that this was an installation with five triple-muffle ovens for 30,000 detainees.[433] He therefore based himself on a ratio of (30,000÷15 =) one muffle for 2,000 detainees. Thus, the 46 muffles at Birkenau would have been sufficient for only (46×2,000 =) 92,000 detainees.

In the months that followed, the SS reviewed their figures, and in September 1942 the potential strength of the Birkenau camp was brought down to 140,000 detainees,[434] but the number of muffles stayed unchanged at 46, although on the basis of the ratio discussed above there should have been (140,000÷2,000 =) 70 muffles. Seen in this light, the number of muffles at Birkenau was actually inadequate for the projected expansions of the camp.

8.8. Historiographic Implications

8.8.1. Activity of the Birkenau Crematory Ovens

Table 10 shows the period of existence of the various crematoria at Birkenau. It is generally believed that the crematoria and the ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau represented the epitome of German technology in this field. Nothing could be further from the truth, though. On account of their overly simplified and to some extent faulty design, on account of their watered down brickwork, and on account of the absence of control devices for the individual muffles, the Topf ovens suffered constant

[432] The figures are based on a statistical analysis of the data contained in the *Sterbebücher* of Auschwitz.

[433] Letter from Bischoff to Bauleitung of Stutthof dated July 10, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-272, p. 168.

[434] The Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers Auschwitz O/S (Lay-out plan for PoW camp Auschwitz – Upper Silesia) dated October 6, 1942, had a strength of 20,000 detainees in BAI, 60,000 in BAII and as many in BA III. VHA, OT 31(2)/8.

Table 10: Times of Operation of the Birkenau Crematories		
	Period of existence	Days
Crematorium II	March 14, 1943 – November 27, 1944	625
Crematorium III	June 25, 1943 – November 27, 1944	522
Crematoria II & III	Subtotal:	1,147
Crematorium IV	March 22, 1943 – October 7, 1944	566
Crematorium V	April 4, 1943 – January 18, 1945	656
Crematoria IV & V	Subtotal:	1,222

breakdowns and had to be shut down frequently, sometimes for long periods of time. The first oven of the Auschwitz crematorium broke down after only five months of activity. On January 8, 1941, *Bauleiter* August Schlachter wrote to Topf:[435]

> *"SS-Neubauleitung has already informed you by cable that the first oven unit has already been damaged on account of intensive usage and can therefore no longer be operated at full capacity."*

In fact, the grids of the muffles had burned out as well as the inner walls of the gasifiers. On January 21 Schlachter informed Topf that the doors of the gasifiers had burned through as well. And still, from the opening of the camp (June 1940) until January 1941 only some 1,600 detainees had died who were not even all cremated in that oven.[436]

The second oven was completed at the end of February 1941, but as early as April 2 *SS-Neubauleitung* of Auschwitz informed Topf that its draft was too weak for a complete combustion.[437] The remedy was to be found in a better control of the flue gases from both ovens, but the results are unknown.

In early June 1941 the second oven was operated nearly every day,[438] but this probably caused the deteriorations of the chimney which had to be repaired between June 23 and 28 by means of angle-irons and tightening rods.[439]

At the end of September 1941 *SS-Neubauleitung* placed an order with Topf for the third double-muffle oven, even though the mortality had been below 40 deaths per day in August and September of that year.

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[435] RGVA, 502-1-327, p. 180.

[436] Obviously, only the corpses of those detainees who had died between August 15, 1940, and early January 1941 were cremated in that oven.

[437] RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 113.

[438] Letter from the head of the Political Department to SS-Neubauleitung dated June 7, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 111.

[439] Tätigkeitsbericht of Bauleiter Schlachter dated June 28, 1941, for the period of June 23-28.RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 31.

Between November 27 and December 4 the Topf technician Mähr repaired the two coke-fired double-muffle incineration ovens.[440] In early December ZBL ordered from Topf a wagon-load of refractory material for repair work.[440] This material was consumed between January and the second half of February 1942, because the freight-car with the refractory material for the third oven arrived on February 20. A Topf technician, probably Mähr, worked on the crematorium even between December 18 and 26, 1941.[441] On January 9, 1942, the inmate metal workshop received from ZBL an order to repair "3 oven doors" and "2 grids."[442] The job was carried out between January 14 and 21.[443] On January 31 the man in charge of the crematoria asked for repairs to be effected on the second oven. The job was done on February 4.[444] On February 10 the metal workshop did further repairs on two hearth doors.[445] On May 14 and 15 the flue duct from the three ovens to the chimney had to be repaired.[446]

On May 30 dangerous cracks appeared in the brickwork of the chimney, and on June 2 Berlin ordered it rebuilt.[447] The old chimney was knocked down and a new one erected between June 12 and August 8,[448] but on August 13 it was discovered that even the brickwork of the new chimney had already suffered, because the crematorium had been started up without waiting for the mortar to dry out completely.[449]

The double-muffle ovens of Crematorium I, as has been explained above, were stronger and better designed than the triple and 8-muffle ovens of Crematoria II to V. They were moreover used almost exclu-

[440] APMO, BW 11/1, pp. 4-5.
[441] RGVA, 502-1-175, p. 339.
[442] Werkstättenauftrag Nr.330 dated January 9, 1941. RGVA, 502-2-1, p. 70. The damage to the grids of the hearths would indicate that the "Ofentüren" were the doors of the hearth.
[443] Häftlingsschlosserei, Arbeitskarte dated January 13, 1941, Auftrag Nr.630. RGVA, 502-2-1, p. 71.
[444] RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 77.
[445] Häftlingsschlosserei, Arbeitskarte dated February 3, 1942, Auftrag Nr.747. RGVA, 502-2-1, p. 61.
[446] Aufstellung der ausgeführten Bauarbeiten. May 20, 1942. APMO, BW 11/5, pp. 5-6, and Bericht über ausgeführte Arbeiten im Krematorium dated June 1, 1942. APMO, BW11/5, pp. 1-2.
[447] Letter from Pollok to Bischoff dated May 30, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-314, p.12 and 502-1-312, p. 64; Telegram from WVHA dated June 2, 1942, signed by SS-Obersturmbannführer Liebehenschel. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 61.
[448] Handwritten note "Schornstein-Krematorium. BW 11," December 7, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-318, pp. 4f.
[449] Letter from Bischoff to camp command dated August 13, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 27.

sively for corpses of registered detainees even according to mainstream holocaust historiography (see Mattogno 2005e).

Crematorium II suffered its first serious damage a little over a week after start-up. On March 24 and 25, 1943, the Topf engineers Prüfer and Schultze went to Auschwitz to check what had happened: the three forced-draft devices had been damaged beyond repair and, as it turned out in the beginning of April, parts of the refractory lining of the flues and the chimney had fallen off. Besides, the gate valves of the flue ducts had melted.[450] In early April it was discovered that the problems were not limited to the three *Saugzuganlagen*, which had burned; when Prüfer was at Auschwitz (April 4 through 9), ZBL requested from him "a new proposal on the subject of the chimney body."[451] The crematorium ovens stood idle between May 17[452] and September 1, 1943,[453] and no doubt ran at a reduced rate from early April until May 16, because one can gather from a ZBL drawing that part of the walls of the central duct of the chimney had, in fact, been damaged.[454]

Crematorium III was in service from June 25 to December 31. Crematorium IV suffered damages beyond repair and operated only from March 22 to May 10.[455] As for Crematorium V, it was most likely in service at least until Crematorium III was put into operation, in other words for less than three months from April 4 to June 24.[456]

Thus the picture as given in Table 11 emerges of the service and down-time periods of the four crematoria of Birkenau in 1943.

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[450] APMO, BW 30/25, p. 8.

[451] Aktenvermerk by Kirschneck dated September 14, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 144.

[452] Between May 17 and 19, the Topf technician Messing dismantled the three Saugzuganlagen of Crematorium II (RGVA, 502-1-306, pp. 91-91a). A few days later, the Koehler Co. began the repair works (RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 37).

[453] The job probably ended at the end of August, because on August 30, Zentralbauleitung asked Materialverwaltung for various supplies for painting Crematorium II (RGVA, 502-1-314, p. 23).

[454] The chimney of Crematorium III was divided into three ducts having a cross-sectional area 80×120 cm.

[455] This date, too, is only approximate. Cracks appeared in the eight-muffle oven of Crematorium IV as early as April 3, APMO, BW 30/34, p. 42; Zentralbauleitung's telegram to Topf, dated May 14, 1943, requests "calculations re. heat engineering for stacks of Crematoria II and IV," APMO, BW 30/34, p. 41. This means that the stack of Crematorium IV as well had been seriously damaged before this date.

[456] Pressac claims that crema IV was no longer used after September 1943, Pressac 1993, p. 81, but does not document his claim. According to R. Höss the crematorium had to be "repeatedly shut down, since the stacks were burnt out after a short period of cremations of about four or six weeks," Broszat, p. 165.

Table 11: Crematories in Birkenau: Days of Operation in 1943				
Crema.	Period	Days total	Days operational	Days not operational
II	Mar. 14/15 – Dec. 31	293	167	126
III	June 25 – Dec. 31	190	190	–
IV	Mar. 22 – Dec. 31	285	50	235
V	Apr. 4 – June 24	272	82	190
	Total:	1,040	489	551

Furthermore, from October 21, 1943, to January 27, 1944, in other words for 98 days, several ovens of Crematoria II and III were probably out of service due to repairs on 20 oven doors (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 95).

The data available for 1944 are less complete. On February 2, 1944, ZBL requested the camp commander to issue a pass for entrance into the camp for Prüfer and the technician Martin Holick "to inspect and/or repair the damage to the large disinfestation unit at the PoW camp and to the crematoria."[457] On February 24, *Standortverwaltung* (garrison administration) asked ZBL to supply 20 sacks of Monolit, 200 normal and 200 wedge-shaped refractory bricks "for urgent repairs on the crematoria."[458] On April 13 an order was issued for the "repair of 20 oven doors" for the ovens of Crematoria II and III. These repairs were completed on October 17, i.e., 196 days later (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 96). At the beginning of May new cracks had appeared in the brickwork of the flue ducts or the chimney, for on May 9 the *Bauleiter* of KL II (Birkenau) requested from the camp commander a "permit to enter Crematoria I – IV" for the Koehler company,[459] because the latter had been "entrusted with urgent repair jobs on the crematoria."[460]

Between June 20 and July 20 another "two large and five small oven doors" were repaired (Czech 1989, p. 637). In 1943 Crematorium IV sustained irreparable damage, and Crematorium V was also seriously damaged. In early June 1944 there was an attempt to repair them, as the order of June 1 to "repair 30 oven doors" in these crematoria shows (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 96). The repairs were completed on June 6, 1944, and that very same day another order was issued for "repairs" to Crematoria II through V. These repairs were completed on July 4 (*ibid.*). However, if we take Pressac's word, Crematorium IV was used as a dormitory from late May 1944 on, for the prisoners making up the so

[457] RGVA, 502-1-345, p. 50.
[458] RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 13.
[459] The Koehler Co. had built the flue ducts and the chimneys of Crematoria II and III.
[460] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 377.

called "*Sonderkommando*" (Pressac 1989, p. 389). One can thus assume that Crematorium IV was not in service at all in 1944, whereas Crematorium V was functional from early June until January 18, 1945, i.e., for 230 days.

Let us put some order into all this. In 1943 Crematorium II operated at reduced capacity at least between April 9 and May 16, i.e. for at least 38 days. If we take into account the prudence which the damages to the old chimney of Crematorium I (which had to be knocked down and rebuilt) must have caused at ZBL, we may assume for this period an operating rate of 50% (10 hours per day) of this crematorium, equivalent to a stoppage of 19 days. Between May 17 and August 31 the crematorium stood idle for 107 days. Repairs of oven doors caused more standstills of individual ovens in Crematoria II and III. It is known that 20 such doors were under repair for 294 days and another 7 for 30 days. For one triple-muffle oven with its 10 oven doors this corresponds to 60 days of inactivity or, if we average this out over the two crematoria with their total of 10 ovens, such repairs caused a loss of 60 operating days at the two crematoria.

On February 2, 1944, damages in the brickwork of ovens in Crematoria II and III were ascertained; they were repaired after February 22. Thus, the damages concerned at least two ovens (at least one in each of the two crematoria) which stood idle for at least 25 days, the equivalent of (1×25÷5=) 5 days of total stoppage for each of these crematoria.

In early May the refractory brickwork of the flue ducts and the chimneys of Crematoria II, III, and V had to be repaired once again. In the absence of more precise data, we may assume a minimum time of three days for the repairs on each one of these installations.

Altogether then, Crematoria II and III were stopped for at least (60+5+5+3+3=) 76 days in 1944, or 38 days on average for each crematorium. Crematorium V was stopped for at least three days. Thus, the service times for the cremation ovens of Birkenau for the year 1944 (including January 1945) may be summarized as follows:

Table 12: Crematories in Birkenau: Days of Operation in 1944

Crema.	Period	Days total	Days operational	Days not operational
II	Jan. 1 – Oct. 30, 1944	304	266	38
III	Jan. 1 – Oct. 30, 1944	304	266	38
IV	–	0	0	–
V	Jan. 1 – Oct. 30, 1944	304	144	160
	Total:	912	676	236

Not considered in the above table are the days lost due to breakdowns of individual ovens as discussed above. The active period for Crematorium V ends as per October 30, 1944, because the alleged homicidal role of the crematoria is said to have ended at that time. We can now compute the total number of days on which the Birkenau were operational:

Crematorium II & III: 889 days Crematorium IV& V: 276 days

About 50,000 registered detainees died between March 14, 1943, and October 30, 1944,[461] some 3,050 of whom were cremated in Crematorium I.[462] Assuming that the remaining 46,950 were evenly distributed over the Birkenau crematoria in line with their available capacity in terms of muffles (Crematoria II and III: 86%, Crematoria IV and V: 14%), about 40,400 corpses would have been cremated in Crematoria II and III and about 6,650 in Crematoria IV and V. The cremation of these corpses thus required (40,400÷300 =) 135 days for Crematoria II and III and (6,650÷160 =) 42 days for Crematoria IV and V. Hence, for any other cremations, (889–135 =) 754 days would have been available at Crematoria II and III and (276–42 =) 234 days at Crematoria IV and V.

The hypothesis for the alleged homicidal gassings is that there were also children to be incinerated, which would have raised the capacity of the ovens by 20% in terms of the number of corpses and decreased the coke consumption by 20% per corpse (Mattogno 1994c, p. 305), as shown in the following table:

Table 13: Maximum Theoretical 20 hours per day Capacity of the Birkenau Crematories (with Children)

Crema.	Capacity in 20 hrs [corpses]	Coke consumption per normal corpse [kg]
I	144	18.8
II	360	12.8
III	360	12.8
IV	192	9.6
V	192	9.6
Total	1,248	

The number of allegedly gassed victims who could have been cremated would thus have been for Crematoria II and III: (754×360 =) 271,440, and for Crematoria IV and V: (234×192 =) 44,928, or a total of 316,368 persons.

[461] Data taken from *Sterbebücher* of Auschwitz.
[462] Leichenhallenbuch. Statistical analysis by J. Sehn. AGK, NTN, 92, pp. 143.

Van Pelt asserts that in Crematorium II alone 500,000 persons were gassed and cremated (2002, p. 68), but over its 433 days of activity this unit could at most have cremated (433×360 =) 155,880 corpses. Even though the figures are based on actual data, both this partial figure and the total of 316,368 persons cremated are merely an upper *theoretical* limit. Actually, the days of activity calculated above are those on which the installations were not damaged and *could* operate, but nothing tells us that they really did function on all of those days; and nothing proves that they always operated at the highest possible rate of 20 hours per day.

Simply by assuming a daily operation of only 12 hours, as in Jährling's note for the file of March 17, 1943, and even leaving aside the time needed for preheating the ovens, the above theoretical capacity (of 316,368 victims) drops by 40% to about 190,000 cremations. Furthermore, there is another factor which affected decisively the number of cremations in crematorium ovens: the durability of the refractory brickwork of the muffles.

8.8.2. Durability of the Refractory Brickwork of Crematorium Ovens[463]

On account of the thermal stress which it has to bear, the refractory brickwork of a crematorium oven ineluctably suffers wear which may go so far as to seriously reduce the efficiency of the unit. In civilian crematoria, as they were designed and built in the 1930s, the brickwork stood up for about 2,000 cremations, although Topf had been able to extend the brick life up to 3,000 cremations (Jakobskötter, p. 583).

In the crematorium ovens of the concentration camps, wear was an even greater problem, not only because of the reduced mass and the lower quality of the refractories, but also because of a greater strain on the units, both thermal and mechanical. How strong the effect of these various factors actually was can be appreciated by considering the Topf double-muffle oven at Gusen. This oven went into operation on January 29, 1941,[464] but was already seriously damaged eight months later. On September 24, 1941, the Mauthausen *Bauleitung* asked Topf to send a

[463] For a more detailed discussion see Mattogno 2005f, pp. 142-147, "The Durability of the Oven's Refractory Masonry."

[464] Date follows from the list of coke deliveries to the crematorium of Gusen. ÖDMM. B 12/31, p. 352.

technician immediately to repair the oven.[465] Topf sent August Willing, the man who had built the unit. He arrived at Gusen on October 11 and started on the oven the following day. We know from the respective work slips that the job was done from October 12 through November 9, 1941. During the week of October 16 to 22, over 68 hours, Willing rebuilt the refractory brickwork of the oven. During the week that followed, again working for 68 hours, he completed the repair of the refractory lining and did a test cremation. Willing stayed on at Gusen until November 9 to adjust the oven and to watch its performance.[466]

Between February 1 and October 15, 1941, the day on which the last cremations before the repair work were done, 2,876 detainees died at Gusen and were cremated during this period of 260 days; there were also about 14 more deaths between January 29 and 31, for a total of 2,890 cases. Hence, 1,445 cremations were carried out in each muffle (Marsalek, p. 156). This confirms that the lifetime of the muffle brickwork was of the order of 2,000 cremations.

The limit of 3,000 mentioned above was valid for the electric oven at the Erfurt crematorium, but in this type of furnace the temperature distribution was more uniform, and there was therefore less strain on the brickwork. This led to a longer lifetime, but such conditions did not apply to the coke-fired ovens.

On that basis, the 46 muffles in the Birkenau crematoria could have handled a maximum of about (46×2,000 =) 92,000 corpses, after which the ovens would have had to be torn down and rebuilt.

If, as van Pelt wants us to believe, 500,000 persons had been gassed and incinerated in Crematorium II alone, it would have been necessary to rebuild the 15 muffles ([500,000]÷[15×2,000] =) 16 times over the period involved! Such an effort would have generated a torrent of documents, but there is no trace of anything like this in the copious exchange of correspondence between Topf and the Auschwitz ZBL. The extant documents do not even contain a hint or an indication in this respect. What is more, such maintenance work was not part of the Topf activities at Auschwitz-Birkenau, something that has been established on the basis of the invoices. The documents, as mentioned above, speak only of the shipment to Auschwitz of one freight-car of refractory mate-

[465] Letter from SS Bauleitung of Mauthausen concentration camp to Topf, dated September 24, 1941. BAK, NS 4 Ma/54.

[466] J. A. Topf & Söhne, receipts for special billing regarding day-rate jobs, October 12 – November 9, 1941. BAK, NS 4 Ma/54.

rial: on December 1941 ZBL had ordered it as "replacement material for repair work."[467] This material was actually used for repairs on the second crematorium oven at the Auschwitz main camp. Considering this rebuilding of the refractory brickwork of the two muffles, the ovens of this crematorium could have handled at best 16,000 corpses. Hence, the total number of corpses which could have been incinerated in the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens is about (92,000+16,000 =) 108,000. This constitutes another confirmation of the fact that cremation of the allegedly gassed victims was technically impossible.

8.8.3. Number of Cremations in 1943: SS Expectations

In his note for the file of March 17, 1943, the civilian employee Jährling calculated the coke consumption of the four Birkenau crematoria "on the basis of indications from the firm Topf & Söhne (supplier of the ovens) dated March 11, 1943." The Topf letter has disappeared. It could not have referred to the fuel consumption of the hearths, however, but – in line with a practice established over decades – to the consumption of coke as a function of the number of cremations. As the coke consumption varied also with the kind of corpse cremated, it is preferable to look at the envisioned duration of the activity of the ovens.

It normally took on average an hour to burn a corpse, plus another hour to preheat the ovens. Hence, over 12 hours it would have been possible to burn 506 corpses in the four crematoria (cf. chapter 8.7.4.) Between January 1 and March 10, 1943, a total of 14,800 inmates died at Auschwitz, some 207 each day.[468] In February the mortality stood at some 7,400 inmates, a daily average of 264 deaths. During the same period, if we follow Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989), 72,700 persons were allegedly gassed, about 1,054 per day. If these gassings had actually occurred, the basis for the coke consumption and for the operating hours of the ovens should have been about 1,250 corpses per day.

If we accept Jährling's estimate as a function of the duration of the cremation – 15.7 kg per hour for Crematoria II and III and 11.7 kg per hour for Crematoria IV and V, or a weighted average of 14.3 kg of coke per hour per muffle – then the claimed figure of 1,250 corpse cremations daily would yield a coke consumption of (1,250×14.3 =) 17,875 kg of coke and an impossible 27 operating hours daily. In contrast to

[467] APMO, BW 11/1, p. 4.
[468] Data taken from *Sterbebücher* of Auschwitz.

that, Jährling forecasted a need of only 7,840 kg of coke and a realistic total of 12 operating hours per day. This demonstrates that the operation of the ovens envisioned by Jährling was based exclusively on the "natural" mortality of the registered inmates.

The facts tell us moreover that Jährling's estimate was enormously exaggerated, because between March 15 and October 25, 1943, a total of 607 tons of coke (plus 96 m³ of kindling wood) was delivered to the crematoria of Auschwitz-Birkenau,[469] 2.7 tons per day on average, little more than a third of what Jährling had estimated. It corresponded to an average running time of the ovens of a little over 4 hours per day. We will return to this point in chapter 9.4.

Other documents tell us in what way the ovens were being used at Crematorium II even as Jährling was writing his memo. We have seen that Crematorium II encountered a first series of problems a little more than one week after it had been started up. As the Topf engineers were summoned to Auschwitz by ZBL on the 24th, it is clear that the damage had occurred at least one day earlier. As we know, the problem was that part of the refractory lining in the flue ducts and the chimney had broken loose.

According to Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989), between March 14, 1943, the beginning of the alleged criminal activity of Crematorium II, and March 23 there were four homicidal gassings with subsequent cremations in this crematorium, involving 6,342 persons: on the 14th (1,492 persons), on the 16th (959 persons), on the 20th (2,191 persons), and on the 23rd (1,700 persons). If this were true, even under the assumption of an all-out operation of the ovens and of the presence of children (360 corpses per day), the cremation of 6,342 corpses would have required (6,342÷360 =) more than 17 days, i.e. it would have taken until March 31 – or even into early April, if we take into account the 1,400 registered detainees who died natural deaths during this period and had to be cremated as well (Crematorium IV was started up on March 19, 1943). Hence the cremation of the persons allegedly gassed would have been technically impossible to start with. But this is not all. If such a mass cremation had actually occurred, all crematorium ovens would have had to operate at full capacity, as the witness Henryk Tauber tells us (Tauber 1945b, pp. 139f.):

[469] "Koks i węgiel dla krematoriów w tonach" (Coke and coal for the crematoria in tons). APMO, D-AuI-4.

> *"During the cremation of the corpses of this first transport in mid-March 1943 we worked without a break for 48 hours, but could not burn all the corpses, because in the meantime a Greek transport had arrived which was gassed as well."*

Historically, though, things are quite different. To establish the responsibilities for the damage to the chimney, ZBL held an inquiry and summoned Robert Koehler, who had built the chimney, and Prüfer, who had designed it. As results from Kirschneck's final report on the matter dated September 13, 1943, it was found that the main cause of the damage to the chimney was closely linked to "firing of individual ovens only"[470] in the sense that the first design of the chimney did not take into account the variations in the thermal expansion of the individual chimney ducts, a mistake that would only be remedied in the design of the new chimney. This firing of only a few ovens at a time is in blatant disagreement with the mass cremation of allegedly gassed victims (as well as with H. Tauber's statement; see chapter 9.3.3.), so that this alleged mass cremation is not only technically absurd but also historically false.

The *fact* of an operation of individual ovens only shows furthermore that a continuous operation of all ovens for 20 hours per day as discussed in chapter 8.7.1. cannot even be valid for a period of alleged mass gassings with subsequent cremations.

The cracks which formed in the 8-muffle oven of Crematorium IV after a few weeks of operation and which caused ZBL to request the help of Topf on April 3, 1943,[471] are likewise to be attributed to the stress on the refractory brickwork of the unit brought about by the use of only individual oven pairs.

8.8.4. Number of Cremations in 1943: Coke Consumption

In the archive of the Auschwitz Museum hundreds of receipts have been preserved documenting the amount of coke furnished to the crematoria nearly every day.[472] The amounts of coke thus supplied were added up month by month by an employee of the Museum and com-

[470] The damage to the three forced-draft units caused by "excessively high temperatures" was instead linked to the a.m. error in the design of the triple-muffle oven: the gases from the two outer muffles came together in the central muffle: the combined volumetric flow rate of the gases from all three muffles did not have a residence time high enough for the gases to burn completely; they kept on burning after having left the oven, giving up their heat in the flue ducts and the chimney. This effect also caused the damage to the smoke traps.

[471] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 42.

[472] APMO, Bescheinigung, segregator 22a. D-AuI-4.

piled in a list covering the coke deliveries for the period from February 16, 1942, to October 25, 1943.[473] The daily entries show that the list is complete; this has been confirmed by Jean-Claude Pressac as well.[474] In 1943 the deliveries were as given in Table 14.

Table 14: Coke Deliveries to Auschwitz in 1943

Month	coke [t]	Month	coke [t]
January	23	June	61
February	40	July	67
March	144.5	August	71
April	60	September	61
May	95	October	82
		Total:	704.5

In addition, in September and October 1943 a total of 96 m³ of firewood was supplied to the crematoria.

As Crematorium II began operating on March 14, 1943 (the other three did so later), this date must be taken as the point of departure. Between March 14 and October 25, 1942, the crematoria received a total of 607 tons of coke. The 96 m³ of wood mentioned above correspond to some 43 tons of wood. The heating value of 1 kg of wood is at best equivalent to half of that of 1 kg of coke, thus the 43 tons of wood correspond to 21.5 tons of coke, and we thus obtain a total amount of coke equivalents of (607+21.5=) 628.5 tons. Some 16,000 detainees died between March 14 and October 25, 1943,[475] which makes the coke consumption per corpse (628,500÷ 16,000 =) 39.3 kilograms. Included in this figure is also the amount of coke needed from time to time to preheat the ovens.

The example of the Gusen oven provides us with further clarification in this matter. At Gusen 2,890 corpses were incinerated with 138,430 kg of coke over a period of 260 days between January 29 to October 15, 1941, or an average of 47.9 kg of coke per corpse. These cremations were carried out every other day, and in each cycle of cremations 22 bodies were incinerated on average. Between October 26 and 30, within five days, 129 corpses were cremated, yet this time on a daily basis, with an average of 26 corpses in each cycle and a consumption of 37.2 kg of coke per corpse. Between October 31 and November 12, in 13 days of operation, 677 corpses were cremated, again with cremations

[473] "Koks i węgiel dla krematoriów w tonach" (Coke and coal for the crematoria in tons). APMO, D-AuI-4.
[474] Pressac 1989, p. 224. Cf. chapter 9.4.
[475] Data taken from *Sterbebücher* of Auschwitz.

taking place every day, with 52 corpses being incinerated in each cycle; the fuel consumption was 30.6 kg of coke per corpse (see chapter 11.5.). Thus, when going from a discontinuous operation (cremations every other day) with (relatively) few incinerations (22 per day) to a continuous operation (daily) with many cremations (52 per day), coke consumption dropped from 47.9 to 30.6 kg per corpse, i.e. to [(30.6÷47.9)×100 =] 63.9%, with coke savings of a little over one third. In other words, if the cremation of 20 corpses required (20×47.9 =) 958 kg of coke in the first case, only (958×0.639 =) 612 kg (or 20×30.6) were needed in the third case. The difference of (958–612 =) 346 kg was used for preheating the oven.

As a ball-park estimate, if we apply this coefficient to the ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the consumption of coke for an emaciated corpse would have been:

- 50.7 kg in an oven with 2 muffles
- 34.3 kg in an oven with 3 muffles and
- 25.0 kg in an oven with 8 muffles.

Between March 14 and July 19, 1943, when Crematorium I was shut down for good, 3,050 detainees died in the Auschwitz camp and were registered in the *Leichenhallenbuch* (the ledger of the morgue in *block* 28 at Auschwitz). Between March 14 and October 25, 1943, Crematoria II and III were operational over 257 days altogether, Crematoria IV and V over 132 days. From the weighted average of the availabilities of the muffles we obtain an availability of 78% for Crematoria II and III and of 22% for Crematoria IV and V. If we use these figures for a distribution of the cremations, then we get:

- 16,000 – 3,050 = 12,950 bodies cremated in the Birkenau crematoria
- 12,950 × 0.78 ≈ 10,100 bodies cremated in Crematoria II and III
- 12,950 × 0.22 ≈ 2,850 bodies cremated in Crematoria IV and V.

The theoretical coke consumption is therefore as follows:

- 3,050 × 32.5 = 99,125 kg for Crematorium I
- 10,100 × 22 = 222,200 kg for Crematoria II and III
- 2,850 × 16 = 45,600 kg for Crematoria IV and V,

or a total consumption of 366,925 kg, which corresponds to 58.38% of the total delivered. This percentage is in good agreement with what had been observed at Gusen (63.9%). The amount of coke supplied to the crematoria was therefore fully compatible with the cremation of the corpses of the registered inmates who had died of natural causes.

Let us now consider the question of the alleged homicidal gassings. If we follow the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* (Czech 1989), 116,794 persons, or roughly 116,800, are said to have been gassed between March 14 and October 25, 1943. As F. Piper tells us, no open-air cremations were carried out, once Crematorium II had begun operating (cf. next chapter), hence the corpses of all persons gassed were cremated in the crematoria.

We have seen that out of the 628,500 kg of coke supplied in total, no less than 366,925 were needed for the incineration of the bodies of the registered detainees who had died during the above period. Thus, some (628,500 – 366,925 =) 261,575 kg of coke were available for the corpses of those gassed, if we assume a continuous operation of the ovens.

Let us take the case which is most favorable for the thesis of homicidal gassings in terms of heat management, i.e. normal corpses and a decrease of $^1/_6$ on account of the presence of children. Using the above method, we have:

- 116,800 × 0.78 ≈ 91,100 corpses cremated in Crematoria II and III
- 116,800 × 0.22 ≈ 25,700 corpses cremated in Crematoria IV and V, requiring
- 91,100 × (16×$^5/_6$) ≈ 1,214,700 kg
- 25,700 × (12×$^5/_6$) ≈ 257,000 kg, or a total of 1,471,700 kg of coke.

Conversely, the weighted average consumption of coke for one corpse would have been [(16×0.78)+(12×0.22)]×$^5/_6$ =12.6 kg, which means that with the 261,575 kg of coke available, as explained above, it would have been possible to cremate (261,575÷12.6) ≈ 20,000 corpses. But what happened to the remaining 96,800 corpses, if no open-air cremations were practiced in 1943?

The cremation of the corpses of 116,800 allegedly gassed persons would thus have required, in the most favorable case, 1,471,700 kg of coke, but only 261,575 kg were actually available. Hence, hardly (251,900÷116,800 =) 2.2 kg of coke per corpse could have been used, an amount absolutely insufficient for a cremation. These amounts do not even take into account the quantities of coke needed for preheating the ovens up to operating temperature.

The average number of deaths during the period in question was about 70 per day. At Gusen mortality was 2,890 deaths during the period mentioned, or a mean value of 11 per day. Cremations were performed in two muffles every other day. By comparison, a similar procedure at Auschwitz would have necessitated 13 muffles with a coke con-

sumption of (366,925÷0.639=) 574,421 kg, or some 91% of the total amount delivered. We must also take into consideration that a certain amount of coke and/or wood was needed to preheat the garbage incinerator (*Müllverbrennungsofen*) present in both Crematorium II and Crematorium III.

The conclusion from the above discussion is that the amount of coke delivered to the crematoria between March and October 1943 proves that the only corpses incinerated there were those of registered detainees who had died of natural causes. Hence, during this period no mass exterminations by means of gas occurred at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

8.8.5. Open-Air Cremations of 1944

The arguments proffered in the chapter above are not only technically valid, they also have a historical significance, for during the period investigated, March through October 1943, holocaust historiography holds that there were no open-air cremations and that all cremations took place in crematoria. On this subject Franciszek Piper, director of the history department of the Auschwitz Museum, has written (1994, p. 164):

> *"In the spring of 1943, with the launching of new gas chambers and crematoria, the two bunkers were shut down. Shortly thereafter, bunker 1 and the nearby barracks were dismantled. The incineration pits were filled in with earth and leveled. The same work was performed on the pits and barracks of bunker 2, but the bunker itself was left intact. It was brought into operation again in May 1944 during the extermination of Hungarian Jews. At that time several incineration pits were reexcavated and new barracks for undressing were constructed."* (Emph. added)

Piper bases his statement on the documentation available on this topic at the Auschwitz Museum. Therefore, if he comes to this conclusion, we may assume that no document or testimony to the contrary is known to him.

Let us consider the question of the aerial photographs of Birkenau taken in 1944. I wish to state, first of all, that I have demonstrated with abundant evidence in my study *The Bunkers of Auschwitz* (Mattogno 2004i) that the "bunkers," as homicidal installations, never existed, to say nothing of the respective "incineration pits."

Some photographs taken of Birkenau from the air in 1944 – in particular the one dated August 23, 1944, published in 2004 amid much publicity – show without any doubt a column of smoke arising in the yard north of Crematorium V, which is taken to be documentary evidence corroborating the declarations made by the eyewitnesses. In my study *Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations* (Mattogno 2005c) I have addressed this very point, analyzing all the known aerial photographs as well as those taken on the ground, and have shown:

1) Holocaust historiography knows no details about the "incineration pits" and is not in a position to say how many there were, where they were, how large they were, or what their capacity was.
2) The testimonies of former inmates differ profoundly as far as the number, the location, the dimensions, and the capacity of the "incineration pits" are concerned.
3) The testimonies of former inmates are radically refuted by the aerial photographs of Birkenau.
4) While the photographs do show an outdoor activity generating smoke in the summer of 1944, it is of an absolutely insignificant order of magnitude and absolutely incommensurate with the gigantic order of magnitude propounded by official historiography.
5) The photographs taken on the ground show a cremation activity in the open air in the northern yard of Crematorium V, but again of an extremely limited size and absolutely incompatible with the figures proffered by official historiography.
6) If the story of mass exterminations at Birkenau were true, the aerial photographs would have to show, among other things, "incineration pits" covering at least 5,900 m², both in the area of the so-called "bunker 2" (between 1 and 4 trenches, depending on the witness) and in the area of Crematorium V (between 2 and 5 trenches). Yet the aerial photographs show actually only a single area of some 50 m² in the vicinity of Crematorium V producing smoke (sufficient to incinerate some 50 corpses per day) and no trace of any trenches or of smoke in the vicinity of "bunker 2."

It is worthwhile to go deeper into item 1, which by itself shows the inconsistency of the assertions of holocaust historiography. In the *magnum opus* in five volumes edited by the Auschwitz Museum in 1995, Franciszek Piper devoted only a total of three lines to the question of the cremation trenches! (Piper 2005, p. 121) The reason for this brevity is easy to understand: no document exists about these "incineration

Table 15: Witness Claims about Cremation Pits in Birkenau

Witness	# of Pits	Length [m]	Width [m]	Depth [m]	Capacity
Tauber (Soviet)	4	–	–	–	400/pit/48h
Tauber (Polish)	5	–	–	–	–
Mandelbaum	–	30-35	15	–	1,500-1,800 /pit/24-48h
Jankowski	2	20	2	2	2,000 (in ?)
Dragon	5	25	6	3	5,000/5 pits/24h
Bendel	3	12	6	1.5	1,000/h
Müller	5	40-50	8	2	1,200/pit/5-6h

pits," and thus everything depends on the witnesses who, however, have stories to tell that are most contradictory and thus without any value from a historiographic point of view. Table 15, for example, lists what the various testimonies tell us about the "cremation trenches" in the northern yard of Crematorium V (see Mattogno 2005c, pp. 13-23).

As explained above, if the statements of the witnesses on the subject of the enormous exterminations allegedly perpetrated at Birkenau in 1944 were true, there would have had to exist in the camp area "incineration pits" covering at least 5,900 m², i.e. the equivalent of

- 11 pits as described by Henryk Mandelbaum (35×5 m)
- 14 pits as described by Filip Müller (50×8 m)
- 39 pits as described by Szlama Dragon (25×6 m)
- 82 pits as described by C. Sigismund Bendel (12×6 m)
- 147 pits as described by Stanislaw Jankowski (20×2 m).

However, the *only* smoking area of some 50 m² which appears on the aerial photographs of Birkenau demolishes totally and irrefutably all the statements of the eyewitnesses.

At variance with all testimonies and the aerial photographs, Pressac asserts that in the area of "bunker" 2 there were two "cremation trenches" of 30 m² and 20 m², respectively, and another three in the yard of Crematorium V which measured 3.5 m × 15 m each,[476] which brings the total to 207.5 m², as against the 5,900 m² which would have been required for the alleged mass cremations.

Let me add that all the trenches for which witnesses give a depth would go lower than the ground-water level which stood at 1.2 m below the surface (see chapter 10.2.15), hence they would have been filled with water up to a depth between 0.3 and 1.8 meters (see Gärtner/Rade-

[476] Pressac 1994, p. 172. In the French edition such data are not included.

macher and Mattogno 2003a). Under these conditions it makes no sense to speak of "cremation trenches."

8.8.6. Van Pelt's Eloquent Silence

The question of the "incineration pits" has a fundamental importance for the figures concerning the alleged extermination of Jews at Auschwitz in 1944. Piper writes that they had a total cremation capacity of 10,000 corpses per day (Piper 1994, p. 173):

> *"The remainder were burned at the rate of about 5,000 corpses in 24 hours in the incineration pits near the crematoria. The same number were incinerated in the pits of bunker 2, which was reactivated in the spring of 1944."*

In spite of this, van Pelt has furnished no indications in this respect – no numbers, no dimensions, no locations (van Pelt 2002). His silence is all the more telling, as he was well aware of the fact that the aerial photographs categorically refuted the respective testimonies.

Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman explain that they had turned to Dr. Nevin Bryant, supervisor of Cartographic Applications and Image Processing Applications at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California (operated by the California Institute of Technology), and had the aerial photographs of the Birkenau area analyzed "by digital technology." They tell us that "the photographic negatives were converted to digital data in the computer, then enhanced with software programs used by NASA for aerial and satellite images" (Shermer/Grobman, p. 143). However, this most sophisticated technology notwithstanding, Shermer and Grobman say absolutely nothing about the absence of mass "incineration pits" on the aerial photographs, even though they devoted no fewer than seven enlargements to a documentation of columns of inmates marching through the camp.[477]

Van Pelt writes that, when Shermer and Grobman saw Nevin Bryant, he was present as well. Here is his account of the meeting (1999, p. 211; cf. 2002, p. 84):

> *"The original CIA analysis was based on* [the] *study of analog enlargements. With new digital technologies it has become possible, however, to revisit the issue of the evidentiary value of the photos. In April 1996, I visited Los Angeles to meet with Michael Shermer, the*

[477] Cf. my observations in this respect in the article "Denying Evidence. The Phony 'Holocaust' 'Convergence of Evidence,'" in: Rudolf/Mattogno 2005, pp. 224-231.

editor of Skeptic *magazine, and Alex Grobman, the director of the Martyrs Memorial and Holocaust Museum. Together we went to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena to meet with Dr. Nevin Bryant, supervisor of Cartographic Applications and Image Processing Applications. One of the world leaders in the analysis of aerial and satellite images, Dr. Bryant agreed to analyze with his computers the photos, enhancing the data using software programs used by NASA. The most important results were that the four shaded markings on the roofs of morgue 1 of both crematorium 2 and 3 did belong to original negative, and were not added later on. Furthermore, Dr. Bryant discovered through comparison of various consecutive exposures taken on May 31, 1944 a long line of people moving into the compound of crematorium 5."*

And that is all! From the silence of Shermer and Grobman on the one hand and of van Pelt on the other we may deduce that the NASA's *Jet Propulsion Laboratory* at *California Institute of Technology*, when it analyzed the aerial photographs taken of Birkenau in 1944, was in fact unable to identify any of the mass "incineration pits" mentioned by the witnesses. If this were not so, the above authors would have shouted their discovery from the rooftops as "converging evidence" for the reliability of the testimonies.

It is clear, though, that the wisp of smoke from the northern yard of Crematorium V cannot have escaped the attention of Nevin Bryant. This means that Shermer and Grobman as well as van Pelt preferred, in fact, not to mention it – obviously because they realized that such a minute open-air cremation activity was at variance with the declarations of all the members of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*"!

Van Pelt also keeps quiet about another important point connected with the aerial photographs: the question of smoke coming from the crematorium chimneys. Polemicizing against Germar Rudolf, van Pelt devotes half a page of his book to the demonstration that the chimneys of the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau always belched smoke during the cremations. He writes, i.a., the following (2002, p. 504):

"The Proceedings of the Associations of American Cemetery Superintendents *provided ample evidence of continuous search by crematory engineers to control the smoke, and that only by 1940 was the problem solved by a combination of practices that included using oil and gas instead of coke as fuel, inserting the corpse into a cold*

instead of a preheated oven,[478] *slowing down the incineration, installing afterburners and air-pollution control scrubbers, and establishing procedures for maintenance. None of these practices applied to the Auschwitz crematoria."*

Hence, while cremations went on, the chimneys always smoked. This is perfectly true. As late as 1945 the problem of smoke haunted even the civilian crematoria,[479] all the more so the installations at Auschwitz, both because of the absence of recuperators to preheat the combustion air and because of the inefficient operation of the ovens which precluded the control of individual muffles. Van Pelt, however, has avoided to draw the inevitable conclusions from this state of the matter. In the whole series of aerial photographs taken in 1944 (May 21, June 26, July 8, August 20, 23 & 25, September 13) and showing the crematoria of Birkenau, smoke from crematoria appears only on *one* such photo, that of August 20, and only over the chimney of *one* crematorium (no. III). This photograph is of particular importance, because besides the chimney of Crematorium III it shows smoke also over the northern yard of Crematorium V. On that day, however, according to D. Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989, pp. 855f.), no homicidal gassing was carried out and hence the open-air incineration could not have had a nefarious cause. Besides, if all of the Birkenau crematoria were operational, why should any open-air cremations be carried out at all?[480]

Actually, in the light of what has been said above, the absence of smoke over the crematorium chimneys is *proof* of their inactivity. This refutes once and for all the testimonies of all the witnesses who assert, in a chorus of false statements, that the crematoria at that time operated all out, day and night. The small-scale cremations outside in the courtyard of the Crematorium V probably resulted from the frequent failure of the crematoria or from lack of coke.

8.8.7. The Witnesses

A further basic task in the scientific study of the cremations at Auschwitz concerns the reliability of the testimonies. From 1945 on the eyewitnesses embraced enthusiastically the Soviet propaganda figure of

[478] This is a technically insane assertion: the introduction of a corpse into a cold oven would have brought about an even more intensive generation of smoke.
[479] In 1944 the engineer Hans Keller ran a series of experiments to gain an understanding of the causes of smoke generation. H. Keller 1945.
[480] I have presented these arguments in chapter 10.3.4. of Mattogno 2005c, pp. 63-66.

four million dead and, in order to back it up technically, made the most absurd statements about the crematorium ovens.[481] How nonsensical their declarations were, can be gathered from the following selection in which I will examine the statements of the self-styled members of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*" of the Birkenau crematoria in chronological order.

1. Szlama Dragon

"Up to 10,000 – 12,000 persons were cremated in 24 hours in all the crematoria."[482]

"We brought the corpses up to the ovens on steel stretchers which we then moved into the oven on rollers mounted next to the oven gates. […]. *We placed 3 corpses into each oven* [muffle…]. *Cremation took 15-20 minutes."*[483]

The data announced by the witness correspond to an average capacity of [(1440÷17.5)×30×3 =] 7,400 corpses in 24 hours for Crematoria II/III and of [(1440÷17.5)×16×3 =] 3,950 corpses for Crematoria IV/V, totaling 11,350 corpses in 24 hours.

2. Henryk Mandelbaum

"Each shift worked 12 hours and cremated 6,000 – 7,000 corpses."[484]

"There were 5 ovens with 3 cremation chambers. […]. *In each oven* [muffle] *one put 4* [corpses] *and 6, if they were very thin. Cremation took 12, 13, and* [or] *15 minutes. As the Kommandoführer used to say, such a transport had to be cremated in one shift."*[485]

"When the persons [corpses] *were not so heavy, one put 3, 4, and even 5 into one oven* [muffle], *and there were 10 ovens. That means, 50 corpses were loaded at one time. Cremation took 12-13 minutes. That depended on the weight of the corpses, but with normal men 12 to 15 minutes on average."*[486]

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[481] Cf. in this connection Mattogno 2003f, pp. 387-392.

[482] Deposition by Sz. Dragon on February 26, 1945, before the Soviet commission of investigation. GARF, 7021-108-12, p. 186.

[483] Deposition by S. Dragon on May 10 and 11, 1945, before judge Jan Sehn. Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 108.

[484] Deposition by H. Mandelbaum on February 27, 1945, before the Soviet commission of investigation. GARF, 7021-108, p. 95; the witness speaks of Crematorium V.

[485] Deposition by H. Mandelbaum at the trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison, fifth session. AGK, NTN, 162, p. 167.

[486] Deposition by H. Mandelbaum at the Höss trial, eighth session. AGK, NTN, 108, p. 853.

A cremation capacity of 6,000 to 7,000 corpses in 12 hours in Crematorium V translates into 12,000 to 14,000 corpses in 24 hours and into 24,000 to 28,000 in Crematoria IV and V, 26,000 on average. For Crematoria II and III, cremation of three to five corpses per muffle in 12-15 minutes corresponds to a mean capacity of ([1,440÷13.5]×30×4=] 12,800 corpses in 24 hours; for all crematoria together, 38,800 corpses in 24 hours.

3. Henryk Tauber

> *"In this crematorium there were five ovens with three muffles each. Four to five corpses were placed into each muffle. The corpses burned for 20-25 minutes.* […] *Then followed crematoria no. 4 and 5; they were different. In each crematorium was an oven with 8 muffles. Four to five persons were placed into each muffle. The duration of the cremation was 35 minutes. One oven cremated 1,200 – 1,500 persons per day."* (Tauber 1945a, pp. 5f.)
>
> *"In continuous operation, the crematorium cremated two loads per hour. According to the rules, we had to load new corpses into the muffle every half hour.*
>
> *Oberkapo August explained to us that, on the basis of the design and the calculations of the crematorium, 5-7 minutes had been set for the cremation of one corpse in one muffle. Initially he did not allow us to load more than 3 corpses. At this rate we had to work without stopping, because when we had loaded the last muffle,* [the load of] *the first had already burned. To allow us a pause in our work, we loaded 4-5 corpses into each muffle. Cremation of such a load took longer, therefore once we had loaded the last muffle, we had a few minutes of time to spare while the load in the first muffle burned.* […] *On average, 2,500 corpses were burned per day."* (Tauber 1945b, pp. 133, 139)

The cremation of four to five corpses per muffle in 20-25 minutes in Crematoria II and III corresponds to an average capacity of [(1440÷22.5)×30×4.5 =] 8,640 corpses in 24 hours. For Crematoria IV and V combined, on the other hand, four to five corpses per muffle in 35 minutes correspond to [(1440÷35)×16×4.5 =) 2,960 corpses in 24 hours, altogether [8,860+2,960 =] 11,600 corpses per day in all crematoria.

In his statement before judge Jan Sehn, Tauber reduced the capacity of Crematorium II to 2,500 corpses per day, which amounts to four to five corpses cremated in 39 minutes. On this basis, the combined capac-

ity of Crematoria IV and V would have been some 2,650 corpses in 24 hours, for a total of about [(2,500×2)+2,650 =] 7,650.

4. David Flamenbaum

> *"In crematoria 2 and 3, each oven accommodated 6 corpses at a time which burned within 15 minutes, and there were 5 ovens. Therefore, each crematorium handled 120 corpses in one hour. Crematoria 4 and 5 also had the same capacity."*[487]

According to this witness, six corpses were fed into each oven of Crematoria II and III, two per muffle, which burned in 15 minutes, hence [(60÷15)×15×2 =] 120 corpses were cremated in one hour or 2,880 in 24 hours, i.e. 5,760 in both crematoria together. As Crematoria IV and V had the same capacity per muffle according to this witness, each of them could absorb [(1,440÷15)×16×2 =] 3,070 corpses in 24 hours, or a total of 8,830 for the two.

5. Stanilaw Jankowski

> *"There were four crematoria in Birkenau at the time. Crematoria II and III with 15 ovens* [muffles] *each and a capacity of 5,000 corpses per day, and Crematoria IV and V with 8 ovens* [muffles] *each which could cremate a total of 3,000 corpses per day. In the four ovens* [crematoria] *one could burn altogether 8,000 corpses per day."*[488]

6. Miklos Nyiszli

> *"There, they put three at a time on a pushing device made of steel sheet.* […]. *The bodies of the dead were reduced to ashes within 20 minutes. The crematorium worked with 15 ovens. This signifies the daily cremation of 5,000 people. Four crematoria were running at the same rate. A total of 20,000 people passed through the gas chamber every day and then on into the crematorium ovens."* (1946, p. 38)

From the data proffered by the witness we obtain a capacity of [(1440÷20)×15×3 =] 3,240 corpses in 24 hours for Crematorium II or 6,480 corpses for the two. The total announced by the witness (5,000 per crematorium, 10,000 for both) is therefore wrong. The witness be-

[487] Deposition by D. Flamenbaum 1945 on March 1, 1945, before the Soviet commission of investigation. GARF, 7021-108-8, p. 177.

[488] Deposition by S. Jankowski on April 13, 1945, before judge Jan Sehn, in: Bezwińska/Świebocka, p. 43.

lieved, moreover, that Crematoria IV and V had the same number of muffles as Crematoria II and III and therefore attributed to these crematoria the same capacity of 10,000 corpses per day for a grand total of 20,000. From the detailed indications, though, the result would be [(1440÷20)×16×3 =] about 3,450, a total of 9,930.

7. Charles Sigismund Bendel

> *"The twin crematorium 1 and 2 was the largest and had the potential to incinerate 2,000 persons in 24 hours. The other crematorium ovens were of a lower potential (of some 1,000 persons)."*[489]
> Total cremation capacity: 6,000 corpses per 24 hours.

8. Ludwik Nagraba

> *"After the gassing, the hair of the persons was cut and their* [gold] *teeth extracted and 8 or 9 persons were placed into the ovens, depending on their stature."*[490]

The witness indicates neither the duration of the incineration nor the capacity of the crematoria.

9. Dov Paisikovic

> *"The removal of the 3,000 corpses from the gas chamber took about 6 hours. As the 15 ovens of the crematorium took 12 hours to burn these corpses, they were piled up in the space in front of the ovens.* […]. *The corpses burned within about 4 minutes."*[491]
> Less than a year later, the witness declared:[492]
>
> *"Inside the crematorium on the ground floor, the corpses taken off the freight elevator were put in twos or threes into each cremation opening.* […]. *There were 5 ovens and each oven had 3 retort apertures for cremation* [muffles…]. *Then the doors were closed and the corpses burned* [over a time of] *15 to 20 minutes."*

The cremation of 3,000 corpses in 12 hours in 15 muffles (Crematorium II) yields 12,000 in 24 hours for Crematoria II and III and 6,400 for Crematoria IV and V. The duration of the cremation mentioned by the witness – four minutes – is the lowest and also the most outrageous

[489] Ministère de l'Intérieur. Direction générale de la Sureté Nationale. Procès-verbal of C.S.Bendel on October 7, 1947. AGK, NTN, 153, p. 210. Bendel had already mentioned this capacity earlier: Amicale des déportés d'Auschwitz 1946, p. 161.
[490] Deposition by L. Nagraba at the Höss trial, eleventh session. AGK, NTN, 118, p. 1146.
[491] Declaration by D. Paisikovic at Vienna on October 17, 1963. ROD, c[21]96.
[492] Account of D. Paisikovic dated Auschwitz, August 10, 1964. APMO, Oświęcim, Oświadczenia, vol. 44, p. 8/92.

of all; at a load of two to three corpses per muffle, this corresponds to 27,000 corpses in 24 hours for Crematoria II and III and 14,400 for Crematoria IV and V, a grand total of 41,400 per day!

The data of the second statement correspond on average to [(1,440÷17.5)×30×2.5 =] 6,170 cremations in 24 hours for Crematoria II/III and to 3,290 for Crematoria IV/V, yielding a total of 9,460.

10. Joshuah Rosenblum

> *"In each oven one could burn about 800 corpses in 24 hours.* […]. *Our job was to put the corpses on a stretcher and load them into the oven. Every 10 minutes, we loaded 4 corpses."*[493]

The cremation of 800 corpses in 24 hours in a triple-muffle oven corresponds to [(800×30 =)] 24,000 corpses in Crematoria II and III; as against this, four corpses per muffle in 10 minutes correspond to [(1440÷10)×30×4 =] 17,280 corpses. For Crematoria IV and V, assuming the same conditions, we would have 12,800 corpses in 24 hours for the first case, 9,210 for the second.

11. Filip Müller

According to this witness, three corpses could be burned in one muffle of Crematorium I within 20 minutes (Müller, p. 30). On the subject of Crematoria II and III, he declared (p. 94):

> *"15 massive ovens in continuous operation could cremate more than 3,000 corpses per day."*

The total capacity of all crematoria was 10,000 corpses in 24 hours (p. 97). In Crematoria II and III three corpses were cremated in each muffle as well (p. 151f.). Hence, the capacity of Crematoria II and III was (10,000 – 6,000 =) 4,000 corpses in 24 hours. From the details given by the witness, we find 6,480 corpses for Crematoria II and III and 3,450 for Crematoria IV and V for a grand total of 9,930.

12. Josef Sackar

> *"In the oven, the fire was so hot that the corpses burned immediately and new corpses could be loaded continuously.* […]. *When Crematorium II was full, the bodies were taken to Crematorium I or III, depending* [on their number]. *On certain days, 20,000 people were burned."* (Greif, pp. 40f.)

[493] Deposition by J. Rosenblum dated Haifa, November 23, 1970. AFH.

13. Jaacov Gabai

> *"Each oven had three doors, through each door entered four corpses.* […]. *It took us half an hour to burn four bodies in one oven opening. Five ovens with three doors* [muffles] *with four corpses gives 60 corpses for each door* [muffle] *that could be cremated simultaneously in Crematorium II within half an hour; 120 in one hour, about 2,800 in 24 hours."* (Greif, pp. 131, 142)

Hence, the cremation capacity of Crematoria II and III was 5,600 corpses in 24 hours for this witness, that of Crematoria IV and V about 2,990, altogether 8,590. From the details we obtain a capacity of 5,790 corpses for Crematoria II and III and of some 3,070 for Crematoria IV and V, a total of 8,830.

14. Leon Cohen:

> *"* [Question]*: How many corpses went into each oven?*
>
> [Answer]*: Between two and five corpses. That depended on the nature of the corpses. If they were not too heavy, we loaded four or five into the oven. The corpses were placed like this: three men and two women, because women have more fat in their bodies. Every half hour, more corpses were loaded into the five ovens.* […]. *In each cremation hall the ovens were alike, so that every half hour 50 to 75 corpses could be loaded."* (Greif, pp. 278f.)

Thus, in five ovens with three muffles each, 100 to 150 bodies could be cremated in one hour, 125 on average, or 3,000 in 24 hours, and 6,000 in Crematoria II and III together, hence 3,200 in Crematoria IV and V, for a total of 9,200.

15. Comments on a report written in the summer of 1943

The declaration which follows is not the testimony of a member of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*" but is nonetheless important because of the details it contains. After his escape from Auschwitz on May 20, 1943, Stanisław Chybiński wrote a report later that summer entitled "Obrazki Auschwitzu" (Auschwitz pictures) which was used as evidence at the trial of the Auschwitz garrison. At the end of it is an anonymous "Legenda" with the following comments on the details in the report:

> *"The crematoria thus had a total of 36 ovens, furthermore each oven had 3 cremation chambers which could accommodate 3 corpses, i.e. a load of 324 corpses at one time. The cremation, as stated in*

'Auschwitz pictures,' took 7 minutes. […]. *Each load of 324 corpses burned in 7 minutes. For a new load and for the cleaning of the ovens we will allow another 7-8 minutes, as this was well managed.* […]. *Thus, one cremation including loading* [took] *15 minutes or 1,396* [recte: 1,296] *corpses per hour. At his rate, the maximum output of the basements – 11,600 persons – was cremated in about 9 hours.* […]. *If we just add up the output of the crematoria over two years, we obtain a highly significant figure, i.e.*

$$1{,}296^{[494]} \times 24 \times 30 \times 12 \times 2 = 22{,}394{,}880$$

which is more or less equal to the number of Poles after the expulsion of the national minority."[495]

The reference to 36 ovens was the fruit of a gross invention by the members of the secret camp resistance which was repeated also in the so-called Vrba-Wetzler report. In fact, in this report nine triple-muffle ovens were ascribed to Crematoria II and III as being placed around the chimney, instead of five triple-muffle ovens set up in a row. Because there actually were four crematoria at Birkenau, the Chybiński report mentions (4×9 =) 36 ovens with three muffles each (see chapter 15.3. and 16.1).

The most incredible thing is that, whoever claimed to have obtained the information about the alleged extermination in the crematoria directly from the detainees working there, did not even know how many ovens they contained! The Chybiński report obviously spoke of the cremation of 324 corpses in seven minutes, which would have amounted to 66,650 in 24 hours, but this figure must have appeared a little on the high side even to the author of the "Legenda" who then took the liberty of bringing in another seven to eight minutes for loading and cleaning (!) the ovens, thus arriving at 15 minutes for one cremation. This amounts to [(60÷4)×36×3×3 =] 1,296 corpses per hour or about 31,100 in 24 hours.

In addition to the insane cremation capacity, we have another surprising aspect in that the author of the "Legenda" knew blueprint no. 932 of Crematorium II, dated January 23, 1942, and even quotes its exact title – "*Grundriss vom Untergeschoss*" (blueprint of basement) – whereas the blueprint shows clearly that the crematorium had five, not nine ovens. The cremation time of seven minutes later inspired Tauber

[494] The text has erroneously "1,236."
[495] AGK, NTN, 155, pp. 399-401.

(five to seven minutes "on the basis of the design and the calculations of the crematorium") and Paisikovic (four minutes).

16. Rudolf Höss

Even captured SS men embraced the Polish-Soviet propaganda entirely and adapted to this collective folly for obvious reasons. We will look at two of the most significant personalities. The former camp commander declared (Broszat, pp. 164f.):

> *"The two larger crematoria, I and II, were built in the winter of 1942-43 and started operating in the spring of 1943. They each had 5 ovens with 3* [cremation] *chambers and could cremate about 2,000 corpses in 24 hours each.* […]. *The two smaller crematoria, III and IV, should have cremated 1,500* [corpses] *in 24 hours according to the calculations of their builders, the firm Topf of Erfurt."*

The overall cremation capacity thus was 7,000 corpses in 24 hours.

17. Erich Mussfeldt

SS-Oberscharführer Mussfeldt, who headed the Birkenau crematoria in May 1944, declared:[496]

> *"In these crematoria 3 adult corpses were loaded into each retort* [muffle]. *Children's corpses were entered in addition. The cremation of such a load took about one half hour."*

These data correspond to a capacity of [(1440÷30)×15×3 =] 4,320 corpses in 24 hours in Crematoria II and III and of [(1440÷30)×16×3 =] about 2,300 in Crematoria IV and V, or a total of 6,620 in the four crematoria.

18. Summary

In Table 16 the data given by the witnesses are summarized, comparing them to the actual capacities of the Auschwitz-Birkenau crematoria in 24 hours.[497] Calculated figures are in italics, the figures announced by the witnesses are in normal type. I have added the data announced by the Polish-Soviet experts and judge Jan Sehn which will be discussed in chapter 17.6.

According to these witnesses, the cremation of two or more corpses in one muffle took about twenty minutes on average. In the 1990s Michael Bohnert, assisted by Thomas Rost and Stefan Pollak, analyzed 15 cremations in a modern gas-fired oven as part of his work in forensic

[496] Minutes of the interrogation of E. Mussfeldt on August 19, 1947. AGK, NTN, 144, p. 87.
[497] Without detracting from what I have stated in chapter 6.

Table 16: Comparison of Witness Accounts on Auschwitz Crematory Capacity

Witness	Load per muffle [corpses]	Cremation time [min]	Capacity of crema II&III	Capacity of crema IV&V	Total capacity
Actual figures	***1***	***60***	***720***	***384***	***1,104***
Dragon	3	15-20	*7,400*	*3,950*	10,000-12,000 *11,350*
Mandelbaum	3-5	12-15	*12,800*	*24,000-28,000*	*38,800*
Tauber 1	4-5	20-25	*8,640*	2,400-3,000 *2,960*	*11,600*
Tauber 2	4-5	*37*	5,000	*2,650*	*7,800*
Flamenbaum	2	15	*5,760*	*3,070*	*8,830*
Jankowski	?	?	5,000	3,000	8,000
Nyiszli	3	20	10,000/*6,480*	10,000/*3,450*	20,000/*9,930*
Bendel	?	?	4,000	2,000	6,000
Nagraba	8-9	?	?	?	?
Paisikovic 1)	?	4	*12,000/27,000*	*6,400/14,400*	*18,400/41,400*
Paisikovic 2)	2-3	15-20	*6,170*	*3,290*	*9,460*
Rosenblum	4	10	*24,000/17,280*	*12,800/9,210*	*36,000/26,490*
Müller	3	20	6,000/*6,480*	4,000/*3,450*	10,000/*9,930*
Sackar	?	?	?	?	20,000
Gabai	4	30	5,600/*5,760*	*2,990/3,070*	*8,590/8,830*
Cohen	2-5	30	*6,000*	*3,200*	*9,200*
Chybiński	3	7	*[33,325]*	*[33,325]*	*66,650*
"Legenda"	3	15	*[15,550]*	*[15,550]*	*31,100*
Höss	?	?	4,000	3,000	7,000
Mussfeldt	3	30	*4,320*	*2,300*	*6,620*
Broad*	5-7	?	3,000-4,000	2,000	5,000-6,000
Soviet experts	3-5	20-30	6,000/*6,900*	3,000/*2,630*	9,000/*9,530*
Dawidowski	5	25-26	5,000/*8,400*	3,000/*3,070*	8,000/*11,470*
Sehn	3-5	30	*5,760*	*3,070*	12,000/*8,830*

* see chapter 18.3.2.

science (Bohnert et al., pp. 11–21). The average duration of a cremation in the muffle (main cremation) was about 66 minutes.[498] After 30 minutes the skull and the trunk of the corpse were still recognizable: the thorax was open and the internal organs were exposed (see document 51).

Hence, it is *a fortiori* impossible that in the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau the cremation of several bodies at the same time in one muffle should have taken 20 minutes.

[498] The oven was equipped with a post-combustion chamber, which could be cut off by means of a movable vane, as well as an ash receptacle.

In the light of what I have explained above it becomes undeniably clear that *all* witnesses of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*" have uttered heat-technological absurdities on the subject of the cremation of corpses. Actually, only absurdities of this nature allowed the mythical figure of four million dead to be established. When this figure fell, however, the unspeakable assertions of Dragon, Tauber, Mandelbaum, Flamenbaum, Jankowski and co., instead of being swept away together with the shipwreck of Soviet propaganda, remained solid and unshaken and, incredible as they were, continued to be taken seriously by holocaust historians, first and foremost by van Pelt.

A sober and scientific assessment of the Auschwitz crematorium ovens incontrovertibly shows, however, that the declarations of the witnesses on the subject of the incineration capacities of these installations and of the number of cremations carried out in them are completely false. Likewise, a scientific assessment of the open-air cremations of 1944 demonstrates equally irrefutably that the eyewitnesses have lied impudently on this subject as well.

However, the story of the homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz is still based on the alleged eyewitnesses in its essential parts. Yet if the witnesses have lied impudently on the subject of the cremations in the crematorium ovens and in the open air to prop up the tale of homicidal gassings, what is the value of their declarations on the subject of such homicidal gassings? Shermer and Grobman have established a set of methodical guidelines which contains this rule (p. 248):

> *"Has this source made other claims that were clearly exaggerated? If an individual is known to have stretched the facts before, it obviously undermines his or her credibility."*

This applies all the more so to the "*Sonderkommando*" witnesses who not only "exaggerated" and "stretched the facts" but have lied and deliberately distorted the facts.

9. Pressac and the Cremation Ovens of Auschwitz-Birkenau

9.1. Pressac's Technical Incompetence

Pressac is the only holocaust scholar who has at least tried to face the technical questions surrounding the structure, the operation, the coke consumption and the performance of the Topf ovens at Auschwitz Birkenau. This is to be appreciated, all the more so as his successors, starting with van Pelt, have given up this area, insidiously barricading themselves behind a rampart of uncritically presented testimonies. For this reason we will deal with van Pelt's approach to this topic in Part Four of this study, after having discussed the most important witnesses upon which he relies. Hence, Pressac still stands out as the eminent specialist of cremation among mainstream holocaust specialists, but here in particular he has demonstrated the limits of a superficial and improvised approach to the subject. Suffice it to point out that he has not even looked into the topic of the coke-fired crematorium ovens that were in use in German cemeteries before WWII and that he was totally ignorant of their design, to say nothing of the ovens planned for the concentration camps.

To give an example, Pressac polemicizes wrongly with the revisionist writer A.R. Butz and argues that, "from a technical point of view," such furnaces "operated without any kind of gas generation or carburetion" (1989 (unless stated otherwise), p. 505), and thus shows that he is unaware of the essential function of the gasifier, which was the production of a gas mixture without which the cremation could not have been carried out. He obviously imagines the cremation to have been the combustion of the corpse by means of flames generated by fuel in the same way as in the false description provided by former *Sonderkommando* member Alter Fajnzylberg (alias Stanisław Jankowski), which he quotes without any comment (p. 124):

"The corpses lay on grates under which coke was burning"

except that he then erroneously describes the flow of the gasification products of the gasifier for a Topf oven, which only serves to underline his more than imperfect grasp of the subject. In fact, he provides an "operating diagram of a Topf triple-muffle oven, ten units of which were installed in Crematoria II and III" of Birkenau, with the gases

flowing around the muffles on the outside instead of entering them directly (p. 492). The "technical" basis for this diagram is the fact that Pressac's translation of Tauber's Polish deposition of May 25, 1945 (see chapter 10.), to which Pressac refers, reads "round the two side muffles (p. 489)," whereas the Polish text says "*przez obie boczne retorty*," – "through the two side muffles" (Tauber 1945b, p. 133).

On the subject of the H. Kori furnace at KL Mauthausen, Pressac asserts (p. 114):

> *"It would appear that the Topf engineer Prüfer was inspired by this model in designing the guillotine closing system for the muffles of his four-muffle furnaces at the end of 1941."*

Here Pressac confuses the fixation device for the corpse in the muffle which was part of Kori's corpse introduction system with a gate closing the muffle, and he totally ignored the fact that such a "guillotine" gate was already part of the Siemens oven setup at the Gotha crematorium as early as 1878, which was later used in many other designs.

For Pressac, the volume of a muffle measuring 0.7×0.7×2.10 meters is 1.029 cubic meters (p. 126), as if it were a normal parallelepipedon without a vaulted ceiling, and for him the increase in the volume of the muffle translates directly into an increase in its capacity (p. 207) – as if the load on the grate of the hearth had no effect at all.

9.2. Pressac's Cremation Capacity

9.2.1. Crematorium I

To the three double-muffle ovens of Crematorium I of the main camp Pressac ascribes a capacity of 340 corpses in 24 hours (pp. 131, 158, 244), which would correspond to the cremation of one corpse in one muffle in about 25 minutes. He also ascribes to the five triple-muffle ovens of each of Crematoria II and III a capacity varying between 1,000 and 1,500 corpses in 24 hours (pp. 179, 475), calling a throughput of 1,000 to 1,100 corpses "normal" (we will later look into the reasons for this uncertainty), and attributes a capacity of 500 corpses in 24 hours to each of Crematoria IV and V (pp. 244, 384).

Let us check the manner by which he arrived at these figures. The letter of ZBL dated June 28, 1943 (see chapter 12.2.1.), gives the following cremation capacities in 24 hours for the individual crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau:

Crematorium I	340	corpses
Crematorium II	1,440	"
Crematorium III	1,440	"
Crematorium IV	768	"
Crematorium V	768	"
Total:	4,576	corpses.

I have already underlined the absurd character of these data which seemed out of proportion even to Pressac, who explains them in terms of a simple exaggeration on the part of the SS (p. 244):

> *"On 28th June* [1943]*, following the handover of Krematorium III, the last one to be completed, Jährling calculated the overall throughput for the five Krematorien as 4,756 people in 24 hours, and sent this information to SS General Kammler in Berlin* […]*. This 'official' figure, coolly doubled when explaining operations to high ranking visitors (cf. SS Major Franke Gricksch's report above, giving a figure of 10,000 in 24 hours), had no basis in practice, and probably has to be divided by two or three to arrive at the true figure. The different visitors, SS, political leaders or others, were obviously unable to check the figures given by the camp SS, but accepted them as true and went away praising the Auschwitz SS for having found such a splendid solution to the 'Jewish question'."*

For Pressac, the cremation capacity ascribed in this letter to Crematoria II and III derives from the "Explanatory report concerning the tentative draft for the new construction of the Waffen SS PoW camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia" dated October 30, 1941.[499] This report proposes for the new crematorium of five triple-muffle ovens (the future Crematorium II) a capacity of 60 corpses per hour or, specifically, of 1,440 corpses in 24 hours. Such an interpretation is basically justified, as it has to be considered in the appropriate details (see Mattogno 2000, pp. 50-56, and chapter 12.2.1). Pressac's statement that the capacity of Crematoria IV and V was calculated on the basis of that used for Crematoria II and III is correct (pp. 244 and 384: [1,440×8]÷15=768).

However, on the subject of Crematorium I Pressac makes a completely unjustified exception when he says that the cremation capacity of 340 corpses in 24 hours "is a valid figure based on relatively long practice" (p. 244) and repeats this several times (pp. 131, 158). This as-

[499] RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 24.

sertion is without foundation, because Pressac does not show any document which might support it.

Moreover, his attempt at demonstrating the soundness of this figure leads to a result which is totally at variance with his initial hypothesis. He goes back to Prüfer, the inventor of the triple-muffle oven, who, so Pressac translates, wrote in a letter to Topf dated November 15, 1942, that the furnaces "have a throughput 1/3 greater than I had foreseen." (pp. 99.). The Topf letter dated July 14, 1941, written to KL Mauthausen states (in the erroneous version published by Raimund Schnabel) that 10 to 35 corpses could be cremated in one double-muffle oven in 10 hours. Pressac comments:

> *"If we arbitrarily take the maximum figure of 35, this gives a total capacity of 84 corpses in 24 hours, so that three such furnaces could cremate 252 corpses in 24 hours. Auschwitz Krematorium I, which actually had three such furnaces, was officially stated to have a throughput of 340 corpses a day, or one third higher than the Topf maximum figure."* (p. 108)

But then, in contradiction with his repeated assertion that such a figure was based on practical operation and was thus an experimental value, he concludes (*ibid.*):

> *"It is impossible to know whether this was the usual SS exaggeration or a true figure."*

In this way Pressac attributes to the three ovens of Crematorium I a capacity one third above the alleged practical throughput of such ovens (252 corpses per day) and on this basis pretends to deduce their alleged maximum practical throughput of ($252 \times {}^{4}/_{3} =$) 336 or some 340 corpses per day. This argumentation is of no value, if only because Pressac confuses the German verb "*leisten*" (to perform) used by Prüfer, which refers to the consumption of coke, with "throughput," which described the number of corpses cremated. In his letter of November 15, 1942, Prüfer in fact wrote on the subject of the triple-muffle oven: "These furnaces perform ${}^{1}/_{3}$ better than what I had actually aimed for." (pp. 98f.) This means that this type of oven allowed a fuel savings of ${}^{1}/_{3}$ for the cremation of one corpse when compared to the consumption in a double-muffle oven (the only coke-fired type which Topf had then built and tested, and hence the only objective reference point which Prüfer could have used for his estimate). In chapter 8.5.3. I have also explained the technical reasons for this improvement.

Besides, Pressac arbitrarily ascribes to the double-muffle oven a result which Prüfer states to have achieved with the triple-muffle type. In other words, Pressac deduces – from the fact that the triple-muffle oven had an alleged cremation capacity (actually a performance) $^1/_3$ above Prüfer's design – that the double-muffle oven had a cremation capacity $^1/_3$ higher than the maximum given in the letter of July 14, 1941, quoted above! We may thus say that, following his method, the maximum cremation capacity of Crematorium I should have been 252 instead of 340 corpses in 24 hours.

9.2.2. The Birkenau Crematoria

On the subject of Crematoria II and III Pressac states that from the triple-muffle oven – which was an as yet untested prototype – one expected a cremation capacity of 225 corpses per day corresponding to (225×5 =) 1,125 corpses per day for each of these crematoria, or more or less the capacity which he believes to be realistic (1,000 to 1,100 corpses in 24 hours, p. 184). However, even this assertion lacks a foundation: there is no document bearing out that the SS or Topf expected the above cremation capacity, which is also inexplicably almost three times the maximum capacity of the double muffle oven calculated arbitrarily by Pressac to be 84 corpses in 24 hours. But in contradiction to this he writes (p. 334):

> *"Messrs Topf & Sons, who had supplied the three- muffle furnaces, claimed that a battery of five would have a normal 'productivity' of 720 corpses in 24 hours. Their designer, the Topf chief engineer Kurt Prüfer, estimated that the actual yield of his three-muffle furnaces had exceeded his expectations by one third, reaching almost one thousand cremations a day for a type II/III Krematorium."*

Now, if the five ovens had a total cremation capacity of 720 corpses per 24 hours, a single oven would have yielded (720÷5 =) 144, not 225, and even if we raise the figure by one third, we would obtain (144×$^4/_3$ =) 192 and not 225 corpses in 24 hours. This increase by one third is merely a ruse employed by Pressac to raise in a seemingly plausible manner the capacity of the ovens. Actually, raising his arbitrary figure as mentioned above, we obtain (720×$^4/_3$ =) 960 corpses per 24 hours, somewhat below his lower limit given for Crematoria II and III of 1,000 per 24 hours.

Furthermore, if Prüfer expected a capacity of 225 corpses in 24 hours for one of his triple-muffle ovens, the actual capacity would have come to ($225\times{}^{4}/_{3}$ =) 300, and the total capacity of one of Crematoria II and III would have been 1,500 corpses in 24 hours – a cremation capacity even higher than the one in the letter of June 28, 1943, which Pressac himself considers to be "a purely administrative figure obtained by calculation" (p. 334.). Elsewhere, Pressac declares (p. 494):

> *"It is reasonable to consider that the initial throughput of Krematorium II reached a ceiling at 700 to 750 incinerations a day. Then, with experience, this was raised to about 1000. Any higher figure is unrealistic, and in certain cases a downright lie."*

This means, on the other hand, that the practical capacity of the triple-muffle oven initially stood at 140 to 150 corpses in 24 hours, but being one third higher than Prüfer's design figure, the latter should have been around 105 to 113 corpses per day, whereas the practical figure "with experience" should have stood one third higher, so that Pressac's computations turn out to have been

$113\times{}^{4}/_{3} \approx 150 \rightarrow 150\times{}^{4}/_{3} = 200 \rightarrow 200\times5 = 1{,}000$ corpses in 24 hrs.

We see that Pressac brings in twice Prüfer's alleged factor of one third, and the final result is thus not ${}^{1}/_{3}$ but nearly ${}^{4}/_{5}$ higher, not 33.3% but 77.8 %. But that is not all. In further contradiction to these contradictory figures, Pressac affirms (p. 334):

> *"The figure of 1,440 for Krematorium II or III officially communicated by the Auschwitz SS to their superiors at the end of June 1943 is a purely administrative figure, obtained by calculation. In the non-criminal plans for this type of Krematorium, formulated at the end of December 1941, the cremation rate was to be 60 corpses per hour, so once the installation was completed, the capacity must be 60×24 hours = 1,440 per day. It was unthinkable to admit that the actual result was less than this, and indeed any lesser figure might be interpreted as sabotage. This rate of cremation, over one third higher than Prüfer's figure, was based on absolutely flat out working 24 hours a day. Even if it was attainable in practice, it could not be maintained for long without causing damage to the installation and necessitating a shut down for repairs."* (Pressac's emphasis)

It follows that, for Pressac, Crematoria II and III could actually cremate 1,440 corpses in 24 hours, but in order to avoid break-downs, the rate was kept at 1,000 to 1,100 corpses per 24 hours. This would make

sense, if these crematoria had been equipped with forced-draft devices in suction which, by raising the combustion rate of the grates, would have allowed to increase the capacity at the expense of greater wear on the equipment and a higher fuel consumption. Such a possibility was considered in the experiments with an actual Topf oven – although gas-fired – in the Gera crematorium. Engineer H. Stenger (pp. 17f.) discusses them:

> *"8 cremations were carried out in one run. If necessary, the time for cremation could be reduced by switching on a draft device in suction; in that way, more than 8 cremations become possible. But one has to make sure, first of all, whether it is better for the protection of the oven to have cremation times that are a little longer or to lower the service life of the oven with an increase in the productivity by means of a forced draft."*

But as the Birkenau crematoria worked without forced-draft devices, the operation of the ovens was necessarily 'normal,' and it was technically impossible to push its performance toward a higher throughput of corpses within the span of 24 hours. In practice, Pressac's cremation capacity of 1,000 to 1,100 corpses in 24 hours reflects only an activity of the installation over a shorter period of time (i.e. 16-18 hours instead of 24).

We should add that the cremation capacity attributed to the new crematorium in the explanatory memo of October 30, 1941, mentioned above – 1,440 corpses in 24 hours – is exactly twice the normal capacity of 720 corpses in 24 hours allegedly given by Topf for "a battery of five ovens" with three muffles each. However, for Pressac, who assumes a direct link between the ovens in the explanatory memo of October 30, 1941, and those actually built in Crematoria II and III, the cremation capacity mentioned in that memo – (1,440÷5=) 288 corpses per triple-muffle oven and 24 hours – is actually the cremation capacity that Prüfer had claimed for his newly designed triple-muffle device. Taking into account the alleged increase by one third (which Prüfer spoke of more than a year later, on November 15, 1942), the cremation capacity of that device should have been ($288\times{}^{4}/_{3}=$) 384 corpses in 24 hours or (384×5=) 1,920 corpses in 24 hours for a crematorium of the II/III type.

Hence, Pressac's conclusion that, "despite this lack, the present state of knowledge makes it reasonable to say that the daily throughput of

Krematorium II or III would have been in the order of 1,000 corpses" (p. 334) is historically, documentarily and technically unfounded.

Pressac arbitrarily ascribes a practical cremation capacity of 500 corpses in 24 hours to the 8-muffle oven without any explanation (pp. 244, 384). For Pressac the cremation capacity of the triple-muffle oven was therefore (1,050[500]÷15=) 70 corpses per muffle in 24 hours, whereas for the 8-muffle oven it was (500÷8 =) 62.5 corpses per muffle in 24 hours. This contradicts Pressac's assertion elsewhere that the 8-muffle oven had been designed by Prüfer "to raise the capacity of his 'conventional' ovens" (p. 112), and thus ought to have constituted an improvement also with respect to the triple-muffle oven leading to a capacity increase. Pressac probably got this erroneous idea from a misreading of the designation of this oven in the Topf letter to ZBL of July 7, 1943, as being an "*erster Großraum-Ofen*"[501] or first large-space oven (in view of its impressive size) which Pressac instead interprets as a "large capacity furnace" (pp. 382f.).

9.3. Loading of a Muffle

To justify his arbitrary cremation capacity, Pressac goes back to the unfounded thesis of multiple cremations. Concerning Crematorium I he initially states that the load on the three double-muffle ovens was "a little over two corpses per muffle per hour" (p. 110) which would yield a cremation capacity of slightly more than 288 corpses in 24 hours. He then goes on to say that the normal loading asserted by the witness Fajnzylberg – five corpses in one muffle at a time – was closer to the actual operation "which was on average three (normal adult) bodies at a time" in one muffle (p. 126), rather than the fantastic maximum figure given by this witness: twelve corpses in one muffle at once. Later Pressac states regarding the normal load of the three double-muffle ovens of Crematorium I (p. 131):

> *"For the first two two-muffle furnaces: 1.5 to 2 bodies per muffle per hour; for the new two-muffle furnace: 3 to 4 bodies per muffle per hour."*

Pressac delivers no factual basis for this estimate at all, though. He obviously attributes to the third double-muffle oven a load twice that ascribed to each of the other two, because he noted that only this oven

[500] The average of 1,000 and 1,100.
[501] APMO, BW 30/27, p. 24.

was equipped with a forced-air blower, probably because the Topf drawing D 59042 concerning the installation of this oven shows a blower only for this device (pp. 152f.). But such a thesis is unfounded, both for historical reasons (the first two ovens had such blowers as well) and from a technical point of view, because the addition of a blower could in any case not bring about a doubling of the cremation capacity of a crematorium oven. Or maybe he has based this assumption on the incorrect speculation that the third oven had "larger coke hearths" (see chapter 9.7.4.).

The cremation capacity which results from the data assumed by Pressac amounts to 288 to 384 corpses in 24 hours, with an average of 336, which is almost equal to the figure mentioned in the letter of June 28, 1943, – 340 corpses in 24 hours – which Pressac, by his choosing, takes to be the *practical* capacity of Crematorium I. It thus becomes obvious that his evaluation is the result of a simple computation which starts out from a pre-established figure (of 340 corpses in 24 hours) and then surreptitiously comes back to it in a circular argument.

For the triple-muffle ovens of Crematoria II and III Pressac opts for an average load of three normal adult bodies in each muffle and a cremation time of 45-60 minutes (p. 253), which yields a cremation capacity for the 15 muffles in each crematorium of 1,080-1,440 corpses in 24 hours, 1,260 on average – a figure considerably higher than what results from his other procedures we have examined (960 corpses per 24 hours). However, commenting on Nyiszli's heat-technological absurdities, Pressac say that the time needed for such a load was probably "half an hour" (p. 475), the equivalent of a cremation capacity of 2,160 corpses in 24 hours for 15 muffles, i.e. twice as much as the average capacity stated by himself.

On the subject of the load of the 8-muffle ovens in Crematoria IV and V Pressac has nothing to say at all.

This inextricable thicket of contradictions is the inevitable consequence of the fact that Pressac's treatment of these questions is exclusively based on speculative calculations which have no technical basis.

9.4. Coke Consumption

On the question of the consumption of coke for the three double-muffle ovens of Crematorium I, Pressac writes (p. 131):

"The coke consumption of the three furnaces was estimated at about 1000 kg per 12 hours of operation, calculated on the basis of a Bauleitung note (Aktenvermerk) of 17th March 1943."

This document, however, says nothing about Crematorium I – so how can Pressac arrive at this figure? Obviously on the basis of the average figures which result proportionally from those applying to Crematoria II/III and IV/V:

- (2,800×6)÷15 = 1,120 kg for six muffles, using the consumption of Crematoria II/III;
- (1,120×6)÷8 = 840 kg for six muffles, using the consumption of Crematoria IV/V;
- (1,120+840)÷2 = 980 or about 1,000 kg for 6 muffles, using the average consumption of Crematoria II/III and IV/V.

Pressac did not know that the fuel consumption of ovens heated by a coke-fired gasifier depended first and foremost on the load of the hearth grates. He did not know either that this load for a double-muffle oven with natural draft was about 30 kg/hr of coke (see chapter 8.4.2.). It follows that over 12 hours the coke consumption of the three ovens of Crematorium I was (30×6×12=) 2,160 kg of coke which, taking into account the reduction by one third mentioned in the above *Aktenvermerk*, translated into (2,160×$^2/_3$ =) 1,440 kg of coke for continuous operation. The heat-technological impossibility of the consumptions proposed by Pressac finds its confirmation in the cremation/fuel ratios which would derive from it:

Table 17: Pressac's Cremation Capacity and Coke Consumption Figures for Auschwitz

Crema	Capacity per day	Coke per day [kg]	Coke per corpse [kg]	Actual coke per corpse [kg]
I	340	2,000	5.88	28.0
II	1,050 (ave.)	5,600	5.33	19.0
III	1,050 (ave.)	5,600	5.33	19.0
IV	500	2,240	4.48	14.0
V	500	2,240	4.48	14.0
Total	3,440	17,680	5.13*	18.5*

*weighted average

Pressac also looks into the supply of coke to the crematoria and states in this regard (p. 224):

"Disregarding February 1942 (incomplete data) and stopping at the end of February 1943, we can determine the average monthly coke consumption of Krematorium I over a twelve month period:

31.1 tons. As Krematorium I had 3 double muffle furnaces, one muffle required approximately 5.2 tons of coke per month. The note of 17th March 43 establishes a theoretical daily consumption of 7.84 tons for the four new Krematorien with a total of 46 muffles, which also gives a monthly consumption of 5.2 tons of coke per muffle. These two concordant figures, coming from different sources, show that the theoretically calculated figures of the note of 17th March can be considered valid and that in PMO microfilm 12,012[502] *the delivery notes for the supply of coke to Krematorium 1 are complete."*

The line of thought is correct, but Pressac draws wrong conclusions. He in fact adds (pp. 224, 227):

"As from March 1943, the delivery notes indicate only total consumption without any breakdown between the different Krematorien. Disregarding March 1943, when Krematorium I was probably still working and large quantities of coke were used in drying out and warming through the Birkenau furnaces, then assuming for the sake of argument that all the Birkenau Krematorien were operational at the beginning of April, then the overall consumption was 497 tons of coke in seven months (April to October) and with a monthly consumption of 5.2 tons per muffle, then the total coke received by the four Krematorien WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE THAN THAT REQUIRED FOR 14 MUFFLES OUT OF 46 (including March 1943, the result changes very little, being slightly over 15 muffles). From April to October 1943 Krematorium II, III, IV, and V worked the equivalent of only TWO MONTHS at full capacity (out of seven). Admittedly, they incinerated the corpses of between 165,000 and 215,000 victims during that time, but it is apparent from the files that Birkenau was OVER equipped with cremation capacity, because until the end of October 1943 they were used to ONLY A QUARTER OR A THIRD OF THEIR MAXIMUM CAPACITY (which means that the 15 incineration muffles of JUST ONE installation of the Krematorien II/III type or the 16 muffles of Krematorien IV AND V would have amply sufficed for the incineration of the corpses from the extermination of the Jews and that two Krematorien, II and III, or

[502] The collection of delivery slips showing the supply of coke to the crematoria preserved at the Auschwitz Museum, inventory number 12010. These slips have been registered in the list I have cited in chapter 8.8.3 "Koks i węgiel dla krematoriów w tonach" (Coke and coal for the crematoria in tons). APMO, D-AuI-4.

three Krematorien, III, IV and V were superfluous to requirements).” (Pressac’s emph.)

This reasoning is based on a technical distortion and thus leads to a historical misrepresentation. According to Pressac, the average amount of fuel used for the cremation of one such (fictitious) corpse was 497,000÷(165,000 to 215,000) ≈ 2.61 kg of coke. Such an amount, though, is not only technically absurd, it also represents nearly half the ratio of coke per corpse which Pressac himself assumes: 5.13 kilograms. Hence, from what he says, the cremation of 3,440 corpses in 24 hours in all crematoria together required a total of 17,680 kg of coke or 5.13 kg of coke for each corpse, but the average fuel consumption for each of the alleged 165,000 to 215,000 bodies of gassed victims stood miraculously at 2.61 kg of coke. Instead of drawing the only logical conclusion that flows from his assumption – namely that the number of corpses cremated was inevitably lower than he thought – Pressac reaches the opposite and nonsensical conclusion that the crematoria were overdesigned.

Actually, as I have demonstrated in chapter 8.8.4., the supply of coke under consideration was sufficient *only* for the cremation of the bodies of detainees who had died of natural causes over the period in question.

Did Pressac seriously believe that the ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau were able to cremate a corpse with 2.61 kg of coke? As we have seen above (chapter 9.2.), he brings in the report (allegedly) written by *SS-Sturmbannführer* Alfred Franke-Gricksch and asserts that this capacity was “coolly doubled when explaining operations to high-ranking visitors (cf. SS Major Franke-Gricksch’s report above, giving a figure of 10,000 in 24 hours).” However, in that document we read (p. 238):

“As fresh corpses burn particularly well, the whole process requires only ½ – 1 hundredweight of coke.”

One *Zentner* or metric hundredweight is 50 kg, and the coke consumption of one cremation was thus 25-50 kg, as Pressac himself correctly notes in the translation of the document (p. 239). This corresponds to an amount 10-20 times as high as the amount assumed by Pressac (2.61 kg). He does not mention this fact in his discussion of the document at all. The reason is easy to understand: even if we assume the low figure of 25 kg per corpse, the 497 tons of coke mentioned above would have been enough for the cremation of (497,000÷25 =)

19,980 corpses only, and Pressac's assertion of 165,000 to 215,000 gassed victims would have crumbled.

The supply of coke in March 1943 was 144.5 tons. In this connection Pressac says that "large quantities of coke were used in drying out and warming through the Birkenau furnaces," and in doing so he furnishes us another example of his technical incompetence. Drying of the ovens was in fact done essentially with wood, and only toward the end of the procedure were small amounts of coke used (Beutinger, p. 127). Besides, the Birkenau ovens with their total weight of refractory material of around 178,200 kg, its specific heat capacity of 0.21 kcal per kg and °C and using a coke variety having an experimental heating value of 6,470 kcal/kg and assuming an efficiency of 0.51 (see chapter 10.2.5.) for the hearth would have required [(178,200×0.21×800)÷(6,470×0.51) =] about 9,100 kg of coke to bringing their temperature from 0°C to the operating temperature of 800°C, or around 5% of the total amount of coke supplied.

Pressac states that the four Birkenau crematoria ran flat out for the equivalent of about two out of the seven months between April and October 1943. He bases himself on the following computation: 5.2 tons of coke per muffle per month, multiplied by 46 muffles equals 239.2 tons of coke per month; with a total coke supply of 497 tons over that period he obtains (497÷239.2 =) about two months of equivalent operating time for the 46 muffles that made up the four crematoria.

There are two errors in his reasoning. For one thing, the coke consumption of 5.2 tons per muffle per month is based on a daily operating time of 12 and not 24 hours. In fact, the consumption of 7.84 tons of coke arrived at in the *Aktenvermerk* of March 17, 1943, concerns precisely an activity of 12 hours: (7.84×30)÷46 ≈ 5.2 tons per muffle per month for an active period of 12 hours per day. Thus, "flat out" or 24 hours per day, if we follow Pressac, the coke consumption would have doubled reaching 10.4 tons. For all 46 muffles we would thus get (10.4×46 =) 478.4 tons, and the supply of 497 tons of coke would have been used up in the Birkenau crematoria over (497÷478.4 =) about one month of "flat out" operation.

The logic of the argument, however, takes us to a conclusion which is the very opposite of what Pressac affirms: if the coke consumption actually was 7.84 tons for an operating day of 12 hours and hence 235.2 for a whole month, the supply for seven months would have been 1,646.4 tons instead of the 497 tons actually delivered. Instead of ac-

cepting the obvious fact that the number of persons cremated over the whole period comes down to [(497÷1,646.4)×100 =) 30% of what had been estimated, Pressac alleges that the crematoria were overdesigned by a factor of [(1,646.4÷ 497)×100 =] 331%!

In actual fact, the Birkenau crematoria were even inadequate for the expansion plans of the camp, as I have shown in chapter 8.7.5.

9.5. The Ratio of Muffles to Detainees

Another arbitrary criterion used by Pressac in his evaluation is the number of muffles for a certain number of detainees. In this respect, he writes (p. 184):

> *"This* [the extermination of Jews on an industrial scale] *was perhaps not always true in practice, but it was certainly the intention of the SS, who between early July and mid August 1942 launched a program of four crematoriums with 46 incineration muffles, without counting the 6 already existing in Krematorium I, for a present and existing total of 20,000 prisoners, or 1 muffle for 400 people. Of course, this calculation is incorrect to the extent that it divides the existing number of prisoners, without adding those planned to come, by the number of existing and planned cremation muffles, but it does perfectly illustrate the criminal nature of the multiplication of crematoriums. It suffices to imagine a village of 4,000 inhabitants with its church in the center and beside it a crematorium equipped with three 3 muffle furnaces as they existed in Birkenau, The installation would have human fuel for scarcely a week of operation. We need not dwell on this picture."* (Pressac's emph.)

Pressac then proceeds to bolster this argument in the following manner (pp. 217f.):

> *"On 17th February* [1943], *the Bauleitung Drawing Office produced a general plan of the Birkenau POW camp, drawing 1991, showing the three construction stages in their final form (total capacity of approximately 100,000 prisoners) and equipped, for the first time on any drawing with FOUR KREMATORIEN (labeled 2, 3, 4 and 5), giving one incineration muffle for 2,200 prisoners, a ratio that does not appear really criminal [for purposes of comparison, KL Lublin Majdanek, with an average population ranging from 15,000 to 20,000 prisoners, had a crematorium with five muffles, giving a ratio of 1 muffle for 3,000 to 4,000 people], but it was crim-*

inal if one considers the state of progress in the building of prisoners' accommodation barracks with that of the Krematorien. If the SS had had them built as and when the construction stages were completed, it might have been possible to believe that these buildings were 'normal,' serving only to cremate the dead among a growing population, but as they had all been planned at the same time (all four in July/August 1942), it obvious that this was not for health reasons but for some quite different purpose." (Pressac's emph.)

He comes to this conclusion (p. 200):

"AS AT MID AUGUST 1942, the criminality of the Krematorien, normally by definition installations planned for health reasons, is evident from the fact that THEIR CAPACITY WAS EXCESSIVE IN RELATION TO THE REAL NEEDS OF THE CAMP, without there being any need to demonstrate the presence of homicidal gas chambers inside them, which is in fact difficult to establish at that date." (Pressac's emph.)

Let us start from the end. In chapter 8.7.5. I have explained the reasons which brought the SS to the decision to build four crematoria at Birkenau. It was the consequence of Himmler's plan to expand the camp to a capacity of 200,000 detainees, which ZBL was notified about in August 1942,[503] and of the tragic increase in the mortality caused by the typhus epidemic which culminated likewise in August 1942. This results from the fact that the decision to build four crematoria at Birkenau was taken during that very month. In the letter of August 3, 1942, addressed to the head of *Amt C V* of SS-WVHA, Bischoff writes i.a.:[504]

"Furthermore, the location for the new crematorium, adjoining the quarantine camp, was established."

The new crematorium, the only one then being planned, was the future Crematorium II. The decision to build another three crematoria (III, IV and V) was taken during the course of that month (see chapter 8.4.4.). Pressac's conclusion is thus completely unsubstantiated, all the more so as he assumes a cremation capacity for the crematoria three times as high as the actual one.

Just as unfounded is his other argument, *viz.* that the criminal character of the crematoria becomes clear, when their construction schedule

[503] Letter from Bischoff to Amt CV of SS-SS-WVHA dated August 27, 1942. GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 41.

[504] Letter from Bischoff to Amt CV of SS-SS-WVHA dated August 3, 1942. GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 37.

is compared to that of the rest of the camp. In fact, it is Pressac himself who says that the SS planned to build the new crematorium (the future Crematorium II), originally intended for the main camp, "when it turned out that Crematorium I was no longer sufficient to cremate the numerous dead of the camp" (p. 133). He says as well that the alleged excessive cremation capacity of the Birkenau crematoria was also due to "the absolute panic that seized the SS in July/August 1942 when they were confronted with a raging typhus epidemic and were in a situation where they had to combat this by every possible means" (p. 227)

It is thus perfectly reasonable that the Auschwitz SS, having to build new crematoria to cope with the terrible situation of the moment, would also have wanted to be able to face a possible future epidemic in a camp with 200,000 detainees and would have planned the necessary installations without waiting for the enlargement of the camp and the arrival of the 200,000 inmates so as to avoid finding themselves in the same predicament they had experienced in August 1942. It would have made no sense indeed for the SS to plan and build the new crematoria *along with or after* the enlargement of the camp, as Pressac alleges, and thus be exposed to the danger of further epidemics during the work on the extensions, which would have struck a far higher number of detainees.

Let us return to the muffles/detainee ratio. The explanatory memo of October 30, 1941, states:[505]

> *"On account of the high* [projected] *occupancy (125,000 prisoners) a crematorium is built. It contains 5 pcs. muffle ovens with three muffles each for 2 men, so that 60 men can be incinerated in one hour."*

The cremation capacity planned for was purely intentional, relying as it did on the assumption that two corpses together could be cremated in one muffle within a half hour, something that was technically impossible in ordinary triple-muffle ovens such as those actually built in Crematoria II and III. What is important here in any case is that 15 muffles were planned for the 125,000 detainees, yielding a ratio of one muffle for some 8,300 persons. The comparison used by Pressac of a fictitious village of 4,000 inhabitants furnished with nine muffles is thus completely inappropriate. First of all, based on this ratio of 1:8,300, the nine muffles would have corresponded to a population of (8,300×9=) 74,700 and not 4,000 persons. Secondly, nothing proves that the opera-

[505] Erläuterungsbericht zum Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Konzentrationslagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S. RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 20.

tion of the new crematorium was planned for 24 and not 12 hours of operation per day, as results from the *Aktenvermerk* of March 17, 1943. In that case, the crematorium would have theoretically cremated 720 corpses per day and "would have had human fuel" for (74,200÷720 =) some 103 days or almost 15 weeks of operation.

According to Pressac's way of thinking, KL Buchenwald should have been even more overfurnished than Auschwitz. In that camp, two triple-muffle Topf ovens were in fact built in 1941 (one in August, one in November, Pressac 1989, p. 98.) of a type similar to those later built at Crematoria II and III of Birkenau (although one of them could also be heated with naphtha). Their alleged cremation capacity was thus [(1,050÷15)×6 =] 420 corpses in 24 hours. However, the strength of that camp was very small at the time (5,705 detainees on July 1, 1941, and 8,370 on October 1; see Internationales Lagerkomitee, p. 27) or about 7,000 detainees on average. Therefore, the muffle/detainee ratio was about (7,000÷6 =) 1/1,100, and the crematorium "would have had human fuel" for hardly (7,000÷420 =) 17 days. We would thus have to conclude that the cremation capacity of the crematorium at Buchenwald in relation to the actual needs of the camp would prove the "criminality" of the installation!

Actually, as I have demonstrated in chapter 8.7.5., we learn from Bischoff's letter to the KL Stutthof *Bauleitung* dated July 10, 1942, that the 15 muffles (planned for the future Crematoria II and III) were sufficient for 30,000 detainees, so that the normal ratio of muffles/detainees was 1/2,000, which means that the 46 Birkenau muffles were enough for (46×2,000 =) 92,000 detainees. Hence 70 muffles rather than 46 would have been needed for the aimed-at future strength of the Birkenau camp of 140,000 inmates.

9.6. Pressac's New Interpretations

9.6.1. Pressac's Arguments re. Cremations and Crematorium Ovens

In his second study of Auschwitz, Pressac went back to the question of the crematorium furnaces in a somewhat disorganized way without presenting a proper discussion of his essential arguments. I will now do this in his stead by assembling and summing up the elements in order to set out the structure of his argumentation.

1) The blower (*Druckluftanlage*) "had allowed the recuperator to be dropped" (1993, unless stated otherwise, p. 21) and "allowed to lower the incineration time" (p. 23).

2) The Topf "Auschwitz type" oven had a cremation capacity of 30-36 corpses in 10 hours (*ibid*.).[506]

3) The crematorium ovens were run for 21 hours a day because their operation required a down-time of three hours for "the maintenance of the oven" (*ibid*.).

4) The three coke-fired double-muffle ovens of Crematorium I had a cremation capacity of 200-250 corpses per day (pp. 59, 90).

5) The two coke-fired triple-muffle Topf ovens installed at KL Buchenwald showed "an incineration performance higher by one third than what had been calculated on the basis of the experience gained with the double-muffle ovens" (p. 49).

6) The cremation capacity of each battery of five triple-muffle ovens built in Crematoria II and III at Birkenau was 800 (*ibid*.) or 1,000 (p. 90) corpses per day.

7) The cremation capacity of the 8-muffle ovens built in Crematoria IV and V was 500 corpses per day (*ibid*.).

8) Pressac comments as follows the data contained in the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943 (pp. 90f.):

> *"These official figures are mendacious propaganda, yet they are valid. Their apparent validity stems from the fact that the duration of an incineration involving two infants of 10 kg and one woman of 50 kg is equal to that of a man weighing 70 kg; this introduces a multiplier somewhere between 1 and 3 and makes all figures of cremation performance random."*

9.6.2. Discussion of the Arguments

This argumentative structure is totally groundless both from the technical and from the historical and documentary point of view, as will become clear from the analysis of its individual items set out below:

1) Pressac's reference is the Topf letter of January 6, 1941, addressed to *SS-Neubauleitung* of KL Mauthausen (Pressac 1993, note 13, p.

[506] As a matter of fact, Pressac scatters all over his 1993 book conflicting implicit and explicit figures about the time it allegedly took to cremate one corpse, for instance: 1 hr., p. 7; 30-40 min., p. 13; 1 hr. 12 min., p. 15; 15 min., p. 28; 1 hr. 36 min., p. 34; 34-43 min., p. 49; 13 min., p. 72; 29 min., p. 74; 22 min., p. 80. This proves Pressac's own confusion.

110.), but the alleged reduction in the incineration time on account of the blower is not reflected by the document which states:[507]

> *"Both coke-fired incineration ovens will be equipped with a compressed-air device to be set up on the right and left sides of the generator. We have taken into account for both ovens that the generator gases will strike the object to be incinerated from above and below, thus leading to a rapid incineration."*

The letter refers to a single-muffle oven which was never built, but also to the "Auschwitz type" double-muffle oven, the drawing of which (D 57253) is mentioned in it. Therefore, the "rapid incineration" (as compared to ovens for civilian use) was the one taking one hour which Prüfer had spoken of in his earlier letter (November 1, 1940). The shorter duration of the cremation resulted from the arrangement of the fire-clay grid of the muffle with respect to the gasifier hook-up and had nothing to do with the blower. The assertion that the blower "had allowed the recuperator to be dropped" is technical nonsense, because the blower fed cold outside air into the muffle, whereas the recuperator provided it with air heated to a high temperature (400-600°C and more).

2) The data used by Pressac are correct. The letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung at KL Mauthausen of July 14, 1941, says in fact:[508]

> *"In the coke-fired TOPF double-muffle incineration oven 30 to 36 corpses can be brought to incineration within about 10 hours."*

However, as I have explained in chapter 8.6.6., these data refer to the Topf double-muffle oven at KL Gusen and applied only in theory to the "Auschwitz type" oven. Besides, the capacity of 36 corpses in 10 hours or one cremation every 33 minutes was utterly unattainable as an average duration and could be achieved only in extremely exceptional cases.

3) The coke-fired ovens required a daily down-time for the cleaning of the hearth grate. The down-time of 3 hours assumed by Pressac is the one mentioned by the engineer Dawidowski (see chapter 8.7.1.).

4) Based on the data given in the Topf letter of July 14, 1941, the cremation capacity of the double-muffle oven would be (30÷10)×21 = 63 or (36÷10)×21 = 76 corpses in 10 hours, hence the throughput of three ovens would be (63×3 =) 189 or (76×3 =) 228 corpses per day, not 200-250, which is a deceptive approximation, because the basic data already refer to the maximum capacity of the double-muffle oven.

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[507] BAK, NS4/Ma 54.
[508] SW, LK4651.

5) In chapter 9.2. I have already explained that Pressac confuses the performance of the oven (i.e. its fuel consumption) with its cremation capacity.

6) However, even using the hypothesis that the triple-muffle oven had actually shown a cremation capacity one third above design and assuming that the design was in keeping with the letter of July 14, 1941, its design capacity would have been $[(36\div10)\times21\times{}^{3}/_{2}] = 113.4$ corpses per day, and hence the effective one (${}^{1}/_{3}$ more) for the entire crematorium $(113.4\times{}^{4}/_{3})\times5 = 754$ corpses per day, but Pressac speaks of a daily capacity of 800 corpses, which later mysteriously becomes 1,000. Hence, we see that Pressac is not even consistent in his erroneous technical assumptions.

7) Nor does Pressac attempt to justify in any way the cremation capacity he ascribes to the 8-muffle oven in his second study. It is just as technically unfounded as that which he attributes to the triple-muffle oven.

8) Pressac's argument that any statement on the cremation capacity of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens would be "random" because of the possible presence of baby or children's corpses is actually a mere alibi: as he is unable to grasp the heat-technological phenomena in cremation, he decrees that the problem has no solution. In view of the higher percentage of infants and children among the Eastern Jewish population and taking into account their average weight, it is in fact possible to say that the numerical capacity of cremation in the crematoria would have risen by a factor of 1.2, as I have documented elsewhere (1994c, p. 305).

Besides, Pressac himself refutes his own assertion when he accepts at face value Tauber's account of the experimental incineration in Crematorium II of three corpses of male *adults* in one muffle in 40 minutes (p. 72), which would lead to a theoretical cremation capacity of 1,620 *adult* corpses within 24 hours for the entire crematorium. In doing so, Pressac implicitly accepts for Crematorium II an effective capacity which is even higher than the one mentioned in the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943 (1,440 corpses in 24 hours), which he himself takes to be grossly inflated.

Regarding the fundamental question of the consumption of coke in the crematorium ovens, Pressac says absolutely nothing in his second study.

9.6.3. Pressac's Conjectures and Conclusions about Crematorium Ovens

Pressac's astonishing incompetence concerning the historical, documentary and technical aspects of cremation and crematoria manifests itself also most glaringly in what we writes about the topic of this chapter.

1) Regarding the gas-fired Volckmann-Ludwig oven he notes (p. 4):

> *"There was a commercial struggle with competing patents being applied for and at the end of 1934, quite surprisingly and probably for political reasons, Volckmann and Ludwig lost the match, and their type of oven disappeared from the German market."*

Pressac begins his "Chronologie récapitulative" precisely with the patent of the oven in question (p. 110) and presents its drawing (his document 2). The reason seems to be that this device did not have a recuperator, just like the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens, although there was no relation with the latter. Contrary to what Pressac tells us, the firm H.R. Heinicke, which then had its seat at Chemnitz and which owned the Volckmann-Ludwig patent, built another 15 ovens of this type in Germany between 1935 and 1940.[509]

2) Pressac's text quoted above continues (pp. 4f.):

> *"A direct competitor, the company Topf und Söhne of Erfurt, took over the market, and in 1935 they set up seven of its 1934 units – without a recuperator, with forced hot-air feed, and gas-fired – in a number of crematoria in Germany."*

In the "Chronologie récapitulative" Pressac confirms (p. 110):

> *"(1934) The department 'Krematorium*[s]*bau,' construction of crematoria of the firm J.A. Topf & Söhne of Erfurt, headed by principal engineer Kurt Prüfer, designed a single-muffle incineration oven without a recuperator, gas-fired, and with forced hot-air feed."*

The reference cited by Pressac in this connection is a Topf letter dated April 14, 1936, and addressed to the engineer J.F.B. Leisse in Luxemburg (from which he also draws the erroneous conclusion discussed in the preceding chapter; his note 3, p. 97). In this letter, written by the engineer Fritz Sander, it is said that Topf had built a gas-fired oven "with hot-air tubes without recuperation."[510] This does not mean,

[509] H.R. Heinicke, VL-Verbrennungsöfen Bauart Heinicke. Sales pamphlet kindly furnished by the firm H.R. Heinicke of Stadthagen.
[510] SW, 2/555a.

though, that it did not have a recuperator, it means only that it did not have the old recuperator typical for coke-fired ovens.

In the 1934 model of a "high-performance oven with rotating ash grid, D.R.P. (German patent)" an air-heater (*Lufterhitzer*) was located above the cremation chamber, consisting of metal tubes (the hot-air tubes mentioned above) linked to a blower (*Druckluftgebläse*): The fumes, striking these tubes on their way to the chimney, heated them to the point that they started to glow, and the air flowing through them thus heated up and entered the cremation chamber at a high temperature (see Etzbach, pp. 3-5). Hence, the entering combustion air was not "gas-heated" but heated by the fumes.

In practice, the air-heater was a recuperator located above the cremation chamber as well as below it. The idea was not new. The Klingenstierna ovens set up in the crematoria at Heidelberg, Jena, Offenbach and Mainz between 1891 and 1903 were equipped with a recuperation system consisting of a bundle of metal tubes (*Röhrenbündel*) – usually 32 – which, as in the Topf oven, were struck directly by the fumes, thus starting to glow and heating up the fresh air flowing through them. This unit was located below the cremation chamber and did not have a blower, since the draft of the oven sufficed.

Pressac's idea that the 1934 gas-fired Topf oven was in any way a precursor of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens "without recuperator" and in which "the blower had allowed the recuperator to be dropped" (see 9. chapter 6.1., item 3) is thus totally unfounded.

3) From the experience with the oven built by the company Walter Müller of Allach, the SS, so Pressac tells us (p. 6):

> *"concluded that the incineration of a corpse without a coffin allowed half an hour to be gained and that a coke supply of 100 kg in the morning permitted some 20 corpses to be reduced to ashes during the day."*

This conclusion is said to have been based on the following indications furnished by the supplier (Emph. in original):[511]

> *"Fuel: good coke, in chunks, of some 6,500 kcal/kg*
> *Weight of the corpse: about 70 kg*
> *Weight of the coffin: about 35 kg*
> *Average duration of the cremation: about 1 ½ hours*

[511] W. Müller, Ingenieurbüro/Industrieofenbau. Allach bei München. Angebot auf einen Feuerbestattungsofen mit Koksbeheizung nach beiliegender Zeichnung. An die Reichsführung SS der NSDAP, München, Karlstrasse. 2.6.1937. AKfSD, 361/2111.

Heating of the oven:

1. From a cold oven to the temperature of the introduction of the coffin: about 2 hours

2. If it was in operation the day before: 1 hr – 1 ½ hours

3. If the oven is operated every day: ½ – ¾ hours

Fuel consumption:

1. For heating the oven and the first cremation: about 175 kg

2. For the second and third cremations immediately following: no fuel consumption

3. If there is a cremation every day, coke consumption is 100 kg for the first cremation, no consumption for a second and third

Wood consumption: for each heating operation 3-5 kg of wood."

We have here not even the slightest hint that the absence of a coffin allowed an alleged "half an hour to be gained." As to the assertion that "a coke supply of 100 kg in the morning permitted some 20 corpses to be reduced to ashes during the day," even leaving aside the fact that the supplier spoke only of "a second and a third" cremation and not of twenty, we note that Pressac, paradoxically, did not understand that the succeeding cremations could (theoretically) be carried out without any additional coke only because the corpse was in a coffin of 35 kg. Its combustion would generate about 140,000 kcal, the equivalent of (140,000÷6,500 =) 21.5 kg of "good coke, in chunks." The "conclusion" thus did not come from the SS but from Pressac and is completely unwarranted.

4) For Pressac the function of the suction device for the draft was "to increase the amount of combustion gas and to avoid, in doing so, an additional coke consumption when incinerating 'frozen' corpses" (p. 29). Pressac has once more misread the Topf explanation concerning the plan to install three suction devices (instead of the initial two) for the new crematorium (the future Crematorium II): it concerned the fact "that frozen corpses will be cremated, which require a larger supply of fuel, and thus the discharge gas will increase."[512] In practice, hence, the frozen corpses would have required more coke which would obviously have increased the volume of the fumes, and therefore it was necessary to install a third suction device – exactly the opposite of what Pressac affirms.

[512] Letter from Topf to Bauleitung at Auschwitz dated November 4, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 83.

5) Concerning the design of the new chimney for Crematorium I, Pressac explains (p. 40.):

> *"Koehler added a flue duct of 12 meters to obtain a draft length of 27 meters."*

In actual fact, as I have explained in chapter 8.3.6., the draft of a chimney depends (aside from the difference in density – and hence on the temperature difference – between the fumes at the base of the chimney and the outside air) on the height and the cross-sectional area of the *chimney*. A horizontal flue duct will not only not increase the draft, but will reduce it because of the pressure drop it causes in the gas flow.[513] Let me add that the flue duct to the new chimney was not 12 m long, as Pressac states. The blueprint dated July 3, 1942 (Pressac's document 8), was realized only in part, because the flue duct of 12.20 m which is shown there was connected only to ovens nos. 1 and 2, whereas for oven no. 3 a separate, transverse duct of 7.375 m was built. This brings the total length to 19.575 m, as shown by Koehler's drawing of August 11, 1942,[514] and by his invoice of August 26, 1942.[515]

6) Pressac calls the Topf oven designed by Martin Klettner "a little marvel of technical design" and asserts that it "incorporated much of the experience gained by Topf in the concentration camps" (1989, p. 105). This is technical nonsense. The Klettner oven was a gas-fired device with a burner which produced combustion gases having a temperature of 1,200-1,300°C, which brought the refractory and a recuperator up to operating temperature. In this device the muffle did not function as a cremation chamber but as a drying chamber. Its grid was made up by two supporting beams, spaced some 40 cm apart and about 65 and 50 cm from the onset of the inclined plane on the right and left. According to the inventor of the oven, once the coffin had burnt, the disarticulated body fell by gravity into a small combustion chamber below where it was struck by the hot air from the recuperator (with a combustion gas recovery) at a temperature of 800-900°C. This allowed a more rapid combustion of the proteins which "with their high N [*nitrogen*] content (about 25%) strongly resist combustion." When the main combustion phase was over, the remains of the corpse fell into a post-combustion

[513] For this reason, the engineer Heepke in his equation for the calculation of the velocity of the fumes in a coke-fired oven introduced a coefficient "h_o," representing the resistance in the smoke ducts. Heepke 1905b, p. 74.

[514] Robert Koehler, Rauchkanal für die Zentral-Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz O.S., August 11, 1942. RGVA, 502-2-23, p.18.

[515] RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 23.

chamber below where they were completely consumed.[516] A design of this type has obviously nothing to do with the ovens for the concentration camps which were coke-fired and lacked a recuperator. To his credit it must be said that Pressac later acknowledged his mistake and wrote that the Klettner patent "was the very opposite of Prüfer's theories on this subject and was not based on the experience acquired with crematoria in the concentration camps" (p. 107).

9.6.4. Pressac's Technical Drawings

The technical drawings of the crematorium ovens which Pressac presents all reveal structural mistakes which demonstrate once again his technical incompetence:

a) Drawing of the Topf coke-fired double-muffle oven at KL Dachau (p. 14): the link of the gasifiers to the muffle is wrong. The corresponding openings were not located at the rear of the oven but on the outside of both sides of the muffles. Pressac's design would have caused the combustion products from the gasifier to be lost immediately via the chimney without heating up the muffles.

b) Drawing of the Topf triple-muffle oven for KL Buchenwald and for Crematoria II and III at Birkenau (p. 28): here, too, the link of the gasifiers to the muffles is wrong. The two gasifiers were connected only to the two outer muffles (and not to the central one as well, as shown in the drawing). The combustion products flowed from the lateral muffle into the central one through six openings between the muffles and from there into the flue duct.

c) "A rustic Topf triple-muffle oven" (p. 37) and sketch of the "probable arrangement of the crematorium with two simplified triple-muffle ovens" (p. 50): the number and the location of the gasifiers are wrong, as is their link with the muffles. This type of oven had only one gasifier,[517] not two, located behind the central muffle, from which the combustion products flowed into the two lateral muffles through appro-

[516] German Patent of note 374; J.A. Topf & Söhne, Wiesbaden. Verfahren und Vorrichtung zur Verbrennung von Leichen, Kadavern und Teile davon. Patentiert im Gebiet der BR Deutschland vom 24. Juni 1950 ab. DPA. Pressac (1989, p. 105) gives only the drawings of the oven, but not the text of the patent.

[517] The Topf estimate dated February 12, 1942, concerning this oven mentions, in fact, only one horizontal grate for the gasifier hearth. Kostenanschlag auf Lieferung von 2 Dreimuffel-Einäscherungs-Öfen und Herstellung des Schornsteinfutters mit Reinigungstür. APMO, BW 30/34, pp. 27-33.

priate openings between the muffles and then from there into the flue duct.

d) "Design unit of the 8-muffle oven, initial type, for Crematorium IV" (p. 78): here, too, the discharge system of the fumes is wrong. The outer muffle of each pair of muffles was linked to the horizontal flue duct, which went to the chimney by means of a vertical duct located in its rear wall. Pressac places this duct in the front part of the oven instead, between the two muffles. In this way the outer muffle would not have come up to operating temperature, because the combustion products of the gasifier would have been sucked up immediately by the chimney draft through the connection opening of the inner muffle with the central flue duct.

e) "Design unit of the 8-muffle oven, reinforced type, of Crematorium V" (p. 78): In this drawing, too, the discharge system of the fumes is wrong. The discharge duct, which Pressac places on the left, was not located in the front part of the oven, but in its rear part, whereas the duct which Pressac places on the right did not exist. Concerning the alleged modification, Pressac explains (note 235, p. 106):

> *"A conclusion based on the difference (about 50 cm) of the spacing between the axis of two muffles of the basic unit of the Topf 8-muffle ovens in Crematoria IV and V. Measurements taken on the remains of the oven in the ruins of Crematorium V at Birkenau and on the APMO photograph, neg. no. 888, which shows the metal frames of the oven of Crematorium IV (because of the dismantling of the building in October of 1944, the elements of the oven were stored at the Bauhof and were found as such at the liberation of the camp)."*

This "conclusion" is thus based on a difference of 50 cm between the anchor bars in the ruins of the 8-muffle oven of Crematorium V and a photograph of the anchor bars of the 8-muffle oven of Crematorium IV! Actually, no document mentions any such modification, and the width of the anchor bars in a pair of muffles in the original list of hardware for the 8-muffle oven – 2,545 mm[518] – fits in well with the ruins of the oven: about 2,500 mm.[519]

[518] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Verankerung zu einem 8-Muffel-Ofen. Septemeber 4, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-313, page number illegible.
[519] Measurements taken on site by the author on August 4, 1997.

9.7. The Ovens of Crematorium I

9.7.1. The First Crematorium Oven

Pressac has sketched out the following historical reconstruction of the activities of Crematorium I (p. 11):

> *"Only Kori had sensed that the wind was turning. In April, during the sale of an oven for Sachsenhausen, the company had also negotiated the sale of a single-muffle oven for Mauthausen which would, however, be coke-fired. It went operational on May 5* [1940] *and thus became the only oven in the camps that was still working.*
>
> *As a consequence of this rationing* [of liquid fuels], *Topf faced claims from the Dachau and Buchenwald Bauleitungen where the ovens no longer worked for lack of oil and the company was also worried about the future of the Flossenbürg-Auschwitz order. The solution was to replace heating-oil by coke.*[520] *Technically speaking, this was a step backward: the compressed air had allowed to do away with a recuperator, the gas or oil firing made the construction of a coke hearth unnecessary.*
>
> *But there was no other way out, for at the end of May the Auschwitz Bauleitung had refused an oil-firing for the mobile oven waiting to be supplied and asked for it to be replaced by coke. In early June, on the basis of its experience at Buchenwald, Prüfer's department redesigned the stationary double-muffle oven by equipping it with two coke hearths and offered it to Auschwitz where it was accepted in that form."*

There are numerous errors in this account. On March 21, 1940, *Amt II* of *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* placed an order with Topf for a mobile crematorium oven with naphtha-firing[521] for KL Flossenbürg, but on June 25 this office decided that the device was to be shipped to *Lager Unterkunft* Gusen, and on July 5 *SS-Neubauleitung* Mauthausen informed Topf of this shipment change.[522] In their reply – the letter of

[520] Initially, the switch-over of the heating system on account of the scarcity of liquid fuel was decided on by the local authority, but on December 17, 1943, the head of Amt C III (Technische Fachgebiete) (technical departments) of WVHA issued a general directive which specified: "In the crematoria the use of liquid fuels can no longer be permitted. The switch to solid fuels has been implemented everywhere" AGK, NTN, 94, p. 177.

[521] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen dated February 26, 1941. BAK, NS4 Ma/54.

[522] Letter from SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen to Topf dated July 5 1940. BAK, NS4 Ma/54.

July 25, 1940, cited by Pressac[523] – Topf, taking note of this order from *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten*, reminded *SS-Neubauleitung* Mauthausen that an oven of this type had been operating at KL Dachau for some time and suggested:[524]

> *"The above camp, however, cannot operate this oven for lack of naphtha for heating it. Possibly, if you are in urgent need for such an oven, you could recover the one at KL Dachau and we could build an oven with solid coke for that camp."*

Hence Topf did not have to face a claim from the KL Dachau *Bauleitung* and even less so from the one at KL Sachsenhausen, which is not even mentioned in the letter in question, and the scarcity of naphtha concerned only Dachau, but certainly not Mauthausen, where the local *SS-Neubauleitung* accepted delivery of the mobile naphtha oven on October 9, 1940. An order for the switch from naphtha to coke was placed on October 9, 1940.[525] The oven arrived at Gusen on December 19, 1940.[526] During the erection period – between December 26, 1940, and February 4, 1941 – the foreman August Willing set up a coke gasifier on either side of the oven.[527]

All this has nothing to do with the first coke-fired double-muffle oven at Auschwitz. Initially a naphtha-fired double-muffle oven had been ordered from Topf for the crematorium hall,[528] but later *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* ordered two coke gasifiers (*Koksgeneratoren*) to be installed in place of the naphtha heating equipment (*Ölfeuerung*). Topf informed *SS-Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz saying that this would cause a delay in the execution of the order,[529] but at the end the Erfurt company did not make any modifications, as *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* decided to install at Auschwitz a different type of oven, coke-fired, which already existed and had been offered by Topf to *SS-Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz in April. The corresponding estimate (*Kostenanschlag*), in fact, referred to the "supply of a Topf coke-fired

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[523] Pressac 1993, note 18 on p. 98.
[524] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen dated July 25, 1940. BAK, NS4 Ma/54.
[525] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen dated February 26 1941. BAK, NS4 Ma/54.
[526] Telegram from SS-Neubauleitung of KL Mauthausen dated December 19, 1940. BAK, NS4 Ma/54.
[527] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Rechnung Nr. D 41/107 dated February 5, 1941. BAK, NS4 Ma/54.
[528] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung at Auschwitz dated May 25, 1940. RGVA, 502-1-327, p. 231.
[529] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung at Auschwitz dated June 11, 1940. RGVA, 502-1-327, p. 224.

crematorium oven with two muffles and blower and 1 Topf device for draft enhancement."[530]

Hence, the coke-fired double-muffle oven erected at the Auschwitz crematorium in July 1940 had not been "redesigned" in early June on the basis of a naphtha-fired oven, nor was any "experience acquired" at Buchenwald in this sense, because the local naphtha-fired double-muffle oven was not changed over to coke-firing.

9.7.2. The Second Crematorium Oven

Pressac writes (p. 22) :

> *"The second crematorium having been fired up, it became evident that it functioned poorly for lack of draft. On April 2, 1941, Schlachter notified Topf of this defect and asked for an technician to be sent. However, no one was available. Topf advised to play on the flue duct vanes. By closing those of the first oven and opening those of the second the draft should improve. Bauleitung, however, not wanting to 'play,' had the crematorium chimney raised to 20 m and the draft re-established itself."* (Emph. added)

In the Topf letter of April 2, the term "play" (in German *spielen*) does not appear, instead we have "regulate," (*regeln*) which would not have allowed Pressac his little pun. Topf's advice was not a joke, as Pressac insinuates, but a pointer in the direction of a solution to the problem: both ovens were hooked up to the same suction device (*Saugzug-Anlage*), and when both were in operation at the same time, the second oven, being farther away from this device, suffered a decrease in draft. It was thus necessary, first of all, to close the two smoke vanes of the first oven and set those of the second, then to reopen those of the first and control the draft on both ovens together.[531] Pressac did not grasp the meaning of the indications from Topf and for that reason may have considered this a useless matter which *Bauleitung* could not seriously follow. For Pressac, closing the smoke vanes of the first oven and opening those of the second one would certainly have led to an improvement of the draft of the latter, but at the expense of the other!

The assertion that an increase in the height of the chimney to 20 m had re-established the draft is technical nonsense, because the problem was not caused by too low a draft (after all, there was a forced-draft de-

[530] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung at Auschwitz dated October 9, 1940. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 209-210.
[531] RGVA, 502-1-312, pp. 115-116.

vice) but by the location of the second oven with respect to the first and to the chimney.

As far as the alleged increase in the height of the chimney is concerned, Pressac cites his "document 8, Bauleitung blueprint no. 1434 of 03.08.42" (p. 22). In the caption for this document (which appears outside the text in the document appendix) Pressac explains – referring to Crematorium I – that it shows "its first chimney, raised by 10 m." But this blueprint, drawn on July [!] 3, 1942,[532] merely shows the location of the new chimney of the crematorium with respect to the earlier chimney (see chapter 9.7.4.). If anything can be concluded from this document, it is the lowering of the height of the new chimney as compared to the old one, but certainly not an increase in its height over what existed 15 months before. Pressac's assertion is not only not borne out by the documents, it does not agree with reality either: in the ZBL reports concerning its activity (*Tätigkeitsberichte*) there is no trace of any alleged raising of the chimney, whereas we find less important jobs, such as the bracing of the chimney with angle irons (*Winkeleisen*) and tightening bolts (*Spannschrauben*) done between June 23 and 28,[533] which Pressac mentions as well (p. 23).

9.7.3. The "First Gassing" and the Deterioration of the Second Oven

According to Pressac, the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz took place in 1941 "between December 5 and the end of that month" (p. 34) Referring to it, he explains (*ibid*.):

> *"The victims, who numbered between 550 and 850, were incinerated in the two double-muffle ovens of the crematorium in one or two weeks of intensive operation, which deteriorated the second oven."*

Pressac's source is the "letter from Grabner of January 31, 1942" (note 108, p. 101). The text quoted above is devised in such a way as to make the reader believe Grabner wrote that the corpses of the gassed victims were cremated in the crematorium ovens at an excessive rate and that this caused the damage of the second oven. Actually, *SS-Untersturmführer* Maximilian Grabner[534] said in this very brief message:[535]

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[532] The date "3.VII.1942" appears three times.

[533] Tätigkeitsbericht of June 28, 1941, concerning the period June 23-28. RGVA, 502-1-214, p.31.

[534] Grabner was the head of the Politische Abteilung (Political Department) of the camp.

"As there is presently an engineer from the firm Topf und Söhne in this camp for the erection of an oven, it is asked to have on this occasion oven no. 2 restored which is in need of repairs."

Nothing links the damage of oven no. 2 to the alleged cremation of the alleged victims of the alleged gassing. An examination of the documents moreover shows the extent to which Pressac's interpretation is unfounded. In December 1941 work was going on in the Auschwitz crematorium in preparation of the erection of the third oven. The Topf technician Albert Mähr worked in the crematorium from November 27 through December 4, pouring the foundation of the third oven and repairing one of the other two,[536] and it is for this reason that Pressac sets December 5 as the start of the period during which the gassing is said to have taken place. However, a Topf technician – probably Mähr once again – was present in the crematorium also from December 18 through 26, 1941,[537] and thus the time during which the gassing could theoretically have been carried out shrinks noticeably.

9.7.4. The Third Crematorium Oven

Pressac writes about this unit (p. 34):

"Three square openings were broken through and arranged in the ceiling of the morgue to allow the introduction of the Zyklon B, which was poured directly into the room, the two doors of which had been made [gas] *tight. The noise of an engine running at full throttle in a truck parked near the crematorium drowned out the cries of the victims.*

The SS was only able to do gassings there from January 1942 onwards up to the erection of the third oven in May, or for four months. It is now estimated that very few homicidal gassings took place in this crematorium, but that they were exaggerated, because they were so impressive for direct or indirect witnesses."

Pressac claims that "the third double-muffle oven was erected during May and handed over at the end of that month" (p. 38), and backs up this assertion by saying:[538]

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[535] RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 77.

[536] Letter from Topf to Bauleitung at Auschwitz dated December 9, 1941, APMO BW11/1, pp.4-5, and letter from Zentralbauleitung to Topf dated January 5, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-312, p.82.

[537] Letter from Zentralbauleitung to Topf dated January 5, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 82.

[538] *Ibid.*, note 120 on p. 102. There is also an item 4, but it has nothing to do with the crematorium ovens.

"Dates not indicated but certain because they are based on:

1. The date of arrival, on April 30, 1942 (ACM, 502-1-327), of the freight car again supplying the hardware for the third oven (contract no. 41 D 1980)

2. The mailing date, May 8, 1942, of the first reminder from Topf (ACM, 502-1-327) of a series of eight reminders to obtain the final payment for the third oven (a down-payment having been made on January 31, 1942)

3. The usual erection time for a double-muffle oven: 15 days, not counting drying (one month overall)."

Pressac's dates are so "certain" that on April 10, 1942, the detainee no. 20033, the Polish engineer Stefan Swiszczowski who worked at ZBL as draftsman,[539] drew an "inventory blueprint of building no. 47a, BW 11. Crematorium" which already showed the third oven as being present.[540] This oven was in fact erected in March 1942, and the work was over by the 31st of that month, as we can see from a list of due dates (*Baufristenplan*) for March 1942, which indicates the advancement of the extension works (*Erweiterung*) on the crematorium as being 100% by March 31st.[541] This date is confirmed also by a report concerning the state of advancement of construction work as of April 1, 1942.[542]

Pressac's mistake as such is fairly serious, but his justification is even more so, because it proves a somewhat superficial reading of the documents, to say the least. Let us begin with item 1. The parts (*Teile*) of the third oven, including the metal hardware, were shipped by Topf on October 21, 1941, in accordance with the order (*Auftrag*) of ZBL, number 41/1980/1, and arrived at Auschwitz on October 27.[543] It is true that, on April 16, 1942, some elements belonging to the anchoring (*Verankerung*) of a double-muffle oven as per order 41/1980/1[544] were

[539] RGVA, 502-1-256, p. 171.

[540] Bestandplan des Gebäude Nr.47a B.W.11. Krematorium. Drawing no. 1241 dated April 10, 1942. RGVA, 502-2-146, p. 21.

[541] Baufristenplan dated April 15, 1942. 502-1-22, p.11.

[542] Baubericht über den Stand der Bauarbeiten dated April 15, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 320.

[543] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Versandanzeige dated October 21, 1941, shipped in freight car no.43225 München (G). RGVA, 502-1-312, pp. 104-105.

[544] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Versandanzeige dated April 16, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-318, pp. 167-170. The freight car did not arrive at Auschwitz on April 30, but on the 18th. Pressac confuses the date at the end of the document – which refers to the conformity of the goods contained in the car with the Versandanzeige and to the acceptance of those goods by the materials administration, an operation which is borne out by the rubber stamp "Material-

loaded into a freight car, which also contained "parts of the triple-muffle Topf ovens" (*Teile zu den Topf-Dreimuffel-Öfen*) for the future Crematorium II at Birkenau as per ZBL order 41/2249/1. Yet these former parts did not belong to the third oven for the Auschwitz main camp, as Pressac believes. Instead, they were intended for KL Mauthausen and were reshipped to that camp on September 22, 1942,[545] as results unambiguously from a comparison of the list of these elements[546] with Topf's shipping list of April 16, 1942. Pressac himself mentions this shipment error (1993, p. 52), but did not understand its significance.

As far as item 2 is concerned, Topf's payment reminder of May 8 has nothing to do with the installation of the third oven. Pressac not only failed to ask himself why Topf had to ship once "again" those parts for the anchoring of the oven which had been shipped before, but also why this new shipment does not crop up in any of the Topf invoices. Actually, the partial invoice (*Teil-Rechnung*) of the Erfurt company concerning the third oven, drawn up on December 16, 1941, and approved by Bischoff on December 22, amounted to 7,518.10 Reichsmarks.[547] On the basis of that invoice, ZBL, on January 7, 1942, emitted a payment voucher for a down payment of 3,650 RM, which was paid out on January 27.[548] Topf sent a second partial invoice, likewise backdated to December 16, 1941, but arriving at Auschwitz on May 22, 1942,[549] showing a balance of 3,868.10 RM, the down payment of 3,650 RM from the SS administration having been deducted from the estimated cost of 7,518.10 Reichsmarks. The final invoice (*Schlußrechnung*), again backdated to December 16, 1941, which arrived at Auschwitz on July 10, 1942, shows a balance of 3,786.10 RM after deduction of 82

verwaltung, Richtigkeit bescheinigt" (Materials administration, conformity certified) – with that of the arrival date of the freight car which was, instead, indicated by a stamp on the first page of the Versandanzeige and was ticked off by the Bauleiter.

545 Letter from Zentralbauleitung to KL Mauthausen dated September 30, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-280, p. 273.

546 Aufstellung of Zentralbauleitung dated September 26, 1942. BAK, NS4 Ma/54.

547 J.A. Topf & Söhne, Rechnung Nr.2363 dated December 16, 1941. RGVA, 502-2-23, p. 263-262a.

548 Abschlagszahlung Nr. 1 für J.A Topf & Söhne in Erfurt dated January 7, 1942. RGVA, 502-2-23, pp. 262-262a. Pressac erroneously indicates January 31, as mentioned in Topf's Schlussrechnung which concerns, however, the crediting of the bank transfer no. Z 8005314 emitted by the cashier (Amtkasse II) of Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten on January 27.

549 J.A. Topf & Söhne, Teil-Rechnung dated December 16, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 114-114a.

RM for a rotating platform[550] specified in the previous partial invoice which had not been shipped.[551] The payment voucher for the final payment (*Schlußabrechnung*) in that amount was emitted by ZBL on July 17, 1942, and paid out on July 29.[552]

Still referring to the third double-muffle oven of Crematorium I, Pressac states (pp. 24f.):

> *"Prüfer went or telephoned to Auschwitz on the 24th, and a firm order was placed by Urbanczyk in an amount of 7332 RM for a third double-muffle oven with larger coke hearths than on the preceding ones, a change which was acknowledged by Topf."*

Pressac's reference is to a "Topf letter and estimate dated September 25 [1941]" and "drawings D 59042 of September 25. 1941" (note 71, p. 99). In the letter of September 25, 1941, Topf writes:[553]

> *"We wish to mention that the gasifier portion of the incineration oven will be made stronger than before."*

Thus, it was not a question of "larger coke hearths" but of a more robust brick structure. As far as the Topf blueprint D 59042 is concerned, it contains nothing which might support Pressac's mistake.

9.8. Ventilation of the Morgue in Crematorium I

I will close the discussion of Pressac's elaborations on Crematorium I with another glaring example of his sloppiness in historical and documentary matters and of the difficulty he has in grasping the significance of the sources. This aspect merely appears to be removed from the question of cremations, but the original ventilation of the morgue of Crematorium I depended precisely on the crematorium ovens. In this connection Pressac writes (1993, p. 18):

> *"As Topf had not sent the changed blueprints for the de-aeration of the crematorium, Schlachter seems to have approached the firm Friedrich Boos at Bickendorf near Cologne which was then installing the central heating system in the SS guard house, asking it to*

[550] The rotating platform (Drehscheibe) was a device which allowed the introduction cart for the coffin, running on rails, to rotate on its axis.

[551] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Schlussrechnung dated December 16, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-23, pp. 261-261a.

[552] Zentralbauleitung, Schlussabrechnung über Lieferung und Errichtung eines Einäscherungsofen der Firma J.A.Topf & Söhne, Erfurt, dated July 17, 1942. RGVA, 502-2-23, pp. 258-259a.

[553] RGVA, 502-2-23, p. 271.

set up a temporary de-aeration while waiting for the final one from Topf.

At the time, Boos was the only civilian firm working in the camp that also had the technology and the equipment needed for such an installation which was put up between February 23 and March 1st. Its details are not known, but SS corporal Pery Broad of the Political Department has described its external appearance: '[…] *a large curved tube climbed down from the roof of* [the crematorium] *from where came a monotonous noise* […] *It was a blower in suction which cleaned the air in the incineration room* [and the morgue…] *in the ceiling* [of the morgue, there was…] *the blower.' Besides, a Bauleitung blueprint confirms what Broad said (document 8)."*

A few pages on, Pressac comes back to the question of de-aeration (p. 23):

"When both ovens operated, i.e. almost every day, the heat generated was so intense that the use of the de-aeration sent the hot air from the furnace hall into the morgue, which was the opposite of what was wanted. To avoid this, the de-aeration vane of the morgue had to be shut and the latter remained unventilated. Adding to this the heat of the summer, and it became hardly possible to stay there, as the atmosphere was unbearable, and flies, transmitting disease, had appeared. Grabner accused Bauleitung of this scandal and asked, 'in the general interest' for two ventilators to be set up in the morgue, one a blower (for aeration), one in suction (for de-aeration) and that the exhaust be fed into the chimney of the ovens (a solution that had been considered before).

This smelly affair is of the greatest importance. <u>It shows that Grabner, making use of his rank as an officer and of the fear which his department brought to bear on the non-coms of Bauleitung, did intervene in the matters of the first crematorium.</u> It confirms that, as the morgue was mechanically de-aerated, homicidal gassings using a toxic gas could be carried out there. It shows that, for the very first time, aerating (belüften) and de-aerating a morgue was being considered." (Emph. added)

Pressac then states that "the crematorium possessed a sufficiently efficient ventilation, provided that it was used only to de-aerate the morgue" (p. 34). The source for the installation of the de-aeration

(*Entlüftung*) by the Boos company is Schlachter's weekly report of March 1, 1941 (note 54, p. 99). In this context we read in this report:[554]

> *"In the crematorium, the work on the new cremation device has been terminated, a temporary de-aeration has been hooked up to the exhaust channel, and everything has been put right."*

That this de-aeration was *mechanical* and was *installed by the Boos company* is, however, unsupported by any evidence and, as we shall see, groundless. The quotation from Pery Broad, which Pressac brings in to explain the structure of *this* de-aeration, is distorted and truncated. According to the witness, the blower in suction (*Exhauster*) was not intended for *both* the furnace hall *and* the morgue, because it was meant "to render the air in the morgue at least halfway bearable" (Broad, p. 19), something rather obvious in view of the fact that in the furnace hall (*Brennkammer*) the supply of fresh air (*Frischluft*) was ensured by a window with bars (*vergittertes Fenster, ibid*., p. 20). We see that Pressac, while admitting that the details of this device "are not known," claims to know them better than Pery Broad to the point that he feels entitled to correct him.

Pressac moreover cuts the quotation short and omits the conclusion of Pery Broad's description that "aside from the exhauster six air holes closed by lids had been installed."[555] The reason for this omission is clear: it contrasts too sharply with Pressac's assertion that, in January 1942, "*three* square openings were broken through and arranged in the ceiling of the morgue *to allow the introduction of the Zyklon B*" (Pressac 1993, p. 34; emph. added), which, moreover, were closed up "before the arrival of the Topf technician" (p. 39). According to Pressac's (erroneous) chronology, this would be in late April or early May, i.e. at least one month before the state of the crematorium as described by Pery Broad!

We should note here that, from a technical standpoint, air holes in a room with a blower in suction linked to the outside do not make much sense. What is more, Pressac commits a serious error in claiming to explain – by means of an account given later than May 1942 – a situation existing at the end of February 1941. In fact, Broad was transferred to

[554] Tätigkeitsbericht dated March 1, 1941 for the period Feb. 23 – March 1. RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 67.

[555] Broad, p. 20; in the French translation of Broad's statements (Musée d'Etat à Oświęcim, p. 166), used by Pressac, the term is given as "orifices d'aérage."

Auschwitz in April 1942,[556] which means that his description was made at least 14 months later!

The *Bauleitung* drawing referred to by Pressac – blueprint 1434 of July 3, 1942 – confirms Broad's description only with respect to the "angled metal tube" (*winkelförmige Metallrohr*) located on the roof of the crematorium, but the function Pressac ascribes to it in the caption of the above drawing is exactly the opposite of what Pery Broad tells us, namely that it showed "the curved conduit for the *exhaust air* (furnace hall and morgue) installed by the firm Friedrich Boos of Cologne-Bickendorf" (caption for his document 8; emph. added). In this way, then, an *aeration* conduit changes by magic into a *de-aeration* conduit!

Pressac has also misunderstood the question of the poor functioning of the de-aeration raised by Grabner in his letter to *SS-Neubauleitung* of June 7, 1941. First of all I will present here its complete text:[557]

> *"It is absolutely necessary that a special de-aeration is installed in the morgue of the crematorium. The de-aeration used so far has been made useless by the construction of the second oven. When the second oven is used – and that happens nearly every day – the de-aeration vane toward the morgue must be closed, because otherwise hot air enters the morgue via the flue duct*[558] *and, in doing so, provokes exactly the contrary of a de-aeration. The absence of a de-aeration and of an air-feed is especially noticeable under the hot climatic conditions we have presently. A presence in the morgue – even if only for a short period of time – is nearly impossible.*
>
> *By means of a controllable ventilation an improvement of the air is certainly possible and the humidity in the room can be avoided. It will also eliminate the presence of flies in the morgue.*
>
> *We ask to install two blowers in the morgue, i.e. one for aeration, the other for de-aeration. For the de-aeration, a special conduit*[559] *up to the chimney must be built. It is asked to proceed with the works as soon as possible."*

Therefore, the hot air did not enter the morgue "from the furnace hall," as Pressac affirms, but from the flue duct of the ovens. This is rather obvious, as the corresponding de-aeration was linked to the "exhaust channel" (*Abzugskanal*), i.e. the flue duct. It is just as easy to see

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556 Staatliches Museum Auschwitz 1995, vol. I, *Täterbiografien* (Biographies of the perpetrators), p. 271.

557 RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 111.

558 "Fuchs," the smoke duct between the oven and the chimney.

559 "Fuchs," yet here referring merely to a simple underground air conduit.

that the foul air from the morgue reached the chimney together with the fumes from the second oven. Pressac has thus misunderstood Grabner's request in this matter as well: he did not want that "the exhaust be fed into the chimney of the ovens" – that is what was happening all along and was the very cause of the grievances – but he asked for the foul air to be fed into the chimney via a special conduit and not via the flue duct.

As far as the installation of two ventilators is concerned, one in a suction and one in a pressure mode (aeration and de-aeration), the reason was simply that there was *no ventilator at all* at the time, not even one in pressure mode; otherwise only one additional blower for aeration would have been requested. We see that the ventilation in the morgue at the end of February 1941 was enhanced – and *mechanical* – but not in the sense that Pressac gives it: It could operate both in an enhanced mode because of the draft of the chimney (the lower pressure in the flue duct sucked in the air from the morgue which was directly linked to it) and mechanically (the foul air from the morgue was taken in by the forced-draft device set into the flue duct just upstream from the chimney).

As one can see from the Topf blueprint D 57999, the left-side flue duct of the second oven ran toward the wall separating the furnace hall and the morgue, then made a U-turn and ran the other way toward the chimney. The curved portion ran along the wall, and it was at this point that the connection between the flue duct and the morgue was located.[560] In order to connect the morgue to the flue duct, no company like Boos was needed. A couple of bricklayers under the supervision of the Topf technician – who had just finished the installation of the second oven – could have done the job. Previously the morgue had been connected to the left-side flue duct of the first oven.

This system of de-aeration which had cold air flowing from the morgue into the flue duct could worsen the draft on the ovens, if the controls were not set just right, and the complaint in the letter of April 2, 1941, no doubt stemmed from this condition as well. However, if the system was to work, an aeration opening in the walls or in the ceiling of the morgue was indispensable.

When attributing "the greatest importance" to the complaint raised by Grabner and emphatically drawing attention to the fact that, "for the

[560] Cf. my connection diagram in Mattogno 2005e, document 11 on p. 119.

very first time, aerating (*belüften*) and de-aerating a morgue was being considered" (as if this betrayed a concrete homicidal intent), Pressac shows that he has a very limited understanding of the technology of ventilation. In fact, the presence of an aeration is essential for the operation of a de-aeration, as otherwise there would be no exchange of air. Thus the first Topf project for the de-aeration of the "corpse cells" (*Leichenzellen*) of Crematorium I from December 9, 1940(!), which was based on 20 air exchanges per hour, actually specified that "the supply of fresh air to the corpse cells through windows or other openings must be assured."[561] Hence it was on December 9, 1940, not on June 7, 1941, when they considered "for the very first time" to aerate and de-aerate a morgue, and without any suspicious purpose.

It thus becomes clear that the only novelty in Grabner's request simply consisted of the demand for a mechanical aeration made up of two blowers. From what has been said, we see that the de-aeration of the morgue installed at the end of February 1941 could operate only, if the room also had an aeration; but where did the air come from? Leaving aside the two access doors and the walls,[562] we are left with the ceiling which thus had to have ventilation openings. It is certainly true that theoretically, thanks to the de-aeration, "homicidal gassings using a toxic gas could be carried out" in the morgue, but it is equally true that during de-aeration the ventilation apertures had to be kept *open*, which is exactly the opposite of what the testimonies tell us on which Pressac bases his assertions.

Finally, when he states that Grabner, making use of his rank as an officer and of the fear which his department allegedly brought to bear, meddled illicitly with the matters of the crematorium, Pressac goofs one last time. The Political Department (*Politische Abteilung*) of the camp functioned, in fact, as a police department as far as deceases were concerned, and in that capacity it had the task of supervising the cremation

[561] Letter from Topf to SS-Neubauleitung dated December 9, 1940. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 136.

[562] The two outside walls were covered by the sloping earth mound which surrounded the building; of the two inside walls, one separated the morgue from the furnace hall, the other from the room later named Waschraum (washing room).

of corpses of detainees[563] and also their registration in the appropriate registers, the death books (*Sterbebücher*).[564]

In keeping with the legal norms regarding matters of births and deaths which applied in civilian society, the Political Department also took care of the treatment of the ashes of those cremated. This explains its frequent requests for urns from the *SS-Neubauleitung*.[565] It is no accident that, when the work on the reconstruction of the chimney was terminated, the crematorium was "transferred to the Political Department for operation."[566]

9.9. The 8-Muffle Ovens

On the subject of the 8-muffle oven, Pressac goes on to write (1993, p. 57):

> *"On September 8, the elements (hardware and fireclay) of two complete 8-muffle ovens of a weight of twelve tons left Erfurt by rail and arrived at Auschwitz on the 16th."*

If that freight car really did contain the "complete" parts for two 8-muffle ovens, the average weight of each muffle would have been (12,000÷16 =) 750 kg including the metal parts, the refractory brick, and half a gasifier! Pressac does not realize that this is absurd. The shipment obviously did not contain the refractory bricks but only the metal hardware and the fireclay bars of the muffle grids, which would give a total weight of 12,186 kilograms.[567] As I have explained in chapter 8.4.4., the refractory brickwork of one 8-muffle oven by itself weighed some 24.1 tons, which would bring the weight of a "complete" 8-muffle oven to 30.2 tons.

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[563] The civilian legislation specified i.a. that the cremations be authorized by the local police authority which also had to keep a register of all cremations carried out (Operating instructions for cremation equipment dated November 5, 1935, § 3 and Decree for the application of the law on cremations dated August 10, 1938. Schumacher, pp. 118-119).

[564] Staatliches Museum Auschwitz 1995, vol. I, p. 225.

[565] Between January and November 1941, the Political Department at Auschwitz requested from the wood-working shop of SS-Neubauleitung (Schreiner-Werkstatt) hundreds of boxes and cases for urns (Urnenkisten, Urnenkästen). RGVA, 502-2-1, p. 28, 29, 41, 45, 46, 47 and 48. The latest known request, of November 27, 1941, concerned 50 "Versandkästen Urnen" (shipment boxes for urns). RGVA, 502-2-1, pp. 34-34a and 31-31a. The urns were shipped to the cemetery of the dependents in the cremated detainee's hometown or to some other cemetery in accordance with Himmler's decree of February 20, 1940.

[566] Tätigkeitsbericht des SS-Uscha. Kirschneck Bauführer Abt. Hochbau für Monat August 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 197.

[567] Topf Versandanzeige of September 8, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-313, pp. 143-144.

Pressac's lack of understanding in historical and documentary matters shows through also with respect to the question of payment for the crematorium oven of the Mogilev order. In this connection, in fact, he speaks of "an unpremeditated and excusable fraud" amounting to 20,700 RM committed by Topf (p. 59), which he explains as follows (p. 93):

> *"But the most difficult problem to solve was the payment of the two 8-muffle ovens. The Russland-Mitte Bauleitung had ordered four ovens from Topf for an amount of 55,200 RM and paid 42,600 RM in two installments. The Auschwitz Bauleitung had ordered two ovens for 27,600 RM and made a down-payment of 10,000 Reichsmarks.*
>
> *Topf believed to have sold six ovens at 13,800 RM each (82,800 RM). But as the two Birkenau ovens had been taken from the Mogilev order, the two Bauleitungen did not owe Topf a remainder of 30,200 RM (on six ovens), but 2,600 RM (on four ovens), which Auschwitz accepted to pay.*
>
> *Actually, Topf had built only two and a half ovens (one half oven at Mogilev and two at Birkenau) for only 34,500 RM and should have paid back 18,100 RM unduly received. By accepting an additional 2,600 RM, Topf raked in a nice benefit of 20,700 RM on this business, which compensated them for their problems with the Auschwitz SS. The party left in the lurch was the Russland-Mitte Bauleitung, which in August 1944, by the time Jährling booked in a credit of 2,600 RM and thus rubbed out Topf's error, had retreated to Posen and was in a state of liquidation."*

Pressac did not understand anything of what had happened. On April 5, 1943, Topf established the invoice for the two 8-muffle ovens for Birkenau with a total of 27,632.30 RM (including 27,600 RM for the ovens and 32.30 RM for shipment costs).[568] On June 2 the head of *Gruppe C/Bauwesen* at *Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer Russland-Mitte* informed *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei Reich-Ost*, to which ZBL was attached, that *Bauinspektion Russland-Mitte* had already paid 42,600 Reichsmarks for the four ovens originally ordered for Mogilev.[569] When ZBL learned about this, it not only considered the Topf invoice of April 5, 1943, to be undue, but also thought that the Erfurt company had received (42,600 – 27,632.30 =) 14,967.70 RM more than

[568] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Rechnung Nr. 380 dated April 5∞ 1943. RGVA, 502-1-314, pp. 29-29a.
[569] RGVA, 502-1-314, pp. 35-36a.

it should have. Besides, the SS did not understand why the April 5, 1943, invoice amounted to 27,600 RM (plus 32.30 RM for shipping), or 13,800 RM per oven, whereas the estimate of November 16, 1942, spoke of 12,972 RM for one oven.[570] Topf replied that the *Reichsführer-SS* had ordered four 8-muffle ovens on December 4, 1941, for a total of 55,200 RM; moreover, as the SS had requested a number of changes to be made in the design of the 8-muffle oven, Topf had applied an increase of 6% or 828 RM, bringing the final price to 13,800 Reichsmarks. Of the four ovens ordered, one half-oven (4 muffles) had been shipped to Mogilev, two to Auschwitz, the remaining one and a half ovens being held in the Topf warehouse at the disposal of *Reichsführer-SS*.[571]

At Auschwitz the matter was finally cleared up by the civilian employee Jährling who, on the copy of the letter from *Bauinspektion Russland-Mitte* of June 2, 1943, which ZBL had received, made two handwritten annotations, one on January 31, the other on February 21, 1944. They describe the payment situation from the point of view of the administration: The SS had ordered four 8-muffle ovens for a total cost of 55,200 RM; *Bauinspektion Russland-Mitte* had already made a down-payment of 42,600 RM to Topf, to which *SS-Standortverwaltung* at Auschwitz then added – on February 1944 – a further payment in part of 10,000 RM,[572] hence Topf was still entitled to 2,600 Reichsmarks.[573]

The remaining one and a half ovens still in the Topf warehouse were legally, for all intents and purposes, the property of *Reichsführer-SS*, thus Jährling's calculation was correct, and Topf received merely what was due. *Bauinspektion Russland-Mitte* was late in being informed about all this, and therefore inquired again with ZBL on August 11, if the 42,600 RM already paid to Topf had been deducted from the final payment.[574] Further to the Topf letter of July 7, 1943, the remaining one and a half ovens were taken over by SS-WVHA. On August 16 the *SS-*

[570] Letter from Zentralbauleitung to Topf dated July 2, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-327, page number illeggible.
[571] Letter from Topf to Zentralbauleitung dated July 7, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 43-45.
[572] Zentralbauleitung, Abschlagszahlung Nr. 1 (first payment in part) dated February 1, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-310, pp. 16-16a.
[573] Letter from Leiter der Gruppe C Baugruppe of Höherer SS-und Polizeiführer Russland-Mitte to Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei Reich-Ost dated June 2, 1943 and handwritten notes by civilian employee Jährling dated January 31, and Febrary 21, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-314, pp. 36-36a.
[574] Letter from Abwicklungsstelle der Baugruppe der Waffen-SS und Polizei Russland-Mitte to Zentralbauleitung dated August11, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-314, p. 28.

Wirtschafter (manager) with *Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer* in the General Government sent to all *Zentralbauleitungen der Waffen SS und Polizei* at Heidelager, Cracow, Lemberg, Lublin, and Warsaw, as well as to *Neubauleitung* at Radom a note informing them that *Amt C III* had available "one and a half crematorium ovens = 12 muffles"[575] and asked the addressees to reply by September 1 whether they had any needs in this regard.[576]

9.10. The Projects of Mass Cremations at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943

In the first months of 1943 the Topf company planned two installations for mass cremations at Auschwitz-Birkenau. A letter from Bischoff to the camp commander, dated February 12, 1943, speaks of "the project of a 6th crematorium (an open cremation chamber with dimensions of 48.75×3.76 m)."[577] Pressac claims that this project was based "on the principle of open-air incineration ditches and the experience gained with them in the Birkenau woods between 20th September and 30th November 1942" (1989, p. 217, 491) and that, in the summer of 1944, even though the project had not been realized, "its principle was not forgotten, and was put into practice in a primitive way in the open-air incineration ditches dug near Krematorium V and Bunker 2/V" (*ibid*.). Thus Pressac asserts in a sterile circular reasoning that the project of Crematorium VI was based on the "incineration ditches" of 1942 and that the "incineration ditches" of 1944 were based on the principle of the project of Crematorium VI. He even ventures out on a detailed description of the device based on two conjectural hypotheses: that it was a "furnace pit" and was "most probably circular" in such a way that the two dimensions mentioned above were "the diameter and the depth of the pit" which would thus have had a surface area of 1,865 m² and a volume of about 7,000 m³ (*ibid*.). He no longer remembers, though, "the high water table at Birkenau," which had forced ZBL to modify the project of the new crematorium (the future Crematorium II) when the project was moved from the main camp to Birkenau by raising the two underground morgues, which instead of being underground now became

[575] "Dem Amt CIII stehen z.Z. 1½ Einäscherungsöfen = 12 Muffeln zur Verfügung."
[576] WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 268, p. 132.
[577] Letter from Zentralbauleitung to camp commander dated February 12, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 80.

semi-basements (1989, p. 284). As I will explain in chapter 10.2.15., the ground water at Birkenau stood at less than 1.2 m below the surface, so that the alleged "furnace-pit" would have been two thirds full of water.

The project of Crematorium VI was most probably based on the principle of a field oven (*Feldofen*) imagined by Friedrich Siemens, which Prüfer as an expert must have been familiar with: a rectangular brick oven.[578] By splitting the individual fires as in that project, Crematorium VI would have had 60 hearths with a total effective surface area of 144 m², enough for the simultaneous cremation of 150 corpses.

Pressac was led astray by another project whose significance he did not understand. The Topf letter to ZBL of February 5, 1943, speaks, in fact, of a "cost estimate for the large annular incineration oven,"[579] which certainly was the "Continuously operating corpse cremation oven for mass applications" invented by Sander (see chapter 12.2.2.). This project had, in fact, a cylindrical, hence annular, combustion chamber, but had nothing to do with a round "cremation pit." Another project for a mass cremation device comes up in a "cost estimate of the Topf Co. for an incineration oven" dated April 1, 1943, of which R. Schnabel shows only the last page (p. 351). Pressac confuses it with the "Crematorium VI" project and asserts that it was "based on the principle of open-air incineration" (1993, p. 69). The device offered in this estimate was a proper crematorium oven, although somewhat special. The presence of "1 cast iron flue duct vane with rollers, cable, and winch" bears this out. This estimate, too, probably referred to the oven invented by Fritz Sander, which did possess a single flue duct.

All these devices were never built, no doubt because circumstances changed in the succeeding months. From April onwards, the mortality at Auschwitz dropped considerably, and that was probably the reason why ZBL gave up on these projects. Such an explanation is reasonable and in keeping with the available documents.

Let us now look at the significance of these projects, assuming that the alleged mass exterminations did actually take place. According to the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*, open-air cremations of corpses at Birkenau began on September 21, 1942 (Czech 1989, pp. 305f.). At the end of the campaign, on December 3, 1942, a total of 107,000 corpses are said to have been cremated (*ibid*., p. 349). This means that, over 75 consecu-

[578] Drawing of the device in Küchenmeister, pp. 82f.
[579] Letter from Topf to Zentralbauleitung at Auschwitz dated February 5, 1943. APMO, BW AuII 30/4/34, D-Z-Bau/2544/2 (page number illegible).

tive days, an average of 1,426 corpses per day would have been eliminated without any trouble at all. Still following the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*, the number of gassed victims at Auschwitz is given as about 16,800 for December 1942, but for January 1943 they are said to have been some 45,700 – the highest figure for that year – giving an average of 1,474 per day for this month or hardly 48 more than for the preceding period of September 21 to December 3, 1942. Even that task is said to have been accomplished without any problem.

Now, all of a sudden, at the end of January 1943, ZBL began to seriously consider the construction of mass incineration devices – for what purpose, if nearly 170,000 corpses had already been cremated in the open without a hitch and if the number of the allegedly gassed victims for the month of February were fewer than half of the January figure (about 18,700)?

Some 134,000 Hungarian Jews are claimed to have been gassed and cremated between May 17 and 31, 1944 (see Mattogno 2005c, pp. 49f.), but Jankowski speaks of 18,000 gassings per day, as quoted by van Pelt (2002, pp. 186f; see chapter 17.6.2.). Thus, during those two weeks about 8,950 corpses are said to have been burned on an average day, about 1,100 in the crematoria and 7,850 in the cremation ditches. However, for this incredible task, which the Birkenau crematoria were totally unable to accomplish, the camp administration and ZBL did not in the least think of taking up and realizing the mass cremation installations of early 1943. This fact seemed so absurd even to Jan Sehn that he chose to assign – by way of a daring falsification – the 1943 projects to the summer of 1944. In fact, he writes (Sehn 1961, p. 141):

> *"The method of burning a considerable number of corpses in ditches, which was applied in August of 1944, turned out to be quicker and more efficient. Hence the crematoria stopped operating and only ditches were used. The sixth crematorium contained in the expansion plans for the camp was based on the principle of burning corpses in the open air. The correspondence with Topf mentions a 'grosser Ring-Einäscherungsofen,' 'offene Verbrennungskammer,' and 'offene Verbrennungsstätte.' The crematorium would have been a heating furnace, combining the enormous capacity of the ditches with the economy of the crematorium ovens with their controlled hearths. This would have allowed to substitute the piles of wood used in the ditches by small amounts of coke or coal."*

This confirms once again that the holocaust thesis is unfounded. The projects for mass cremations concerned exclusively the corpses of registered detainees who had died a natural death. They were under discussion at the end of January and in early February 1943, both because there had been, at that time, an increase in the mortality of the registered detainees and because ZBL knew it could not keep the new date for the completion of Crematorium II, i.e. February 15, 1942.[580] The availability of Crematoria II and IV and the drop in the mortality of the detainees noted in April made the realization of these projects superfluous. They were not at all discussed in 1944, because by then the Birkenau crematoria existed and were amply sufficient for the requirements of the camp.

Pressac states that "the exceptional wealth of the documents retrieved by the Soviet army allows a nearly perfect understanding of this criminal engineering" (1993, p. 2). Actually, as I have demonstrated in the preceding chapters, Pressac is lost in a nearly perfect *ignorance* on the subject of this alleged "criminal engineering" – the alleged homicidal gas chambers and the crematorium ovens.

[580] APMO, BW 30/34, p. 105. Prüfbericht by eng. Prüfer dated January 29, 1943. The initial termination date for Crematorium II, pushed back by Chef der Amtsgruppe C of WVHA Kammler by his order of January 11, 1943 (RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 59), was January 31, that of Crematorium IV was February 28.

Part Three: The Witnesses Henryk Tauber and Rudolf Höss

10. Critical Analysis of Henryk Tauber's Testimonies

10.1. Introduction

Henryk Tauber was one of the most important witnesses during the famous Polish trial of Rudolf Höss at Warsaw, March 11 through 19, 1947. However, for unknown reasons he did not participate directly in the debates and did not even testify during the trial of the camp garrison, which later took place at Cracow from November 25 to December 16, 1947. His testimony, as attached to the proceedings of the Höss trial, was constituted by the minutes of a deposition which Tauber had made before the investigating judge Sehn on May 24, 1945 (Tauber 1945b). This testimony became the essential basis of the judicial reconstruction of the alleged method of extermination which the tribunal established; it was taken over as such by the incipient Polish historiography for its historical reconstruction of the events.

Tauber's testimony remained unknown for decades in Western historiography, until Pressac rediscovered it in 1989 in the papers of the Höss trial. In his voluminous work on Auschwitz, the French historian presented, in fact, a full translation into English together with his own detailed comments (1989, if not stated otherwise, pp. 481-505). This translation, which is somewhat objectionable, came from his own adaptation of two French versions prepared for him by Dorota Ryszka on one hand and Adam Rutkowski on the other (p. 481). For that reason I have used my own translation of the Polish text into Italian (translated into English for the purposes of this book).

Pressac held Tauber in high esteem, calling him "an exceptional witness," "being 95% historically reliable" (p. 380, 481) and stated (p. 502):

> *"The proof of the exceptional validity of his testimony is how well it corresponds with the historical material available now that was not available in May 1945."*

Pressac's assessment left its imprint on all later elements of holocaust historiography, which lost no time in spreading Tauber's testimony. In 1995 Piper incorporated it in the original language into the five volume history of the camp, later translated into German and English (Długoborski/Piper 1995, vol. III, pp. 189-208).

Van Pelt, polemicizing against the revisionist historians, has pushed Pressac's limits even further by writing (2002, p. 193):

> *"All of Tauber's testimony up to this point can be confirmed in the blueprints or by means of the other documents in the archive of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office. Only the division of the gas chamber of Crematorium 2 into two spaces cannot be traced in the archive. Negationists use this to refute the validity of the whole of Tauber's testimony."*

Needless to say that no revisionist historian has ever dreamt of refuting the testimony in question on the basis of this detail alone. Van Pelt goes on (p. 205):

> *"Given Eknes's*[581] *difficulty in discrediting Tauber's testimony, it is not surprising that negationists preferred to bury it in silence. Yet we do well to attach the highest evidentiary value to it, and not only because of its internal consistency. Tauber's statements were largely corroborated by the contemporary testimonies of Jankowski and Dragon and by the later memoirs of Filip Müller."*

This is how van Pelt summarizes his opinion on the testimony in question (p. 204):

> *"Tauber's statement was extremely specific, it did not contain contradictions, and it did not contain improbable allegations. In fact, negationists have not been able to discredit him as a witness."*

Even though Tauber has been considered to be by far the most reliable and the most important witness on the subject of the alleged homicidal gassings at Auschwitz by the legion of holocaust historians headed by Pressac, van Pelt and Piper, none of these authors has ever gone to the trouble of obtaining Tauber's very first statement – the one he made on February 27 and 28, 1945, in front of the Soviet vice-prosecutor Pachomov (Tauber 1945a). The existence of this document has been known since 1945, for the report of the Soviet Commission of Investigation on Auschwitz refers explicitly to the testimonies of "Genrich [*Henrich*] Tauber from the town of Krzanow, Poland" and of "Shyloma

[581] The Spanish revisionist historian Enrique Aynat Eknes.

[*Szlama*] Dragon," and it even presents an excerpt (document URSS-008). Once the Soviet archives were opened, the testimony was open to any interested party, and Jürgen Graf and I encountered no major problem finding it in Moscow. There exists yet another brief and practically unknown declaration by Tauber, the one he made to the Jewish historical commission of Cracow; its exact date is not shown.[582]

In the following chapters I shall examine the degree of reliability of Tauber's testimony from the technical and the historical point of view.

10.2. Crematorium Ovens and Cremations

10.2.1. Dimensions of the Muffle

On this point, Tauber states (p. 133[583]):

> *"The doors were smaller than the openings of the muffles; the muffle itself was about 2 meters long, 80 centimeters wide and about 1 meter high."*

The reference is to the triple-muffle oven, for which the muffle was 70 cm wide, 80 cm high and 210 cm long. The muffles were closed at the front by loading doors (*Einführungstüren*) 60×60 cm in size.

10.2.2. Temperature of the Muffle

In the Soviet testimony Tauber asserts that the temperature of the muffles in the double-muffle oven at Crematorium I fluctuated between 1,200 and 1,500°C (1945a, p. 3). This is technical nonsense. The Topf operating instructions specify that the temperature in the double-muffle oven was not to exceed 1,100°C; the triple-muffle oven was limited to 1,000°C. These limits were imposed by the thermal load on the oven and depended on the weight and the quality of the refractory materials used. At temperatures higher than 1,100-1,200°C sintering occurred, i.e. partial fusion and adhesion of bone parts to the refractory.

In the Polish testimony, when speaking of the triple-muffle ovens of Crematorium II, Tauber says that the muffles reached temperatures of 1,000-1,200°C (p. 133). This is not only an exaggeration, but also a contradiction. Tauber states, in fact, that after a number of cremations the ovens "reached red heat" (p. 143) and then sings the praises of the

[582] "Bunt in crematorium" (Revolt in the crematorium), in: Borwicz et al., pp. 89-91.

[583] The page numbers suffice to distinguish Tauber's Soviet (1-12) from his Polish deposition (122-150).

wonderful capacity of "such a red-hot oven" (*ibid*.). In the Topf instructions for the double and triple-muffle ovens, however, we can read:[584]

> *"Once the cremation chambers are well into red heat (some 800°C), the corpses may be fed into the two chambers one after another."*

Thus, red heat corresponds to 800°C, a value which even for Tauber represents the maximum temperature of the muffle. At higher temperatures the refractory brickwork's color is different: bright cherry red at 1,000°C, red orange at 1,100°C, yellow orange at 1,200°C, white at 1,300°C, and blinding white at 1,500°C (Bordoni, p. 13).

10.2.3. Loading System of the Muffle

In this chapter we will consider only the procedure for the introduction of the body into the muffle. First of all, the description already given in 8.4.3. will be reviewed and completed.

Below the loading doors of the triple-muffle ovens, a round fixation bar (*Befestigungs-Eisen*) had been welded to which was hinged the frame with the rollers[585] for the coffin loading cart (*Sargeinführungswagen*, see document 40). The frame could move horizontally along the fixation bar and thus served all three muffles of the furnace; it was moreover collapsible, i.e. it could be raised or lowered. When raised, the two rollers rested on the base of the door of the muffle, some 9 cm above the level of the grid. The same device was used also on the double-muffle furnace, except that there each muffle had its own pair of rollers.

The corpse introduction device (*Leicheneinführungs-Vorrichtung*) consisted of a coffin loading cart (*Sargeinführungswagen*) placed on rails (*Laufschienen*) and of a semi-cylindrical mobile cart (*Verschiebewagen*) running above it. The coffin loading cart had at its leading portion a metal stretcher some 270 cm long, on which the corpse was placed and which was pushed into the muffle. The stretcher consisted of a horizontal wrought-iron plate about 40 cm wide and two such vertical plates welded in the shape of a ⊢⊣, forming two pairs of edges; the two upper edges kept the corpse from sliding off to the side

[584] APMO, BW 11/1/3, p. 2-3. The instructions for the operation of the triple-muffle oven obviously say "in die drei Kammern." Pressac 1989, p. 222.

[585] These rollers were called "Führungsrollen," guide rollers, "Laufrollen," runner rollers, or "Einführrollen," feeding rollers.

during loading, the two lower ones ran on a pair of rollers (see document 41). On the subject of this device Tauber declared (p. 124):

> *"On this stretcher, we piled five corpses: the first two with the feet toward the oven and belly up, a further two in the opposite sense, also belly up. The fifth corpse was placed with the feet toward the oven with his back up."*

This assertion is false. The bed of the stretcher on which the body was placed was some 15 cm above the level of the muffle grid because of the height of the rollers and of the edges which ran on them (see document 42). In view of the narrowness of the stretcher, only one corpse could be placed on it; other bodies would have had to be placed on top of it. The height of the body of a normal adult in prone or supine position is 20-25 cm. This means that at best ([60–15]÷20~25 =) two normal (see chapter 10.2.5.) corpses, one on top of the other, could pass through the opening at one time, but not five. Tauber adds (pp. 140f.):

> *"In Crematorium II the cart for loading the corpses was used for a short time only and was then replaced by steel stretchers – in German they were called Leichenbrett*[er] *– which were pushed into the muffle all the way on steel rollers mounted on the lower edge of the door of the muffle. This was done because the use of the cart slowed down the loading of the corpses. I think the new device was invented by Oberkapo August. It was then used in all the other crematoria. In Crematoria II and III there was only one pair of rollers for all three muffles of one oven; it slid along a steel bar in front of the muffle doors. In Crematoria IV and V each muffle had its own rollers mounted in front of its door.*
>
> *Each crematorium had two steel stretchers for loading the corpses into the ovens. These board*[-like stretcher]*s were placed in front of the muffle. Two detainees put the corpses on them. They were arranged in such a way that the first was on its back, belly up and feet toward the muffle. Another corpse was placed on top of it, also belly up,* [but] *with its head toward the muffle. This was done so that the upper corpse would hold the legs of the one below and to prevent the legs of the one above from advancing into the oven* [and getting stuck] *but rather to slip into it* [easily]. *Two detainees placed the bodies on the stretcher. Another two stood near the oven at the ends of a bar placed under the stretcher. While the bodies were loaded on the stretcher, one of them opened the muffle door, the other set up the rollers. A fifth detainee lifted the stretcher by the handles, and*

when it had been raised also by the other two and placed on the rollers, then the stretcher entered the muffle. When the corpses were now inside the muffle, a sixth detainee, by means of a steel rake, held them in the muffle, and the fifth pulled out the stretcher from under them. The sixth detainee also had the task of washing down the stretcher after it had been taken out of the muffle. This was done in order to cool the stretcher which had become hot in the oven. It was also a matter of keeping the corpses from adhering to the stretcher once they had been placed on it. Soap was dissolved in this water for the corpses to slide better on the sheet metal of the stretcher. The second load [of corpses] *to be cremated in the same muffle was loaded in the same way as the first, but with this second pair of corpses we had to hurry, because the corpses that had been loaded first were already burning, their arms and legs rose up, and we would otherwise have had problems loading the second pair of corpses. While loading of the second pair of corpses, I had the opportunity to observe the combustion process of the corpses. It seemed as if the corpses raised the trunk of their bodies, that* [their] *hands went up and closed; the same things happened to the legs."*

Here, Tauber describes the loading system by means of a stretcher (*Trage*, *Leichentrage* or *Einführtrage*), also used for the Topf ovens at Mauthausen, which consisted of two parallel metal tubes, 3 cm in diameter and some 350 cm long. In their forward portion toward the muffle a slightly concave metal sheet was welded about 190 cm long and 38 cm wide. Near the handles the tubes were farther apart (49 cm) for better handling thanks to a double bend. The two tubes of the stretcher were spaced at the same distance as the guide rollers (*Führungsrollen*) in order for them to run smoothly over the latter. The usual weight of one stretcher was 51 kilograms (see photos 43-45).

If we follow Tauber, this system allowed the successive introduction of two loads of two adult corpses or more (he also mentions a total load of four to five corpses per muffle, see chapter 10.2.5.), which is even more absurd than what he has to say on the subject of the *Leicheneinführungs-Vorrichtung*. Actually, the two first corpses loaded into the oven one on top of the other would have precluded the introduction of another pair. In document 46 I have two lines representing the upper limits of two superimposed corpses: line 1 refers to the first corpse (22.5 cm), line 2 to the second corpse (a total of 45 cm); the distance

between the second corpse and the vault of the muffle opening would have been (60–45=) 15 centimeters.

When attempting to load a second pair of corpses, the stretcher could no longer have run over the rollers but would have had to be raised up and brought to rest on the upper corpse below it. However, above this corpse, up to the top of the opening of the muffle door, only (60–45–3=) 12 cm would have been available. Document 46a shows how far the stretcher would have had to be raised for it to be moved into the muffle above the first pair of corpses.

In Tauber's second deposition, the staggered arrangement of the corpses would have allowed the operators to gain a few centimeters, but for the introduction of the second pair of corpses into the muffle it would have been necessary to raise the stretcher a couple of centimeters higher than the upper body of the first pair; furthermore, the curved vault of the introduction gate would have reduced the available space even more. Hence, the above calculations remain perfectly valid.

Therefore, the introduction of more than two corpses into one muffle with the system described by Tauber is impossible.

10.2.4. Loading the Corpses: David Olère's Drawing

In his effort to show the exactness of Tauber's testimony, Pressac refers to a drawing by David Olère, a self-styled member of the crematorium personnel. In this drawing (Pressac 1989, p. 259; also van Pelt 2002, p. 179), the loading procedure is actually somewhat different than Tauber's description: the stretcher does not move on rollers but on a steel rail held by two detainees.[586] Those doing the work number only three. Moreover, this drawing contains four serious mistakes: first of all, the dimensions of the muffle opening are vastly exaggerated. The top of the muffle door is above the heads of the three detainees, whereas it actually stood at 132 cm from the floor. Secondly, the inmate on the right who lifts the rail has no protection against the heat; his upper body is bare, although he stands with his back toward the inside of the muffle door which is essentially at about 800°C. Thirdly, this way of loading would necessarily require a fourth man to hold the corpses inside the muffle while the stretcher-man pushes the stretcher in under them. Finally, flames and smoke escape from the open center muffle, but this was impossible, because flames and smoke were sucked up immediate-

[586] But, curiously, the rollers appear on the oven in the back of the room.

ly by the draft of the chimney, and the openings to the flue duct of a triple-muffle oven were located in the ash chamber below the central muffle. Olère's drawing therefore has no value in terms of evidence.

10.2.5. Loading the Muffles and Duration of the Cremation

Tauber asserts that the operating time of the Birkenau ovens was 21 hours (p 10):

> *"In crematories no. 2 and 3 cremation of the corpses went on all day long, except for a break which allowed the removal of the slag, but at least for 21 hours."*

He describes the cremation capacity of the Birkenau ovens in the following manner (pp. 5f.):

> *"There were five ovens with three muffles each in this crematorium. 4-5 corpses were loaded into each muffle. The corpses burned in 20-25 minutes.* […]
>
> *In each crematorium there was an oven with eight muffles. Into each muffle 4-5 persons were loaded. The duration of the cremation was 35 minutes. One oven cremated 1,200-1,500 persons per day."*

Summarizing:

- triple-muffle oven: 4-5 corpses per muffle in 20-25 minutes
- eight-muffle oven: 4-5 corpses per muffle in 35 minutes.

From these indications we obtain the following average capacities of the ovens in 21 hours of operation per day:

- triple-muffle oven: 756 corpses per day
- Crematoria II and III: 3,780 corpses per day, each
- eight-muffle oven: 1,296 corpses per day
- Crematoria IV and V: 1,296 corpses per day, each
- total capacity of all four crematoria: 10,530 corpses per day.

However, the cremation of five corpses in one muffle of a double-muffle oven allegedly took 1½ hours according to Tauber (p. 3):

> *"There were three ovens with two openings each in the crematorium. Into each opening five corpses at a time were placed. The cremation process of one load*[587] *took one and a half hours."*

This is a tribute to the propaganda fiction requiring that the triple-muffle and the 8-muffle ovens were much more efficient than those with two muffles.

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587 In the text "operatsii." operation.

In his Polish testimony Tauber confirms that 4-5 corpses were cremated at one time in a muffle as a rule (p. 133), but he explains (p. 135):

> *"In continuous operation the crematorium cremated two loads per hour. According to regulations, we had to load new corpses into the muffles every half hour.*
>
> *Oberkapo August explained to us that, on the basis of the calculations and the design of the crematorium, 5-7 minutes had been scheduled for the cremation of one corpse in one muffle.*
>
> *At first he did not allow us to load more than three corpses. With such a number we had to work without stopping, because after having loaded the last muffle, the* [load in the] *first had already burned. To get a break in our work, we loaded 4-5 corpses into each muffle. The cremation of such a load took far longer, hence after loading the last muffle we had a few minutes of rest while the first muffle burned its load."*

Tauber asserts moreover that Crematorium II handled an average of 2,500 corpses per day (p. 139). The load of 4-5 corpses referred to adults, because with children's corpses the procedure was different: 2 adults and 5-6 children (pp. 141f.). Elsewhere Tauber declared that "eight '*Muselmänner*' (emaciated corpses) also found space in one muffle" (p. 134).

We note, first of all, that these indications are contradictory. Tauber says that a load of 4-5 corpses in the triple-muffle oven took "far longer" than the half hour specified. As 2,500 corpses were cremated in Crematorium II each day, the average time needed for the cremation of one load of 4-5 corpses was about 39 minutes (or 34 minutes if the ovens were operated for 21 hours per day) and not 20-25 minutes. Another contradiction concerns the loading of the ovens. Tauber affirms that there were two squads of five detainees each in Crematorium II whose task was to load the ovens (p. 9, but in his Polish deposition he speaks of six detainees in this connection, p. 141) and that, with three corpses for each muffle, the corpses in the first muffle were already consumed when the last muffle was being loaded. As such a load is said to have been consumed within half an hour, this was also the time it took to load the three muffles of one oven. Hence the loading of one muffle, with all the necessary preparations, took 10 minutes.[588] But then the two

[588] Tauber refers to the 3 muffles of one oven, and not to the 5 ovens of the crematorium, as can be seen clearly from the passage quoted in chapter 8.8.7.

squads could have handled only two ovens (six muffles) and five squads would have been needed for the five ovens. The idea – technically impossible anyway – of loading four to five instead of three corpses into one muffle would not have solved the problem, because the duration of this hypothetical cremation would have gone up to 39 minutes, but the loading operation, too, would have been lengthened by the additional time needed for the handling of one to two more corpses.

Let us suppose, though, that the loading time would have stayed the same and that – to make the calculations easier – the cremation of four to five corpses in one muffle would have taken 40 minutes. In that case each squad could have taken care of four muffles, and as soon as the fourth muffle had been filled, those of the first would have been consumed, and it would have been necessary to reload. Thus, the two squads could have served only a total of eight muffles. Hence the remaining seven muffles would have stayed idle. What is more, according to Tauber there were only two loading stretchers available in the crematorium (p. 140), and hence this absurd method of operation would have been inevitable.

The new system called for the loading of two (or three) corpses into a muffle and then three (or two) more. From what Tauber says, the second load had to go in right after the first and had to be introduced before the arms and legs of the first lot of two or three corpses rose under the effect of the heat (p. 141), i.e. while the first lot was still more or less intact.

However, as I have already explained in chapter 10.2.3., it would actually have been impossible to load two corpses into a muffle which already contained two bodies, to say nothing of a fifth. Moreover, even if we assume 10 minutes for two successive loadings and a cremation time of 40 minutes, there would not have been enough time in any case, "to wash down the floor of the furnace room" (p. 135), because no sooner had Tauber's squad filled the four muffles, after (10×4=) 40 minutes in fact, than the load in the first muffle would have been consumed and would have required a fresh double refill. The second squad would have worked on their own four muffles in the same way, and the remaining seven out of the total of 15 muffles would still have had to stay idle!

Finally, Tauber's method runs into another material impossibility. As I have said, the half-basement (*Kellergeschoss*) of Crematorium II, which supposedly contained the homicidal gas chamber, was connected to the ground floor (*Erdgeschoss*) with its furnace hall by means of a

rudimentary and temporary freight elevator with a permissible load of 300 kg or six corpses (see chapter 1.9.). According to Tauber, two detainees were assigned to the elevator in the half-basement loading the corpses, and two more to unload them in the furnace hall (p. 9). In chapter 1.9. I have assumed an average of five minutes for one such complete run (loading, upward leg, unloading, downward leg).

After having been taken out of the elevator, if we follow Tauber, the corpses were stripped of rings, ear-rings, watches, and gold teeth (p. 5) and were then taken to the ovens. Assuming a time of three minutes for all of these operations, a load of six corpses would have been available every eight minutes (five minutes for the elevator plus three minutes for the stripping operation) and a total of 45 corpses in one hour. According to Tauber, though, the ovens consumed 90 corpses per hour (three corpses in one muffle in 30 minutes or four corpses in about 40 minutes); yet it would have taken ([90÷6]×8=] 120 minutes or two hours to move 90 corpses into the furnace hall.

Tauber's average figure of 2,500 bodies cremated in one day is also impossible, because it would have necessitated (2,500÷6=) 417 round trips of the elevator (including corpse stripping), something that would have taken (417×8=) 3,336 minutes or 55½ hours! If, instead, 4,000 persons were gassed each day (Tauber 1945a, p. 4), transportation of the corresponding corpses to the ovens would have taken ([4,000÷6]× 8=) 5,333 minutes, i.e. 88 hours. The loading of the ovens as described by Tauber is thus impossible.

Secondly, his assertions are also technically foolish as far as the duration of the cremation process is concerned. The duration of the cremation process in the ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau stood at about 1 hour (see chapter 8.6.), hence a duration of five to seven minutes allegedly arrived at for one corpse "based on the blueprints and calculations of the crematorium" is simply absurd: it would not even have sufficed for the cremation of a coffin made of seasoned wood. The time allotted by Tauber to the cremation of a load of four to five corpses would hardly have been enough for the evaporation of the water content of a single corpse. In Kessler's experiments this phase took 27 minutes on average, but the corpses were burned with a normal coffin, the combustion of which brought the temperature of the muffle to around 1,000°C, thus speeding up the process of evaporation. In the naphtha-fired ovens of Ignis-Hüttenbau at Theresienstadt, vaporization of the water took some 35 minutes.

The cremation of four to five corpses in one muffle within 20-25 minutes, or half an hour (or a little more than half an hour) is absurd on two counts: first of all because it took one hour to burn a single corpse and secondly because the time needed to burn multiple corpses at once would have extended the time necessary for each corpse well beyond one hour. In practice, however, such a procedure would have brought along insurmountable problems of heat technology (see chapter 8.7.2.).

The necessary condition for carrying out a cremation is that the temperature of the muffle never drops below 600°C; otherwise there is no longer any incineration, but only carbonization of the corpse. A body of 70 kg contains some 45.5 kg of water. The heat of vaporization at 600°C of the water contained in three corpses is 3×45.5×[640+0.477×(500–20)] ≈ 118,500 kcal. It is known from experience that the process of evaporation took about half an hour. The loading of the grate of the triple-muffle oven was about 70 kg/hr of coke (two hearths with grate loads of 35 kg/hr each), hence the theoretical availability of heat over half an hour was 6,470×35 = 226,450 kcal. The effective availability was much lower because a large part of the heat generated in the gasifiers was lost. During evaporation, the major heat losses came from radiation and conduction, some 62,500 kcal/hr at 800°C; at 600°C we may assume them to be 46,900 kcal/hr or 23,450 kcal in half an hour, i.e. (23,450÷226,450×100=) 10.3%. *To this we must add* the heat of the smoke at 600°C: about 31.3% acc. to calculations; uncombusted gases from the hearth: 4%; uncombusted solids from the hearth: 3.1%. The efficiency of the oven was thus (100–[10.3+31.3+4+3.1]=) 51.3%, the effective *specific heat of combustion* of the coke (6,470×0.513) ≈ 3,320 kcal/kg, which brings the effective heat supplied to the oven *over half an hour* to (35×3,320) ≈ 116,200 kcal. To keep the oven at 600°C, an additional heat contribution of (118,500–116,200 =) 2,300 kcal was thus needed *during that time*: it could easily be supplied by the radiation from the muffle walls.

Let us now look at the case of the evaporation of the water contained in four corpses in each of the three muffles, 12 corpses altogether. The water content of the corpses is (45.5×12=) 546 kg: the heat of vaporization at 600°C is 546×[640+0.477×(500–20)] ≈ 474,500 kcal. The available heat input stays at 116,200 kcal in 30 minutes,[589] hence the addi-

[589] Realistically speaking, though, it would actually drop, for the heat loss would rise as a result of a lower residence time of the combustion gases in the muffle due to the latter's drastically decreased free volume.

tional heat needed is (474,500–116,200 =) 358,300 kcal or some 119,400 kcal per muffle.

We must now examine whether the radiation from the muffle walls could possibly supply this amount of heat. It is difficult to calculate the heat radiated by these walls and absorbed by the corpses, both for reasons of geometry and because of the continuous cooling of the wall temperature. However, in a specific technical article professor Schläpfer, one of the major experts in cremation in Europe in the 1930s, does give us a reliable estimate of the heat radiated to a single corpse from the muffle walls at various temperatures. He has published a chart, from which we may derive the data in the table to the right (Schläpfer 1938, p. 153, see my document 47).

Wall temp. [°C]	Heat flow, kcal/min
800	1,400
700	930
600	600

The geometry changes somewhat when a hypothetical load of three corpses in one muffle is irradiated, but the surface-to-volume ratio of such a load is less favorable than that of a single corpse, because the corpses partly cover one another. Even if we leave this consideration aside, the amount of heat required for the evaporation of the water contained in three normal corpses, about 119,400 kcal, would require over three hours at a constant wall temperature of 600°C[590] according to Schläpfer's data. The wall temperature, however, would certainly not stay constant over such a long period of time, and conditions would quickly become very unfavorable, because, as shown by Schläpfer's chart, the heat radiated by the walls drops sharply with a decrease in wall temperature.

In his discussion of a similar thermal problem, Kori writes (1924, p. 117):

> *"If the inner wall of the cremation chamber has a surface area of about 4 m², with a specific gravity of 2.1, a layer 5 cm thick would weigh about 420 kilograms. The specific heat of the fire clay is about 0.2. Hence, if this layer could supply its total heat content sufficiently fast, only 200×0.2×420 = 16,800 kcal would have become available for an internal temperature dropping from 1,000 to 800°C. Actually, not even this would have been possible, because the brick-*

[590] The calculation of the heat loss is based on this temperature, as the introduction of several corpses at once would have lowered the muffle temperature drastically due to the huge amount of water evaporating in such a case.

work does not release its accumulated heat as quickly as the [muffle] *temperature drops."*

The weight of the refractory brickwork of one muffle was about (5×1.5×200=) 1,500 kilograms. To compensate for the heat lost due to the evaporation of the water content of the corpses, each muffle would have had to contribute 119,400 kcal, corresponding to a decrease in the average temperature of the refractory brickwork of the muffle of about (119,400÷[0.2×1,500] ≈ 400°C. The effective amount of heat supplied to each muffle is therefore:[591]

$$\frac{3{,}320\times 70}{3\times 60} \approx 1{,}290 \text{ kcal/min} \qquad (3)$$

This corresponds to the supply of 119,400 kcal in (119,400÷1,290) ≈ 92 minutes. I have only sketched the evaporation process, which is actually more complex, depending on further factors. But these factors apply in the same way both to single cremations and to the hypothetical cremation of several bodies at the same time. The enormous difference between the two set out above still applies. It proves not only that the simultaneous cremation of four bodies in half an hour was impossible, but also that not even the evaporation of the water they contained could have been brought about during that span of time. If assuming an average weight of 60 kg per body, the figures of the above calculations drop by a mere 15%, and the conclusions are basically the same.

10.2.6. Opening the Muffle Doors

Tauber affirms that "the SS *Kommandoführer* checked after each load in order to see whether the ovens had been properly loaded. We had to open the doors of all muffles, and then we could see what was going on inside" (p. 141). As a rule, two loads were allegedly placed into the ovens every hour with the corpses being introduced in two lots. This means that the muffle doors would have been opened four times per hour for the loading operations alone. Tauber adds that the corpses in the muffle were poked with a rod "to speed up the combustion of the corpses" (*ibid*.), which means that each muffle door was opened at least once more during a run for a total of four openings and closings, i.e. eight times per hour (four for the loading, two for the *Kommandoführer*,

[591] 3,320 (kcal/kg): effective heating value of the coke; 70 (kg): hourly coke consumption coke in the two gasifiers; 3: number of muffles; 60 (minutes): period considered.

two for stoking). In terms of time, even assuming the loading time adopted by the Soviet experts (two to three minutes),[592] each door of a triple muffle oven would have stayed open for four to six minutes each half hour for the loading process. If assuming a minimum of 30 seconds each for the remaining four opening operations (two for the *Kommandoführer* and two for stoking), the total time comes out as 6-8 minutes per run or 12-16 minutes every hour! This is technical nonsense, because the entry of fresh air would have cooled the oven down enormously. As Kessler has noted, air "is a very weak heat conductor, and the temperature goes down considerably at even the slightest removal of calories" (H. Keller 1928, pp. 24f.). How strong a phenomenon this is can be gathered from the following remark by Kessler (1927, p. 136):

> *"It has been ascertained by our experiments that the cracks in the brickwork, which form to a greater or lesser degree in the ovens precisely because of the continual stress they are exposed to, allow – in the final phase of the cremation – a volume of air to enter the cremation chamber, cold air to be precise, which is much higher than what is needed at that point for the cremation of the remains of the body. This, of course, results in a useless cooling of the oven (loss of calories)."*

If, therefore, the air leaking into the oven through mere invisible cracks in the brickwork could cool down the muffle, it is easy to imagine what would have happened if the doors of the oven had been opened so often for so long. For that very reason the doors of the Topf triple-muffle ovens possessed, in their lower portion, an air vent with a movable cast-iron cover, 10.8×12.6 cm. This cover had a peephole of 45 mm diameter in its center with its own cast-iron lid attached to the cover by means of a peg. To observe the cremation process, it was only necessary to move the lid aside and look through the peephole or to lift the cover and look through the rectangular opening.

10.2.7. The Combustibility of the Corpses

Tauber tells us (p. 142):

> *"The corpses of women burned much better and more quickly than the corpses of men. Therefore, when a male body burned poorly, we fetched a female body* [and] *put it into the oven to speed up the combustion process."*

[592] This duration refers to the actual introduction of the corpses into the muffles.

It is generally accepted that the female body contains a higher proportion of fat than the male body and should thus, at least theoretically, burn more easily. However, in practice the average duration of a cremation of a female corpse in the ovens of Ignis-Hüttenbau at Terezín was around 35.5 minutes, as compared to about 36.5 minutes for a male body, a negligible difference. But what Tauber says is nonsense anyway, because female bodies, too, are made up of 65% water, so that "when a male body burned poorly," the introduction of another body would have made things worse – the evaporation of the water it contained would have reduced the temperature of the muffle even more.

10.2.8. The "Auto-Combustion" of Corpses

In his Polish deposition Tauber states that fat bodies burned by themselves. I have split his statements into sections to make the refutation easier:

> *"*[1] *During a cremation of these bodies we used coke only for lighting the oven. Fat bodies burned by themselves thanks to the fat they contained.*
>
> [2] *It also happened, when there was not enough coke to heat the gasifiers, that we piled straw and wood into the ash containers which were beneath the muffles, and as soon as the fat of the corpses caught fire, the entire load*[593] *burned by its own fire."* (p. 133)
>
> *"*[3] *With the first loads, when the ovens were heated only by the gasifiers, cremation proceeded slowly. But once further loads were cremated, they became red-hot thanks to the glowing parts which formed during the cremation of the corpses, so that, when fat corpses were cremated, the gasifiers were normally extinguished.*
>
> [4] *The fat of the corpses placed into such a red-hot oven ran directly into the ash container where it ignited and burned the corpse."* (p. 142)

[1]: Fundamentally, auto-combustion of a corpse, even a fat one, is a physical absurdity, if only because of the fact that the combustible portions are, so to speak, immersed in water, which makes up 65% of its weight.[594] This is confirmed by Tanner's triangular diagram, valid for

[593] All of the corpses loaded into the oven.

[594] This percentage is usually given in the studies re. cremations done in the 1930s, e.g.: Heepke 1933, p. 124. More recent assessments have a percentage of 64% of water, Davies/Mates, p. 134.

the combustion of solid urban refuse, which gives the region of auto-combustion in terms of the following parameters:

Water content: 50% *Combustible matter: 25% min.*
Incombustibles: 60% max.

From this diagram we can glean that a water content of 65% was well outside of the region of auto-combustion (Hoepli, p. E-734). As early as 1925 it was established experimentally that, "if the spent gases are completely removed from the chamber by closing the valve, the oven cools down so fast that at most an hour and a half later the body portions no longer burn, but only smolder."[595] An "auto-combustion" of corpses was impossible to achieve even in the best civilian crematoria in Germany in the 1930s and 40s (see chapter 12.6.).

[2]: Here, Tauber evokes the case of a cold oven ("when there was not enough coke to heat the gasifiers") with corpses being introduced into the muffle and straw and wood into the ash container below. First of all, we must know that the ash container was a chamber some 35 cm wide and 45 cm high, closed by means of a lid, 28×35 cm in size. Wood (obviously in bundles of kindling) and straw were thus allegedly put into this space, the straw was lit, and as soon as the wood had caught fire, the fat from the corpses (the usual four to five bodies) flowed into the ash container where it caught fire in turn, and hence the load of four to five corpses of each muffle "burned by its own fire." This assertion is even more absurd than the preceding one, for if auto-combustion of four to five corpses in an oven heated to 800°C is impossible, an auto-combustion in a cold oven would be – so to speak – even more impossible. In Tauber's account, the wood in the ash container (a few dozen kilograms[596]) did not serve to bring about the cremation (as in a pyre), but only to gather the fat of the corpses, after which cremation proceeded by self-combustion.

[3]: Tauber declares that, "when fat corpses were cremated, the gasifiers were normally extinguished." Beyond the absurdities we have already discussed, this assertion is technical nonsense and goes against the normal operation of crematorium ovens. No gasifiers of any oven were ever temporarily extinguished, not even when the heat they produced was not needed. In this respect, Kessler states (1927, p. 159):

[595] "Amtliches," 1925a, pp. 89-91; cf. Arbeitsgemeinschaft 1926, p. 96.
[596] Dry wood branches in bundles weigh 100-120 kg per m³. Hence in the ca. 0.3 m³ of one ash container one could load (120×0.3 =) 36 kg of branches. Colombo, p. 63.

"Whereas with gas heating the heat supply can be precisely controlled, with coke or lignite heating [however] *heat is produced also at times when it is not needed. While it is possible to reduce combustion in the gasifier, it is not possible to turn it off altogether, because the glowing embers would go out."*

It is clear that an extinction of the fire on the hearth of the gasifier – aside from the problems indicated above – would have brought about also a useless loss of time for the re-ignition of the coke when lean corpses were to be cremated, a waste of precious time in complete disagreement with the mad rate of cremations described by Tauber.

[4]: Tauber describes in what way the alleged self-combustion of corpses occurred in a hot furnace. We therefore have here the absurdity already encountered in the first statement. It is certainly true that the fat from the corpses ignited and burned, but it could certainly not have burned the corpse itself. What is important to note here is that the technical and experimental data concerning the immediate ignition of the fat disproves and demolishes in a radical manner Tauber's description of the "cremation trenches" (see chapter 10.2.13.).

10.2.9. Embers

In paragraph 3 of the above quotation Tauber asserts that "once further loads were cremated, they [*the ovens*] became red-hot, *thanks to the glowing parts* (*żarem*) which formed during the cremation of the corpses." Tauber adds in this respect (p. 125):

"The cremation process is sped up by the combustion of human fat which produces further embers."

Actually, the muffles heated up due to the combustion products of the gasifiers and of the flames which formed over the corpses. The embers were not only almost negligible but died out in the ash containers underneath the muffles; their contribution to the heat supply was insignificant. Moreover, it is utterly absurd to claim that the body fat – which drained out, evaporated and burned – produced embers; it is tantamount to saying that the combustion of gasoline produces embers.

10.2.10. Flaming chimneys

Tauber states (p. 134):

"But there were also cases when we put a greater number of bodies into the muffle. Eight Muselmänner also found space in a muffle.

We burned these greater loads during air raids, unbeknown to the crematorium Kapo: we did this so there would be larger flames coming out of the chimney and the aviators would notice this."

This tale is absurd on two counts. First of all, as I have pointed out elsewhere (2003c, pp. 386-391), the appearance of flames on the chimneys of the Birkenau crematoria as an effect of their use was technically impossible. In this respect I have conducted some experiments which I will summarize briefly here:

I have built a field oven with a combustion chamber of about 0.05 m³ and a chimney some 0.54 m high having a cross-section 0.27 by 0.27 meters. I have placed an aluminum tray with 200 g of lard (pork fat) on a grid mounted above the hearth and lit the fire. A few minutes later the boiling fat caught fire and flames shot out of the chimney up to a height of 70 cm above the top. Combustion of the fat took 3 minutes, with 2 minutes and 45 seconds of intense fire. I have then dismantled the chimney and replaced it by an ordinary stovepipe, 2.10 m high and having a cross-sectional area 0.40 by 0.20 meters, making for an overall volume of about 0.2 cubic meters including the combustion chamber. On the grid I placed an aluminum tray with 300 g of lard and lit the fire. In this case, too, the grease caught fire rapidly, but no flames nor even isolated flame jets emanated from the chimney. Combustion took 3 minutes and 45 seconds, with 3 minutes 30 seconds of intense combustion.

As these are physico-chemical phenomena, the results of these experiments can be applied in proportion to the chimneys of the Birkenau crematoria. I will present the results as applied to Crematoria II and III.

- Volume of shortest flue duct (including chimney conduit): $0.46 \times 24 \approx 11$ m³
- Combustion chamber: $1.5 \times 3 = 4.5$ m³
- Total volume: $11 + 4.5 = 15.5$ m³

From the second experiment, which establishes the limit for the impossibility of observing the phenomenon of a flaming chimney, we have:

- 0.3 kg of grease per 0.2 m³ per 4 minutes =
- $(0.3 \times 60) \div 4 = 4.5$ kg of grease per 0.2 m³ per hour =
- $(4.5 \times 1) \div 0.2 = 22.5$ kg of grease per m³ per hour =
- $22.5 \times 15.5 \approx 350$ kg of grease per hour.

Therefore, burning some 350 kg of animal fat per hour in the three muffles of the above oven would not have resulted in flames coming

out of the chimney. Note: We are speaking of *pure fat* here. The above 350 kg of fat correspond to the fat content of some 42 normal corpses of 70 kg each, but only in theory, because this fat was obviously distributed throughout the body and mingled with water and would thus not have burned immediately, as in the experimental fires mentioned. Still, the phenomenon of a flaming chimney would not have occurred even with the simultaneous cremation (if this had been possible) of 13 to 14 corpses per muffle. It is clear from the above that, in theory at least, the phenomenon of flaming chimneys would have been tied in strongly with the fat content of the corpses, but obviously – and Tauber himself says so – the bodies of the *Muselmänner* were "emaciated and without fat" (p. 133).

It is thus absurd for these two reasons to claim that the cremation of eight skeleton-like corpses could have produced the phenomenon of flaming chimneys.

10.2.11. Test Cremations

Tauber describes in detail the test cremations in Crematorium II (pp. 134f.):

> *"On March 4* [1943]*, we were ordered to light the gasifiers. We kept them going from morning until 4 p.m.* […]
>
> *We carried these corpses* [there] *by means of the elevator and the door which led to the furnace hall and placed them in twos or threes on a cart similar to the one I described when I spoke of crematorium no. 1 and placed them in the individual muffles. After the introduction of the whole lot of corpses into all the muffles of all the ovens, the members of the commission, watches in hand, observed the cremation process of the corpses, opened the doors, checked the time, and were surprised that the cremation had taken* [so] *long. The ovens had been lit in the morning, but as they were brand-new, they had not yet warmed up sufficiently, and the cremation of this load therefore took 40 minutes.* […]
>
> *For the next 10 days, under an SS escort, we went to the crematoria every day to light the gasifiers. No transport arrived during those 10 days; we did not burn any corpses, but kept the gasifiers going to heat the ovens."*

This description is a string of technical absurdities. First of all, as I have already explained, the simultaneous cremation of two or three

corpses in one muffle, if it had been possible at all, would have taken two or three hours instead of 40 minutes. The explanation of this "long" time, i.e. the fact that the ovens "had not yet warmed up sufficiently" because "they were brand-new" is technical nonsense and historically false. It took at least eight hours to heat the ovens according to Tauber. The rated load of coke for the two hearths of the triple-muffle oven was 35 kg of coke per hour each, or 70 kg/hr in total. The weight of the brickwork of this oven (including gasifiers and ash containers) was about 13,000 kilograms. Assuming a heating value of 6,470 kcal per kg of coke, a thermal efficiency of 51% for the oven, and a temperature of 20°C in the furnace hall, it would have taken:

$$\frac{0.21\times 13{,}000\times(800-20)}{6470\times 0.51} = 645 \text{ kg of coke} \qquad (4)$$

and (645÷70) ≈ 9 hours and 10 minutes to bring the brickwork of the oven up to 800°C. *Vice versa*, in 8 hours of heating, a mass of

$$\frac{6{,}470\times 0.51\times 560}{0.21\times(800-20)} = 11{,}300 \text{ kg} \qquad (5)$$

would have heated up to 800°C. As the thickness of the brickwork was 15 cm, the bricks would have reached 800°C on average up to a depth of [(11,300÷13,000)]×15 ≈ 13 cm. While being theoretically correct, this computation does not take into account the fact that heat flow is not linear but decreases within the brickwork as shown by a diagram established on the basis of experimental data (see document 47).

The make-up of the wall in question (15 cm of refractory brick, 7.5 cm of insulating brick, and 21 cm of ordinary brick) is sufficiently close to that of the double-muffle Topf ovens (15 cm of refractory brick, 7 cm of insulating brick and 20 cm of ordinary brick). The diagram shows the heat flow within the above wall when it is exposed to a constant temperature of 600°C.

Within one hour of heating, the heated surface reaches the temperature of 600°C, but only over a depth of a few millimeters; 5 cm into the bricks the temperature is 230°C, at 10 cm it is about 50°C, and at 15 cm it is hardly above 20°C. At thermal equilibrium, the temperature on the hot side is 600°C, on the cold side, against the insulation, we have a temperature of some 510°C.

Obviously, cremations were not carried out as soon as the muffle had reached 800°C; this is specified in the operating instructions of the double and triple-muffle ovens (see chapter 10.2.2.).

In the triple-muffle oven with its two gasifiers, it took one hour to reach operating conditions; in civilian crematoria, the ovens had a refractory brickwork weighing the same as that of a triple-muffle Topf oven, *viz.* about 13,000 kg, but had only one gasifier and needed two hours. In Kessler's experiments of January 5, 1927, heating the ovens prior to the introduction of the first corpse (785°C) required 2 hours and 12 minutes.

In conclusion, the claim is technical nonsense that, after 8 hours of heating, the triple-muffle ovens of Crematorium II at Birkenau had not yet warmed up sufficiently. This absurdity is logically linked to the other absurdity, *viz.* the heating of the ovens over 10 days: in that way, assuming a shift of 12 hours per day, the SS would have merely wasted (12×70×5×10 =) 42,000 kg of coke!

In his Soviet testimony Tauber states that the ovens were dried out over those 10 days: "Up to March 15, 1943, we heated the ovens, or rather, we dried them out [*prosushivali*]" (p. 4). And this, in turn, had to do with the fact that they were "brand-new," i.e. still having to be dried. Actually, the ovens of Crematorium II were already dry. On January 29 Prüfer inspected the sites of the crematoria and drew up a report about the state of advancement of the work. He writes that the five triple-muffle ovens at Crematorium II were in the drying stage ("*werden z. Zt. trockengeheizt*"). Kirschner's memo of March 19, 1943, tells us that Crematorium II went into operation on February 20, 1943 ("*zum 20.2.43 in Betrieb genommen*"),[597] which means that drying had been terminated at that time.

The desiccation of a crematorium oven was done gradually, by lighting only a small fire of wood-shavings on the hearth, then adding more wood chips, followed by larger chunks of wood mixed with coke. If the heating had been too quick and too strong, it would have generated large amounts of water vapor from the brickwork, the pressure of which would have loosened the brickwork, forming cracks and thus damaging it seriously (Beutinger, p. 127). Obviously, the Topf engineers who, according to Tauber, were present at the test run would never have allowed firing up any ovens that had not yet been dried properly. Furthermore, as I have already pointed out, they would not have allowed

[597] Tätigkeitsbericht des SS-Ustuf. (F) Kirschneck, – Bauleiter für das Schutzhaftlager und für landwirtschaftliche Bauvorhaben. Zeit 1. Januar 1943 bis 31. März 1943 dated March 29, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 61.

either that the muffle doors be opened for a look at the progress of the combustion.

10.2.12. "Fire-Proof" Sack

Tauber relates the following story (p. 128):

> *"Tomiczek's head was enclosed in a sack, but we still recognized him from his robust physique. Kwakernak watched us until Tomiczek's body had been loaded into the oven and then walked away suddenly. We* [then] *opened the door of the oven, took out the corpse, opened the sack, and immediately recognized Tomiczek without any doubt."*

The operating temperature of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens was 800°C. At that temperature, in civilian crematoria, the coffin caught fire while it was being loaded. But Tauber's sack remained perfectly intact to the point of having to be undone, after the body had been withdrawn from the muffle, to verify the owner of the head inside. The sack was, apparently… fire-proof!

10.2.13. "Cremation Trenches"

We see right away that Tauber makes contradictory statements on the subject of the number of these alleged pits. In his Soviet testimony he asserts that "4 crematoria and 4 large pyres were in operation for the extermination" (p. 6.). In the Polish one he says, on the other hand, that in May 1944 five trenches were dug in the yard of Crematorium V, and that, moreover, "bunker no. 2 and its trenches" (p. 149) were put back into operation, hence at least two more. The trenches were therefore both four and at least seven in number at one time. In his Soviet testimony Tauber asserts (p. 11):

> *"*[1] *The cremation pyres for the corpses were arranged in trenches, at the bottom of which, over the whole length of the excavation, there was a channel for the air supply.*
>
> [2] *From this channel there was a branch-off toward a hole, 2 by 2 m, 4 m deep.*
>
> [3] *The fat ran into this hole during the cremation of the corpses on the pyres.*
>
> [4] *The corpses on the pyres were doused with this fat so that they burned better.*

> [5] *At first wood was placed into the trench, then 400 corpses alternating with branches were doused with gasoline, and the fire was lit. Then the remaining corpses* [from] *the gas chambers were thrown in, and from time to time the fat from the corpses was poured on."*

[1]: The "channel for the air supply" was not a closed channel but an open one situated at the bottom of the trench; actually, the channel for the collection of human fat started out from that level. On the bottom of the trench, however, there was a layer of wood (with a layer of corpses on top) which, once ignited, would have filled up the channel with glowing embers and ashes; this channel is therefore a mere figment of literary invention.

[2]: The draining and collection system for the liquid fat, even assuming smooth and impermeable walls, would have required sloping planes toward the center line of the trench and toward the collection hole, which the witness does not mention.

[3]: Tauber describes a real and true miracle of physics. Human fat has a flash point[598] of 184°C (Perry, p. 1586), the autoignition temperature[373] of the seasoned wood of a coffin varies between 325 and 350°C. Its combustion temperature is higher yet. In the case in point, if the aim is the cremation of a corpse and not only its carbonization, the temperature must reach 600°C. Hence, the fat of the corpses ran down, through a layer of burning wood at somewhere between 350 and 600°C, flowed into the appropriate "channel for the air supply" full of glowing embers into the collection channel, likewise full of glowing embers, and drained into the hole proper: all this without in the least catching fire along the way![599]

As we have seen in chapter 10.2.8., this physical miracle is, moreover, in blatant disagreement with Tauber's description of the "autocombustion" of the corpses:

> *"The fat of the corpses placed into such a red-hot oven ran directly into the ash container where it ignited and burned the corpse."*

This would mean that the fat burned in the crematorium ovens, whereas in the "cremation trenches" it flowed in liquid form into the

[598] The lowest temperature at which a volatile liquid forms an ignitable mixture in air.
[599] The alleged "cremation trench" for 400 corpses had to have a minimum surface area of 320 m², cf. below.

collection hole.[600] The theoretical conclusions set out above have been fully confirmed by a series of experiments of the combustion of animal fat which I have run in a field oven of my own design as an experimental verification, supplemented by photographs (2003b, pp. 185-194). In the first experiment I have placed an aluminum tray with 500 g of lard on a grid, 25 cm above the hearth (a strong metallic webbing), in the second case with 250 g of lard 25 cm below the hearth, and in the third run with an aluminum tray containing 250 g of lard set 28 cm below the hearth made up of a metal grid with larger holes. In all three cases the fat melted, caught fire, and burned easily. The conclusions from the experiments were as follows (*ibid*., pp. 193f.):

> *"1. The experiments run have confirmed that animal fat burns with ease when exposed to temperatures obtainable with a wood fire.*
>
> *2. Experiment 3 shows that animal fat will burn when in contact with glowing embers. Therefore, in a cremation trench, the fat running out of the corpses will burn without ever even flowing over the bed of embers as far as the collection hole, as it runs through the burning wood and eventually into the layer of glowing embers at the bottom of the trench.*
>
> *This has been further confirmed by incineration experiments in an open furnace, as described above, during which the fat flowing from the meat in the ash compartment caught fire and burned immediately.*
>
> *3. Experiment 2 proves that any liquid fat hypothetically flowing underneath the embers in the run-off channels would have burned from the heat radiation of the embers and from contact with them.*
>
> *4. Experiment 1 shows that any human fat hypothetically flowing into the collection pit would have burned with high and vivid flames on account of the heat radiated by the fire, thus making not only its recovery impossible but also preventing anyone from approaching the trench."*

[4]: The liquid human fat was poured on the corpses "to make them burn better." How was the liquid fat gathered from the holding pit? Surely with buckets of galvanized steel attached to poles with a handle, as we are told by the witness Filip Müller who later amplified this literary theme (Müller, pp. 219f.). But how was it poured over the corpses?

[600] It is rather unimportant whether the oven was "red-hot," because in both cases the temperature was far higher than the autoignition temperature of the fat.

Let us look at this hypothetical spectacle: a glowing pyre of at least 320 m²[601] burning at a temperature of at least 600°C, which radiates to the edges of the trench enough heat to produce a temperature of several hundred °C. If Tauber and Müller had launched their bucket full of boiling fat from a safe distance, it would not even have reached the trench; if, on the other hand, they had ventured up to the edge of the trench, they would have undergone an "auto-combustion" of their own, which means that our witnesses would have been roasted alive.

From the point of view of heat economy, a bucket ful of boiling fat projected into a burning trench of that dimension would not have brought any benefit at all: because of its low autoignition temperature, the fat would have caught fire as soon as it struck the surface and would not have penetrated into the pyre at all.

In a cremation trench (with an efficient air-supply from below, constituted for example by tubes connected to a blower) it would have been necessary instead to make use of the fat from the corpses within the trench itself in such a way that the flames so generated would have struck the corpses from below. And if, by some miracle, it would have been possible to bring about the flow of fat toward the bottom of the trench, it would have been necessary, by all means, to keep it from flowing out of the trench, because, if that happened, most of its heat contribution would have been totally lost. Exactly the opposite of what Tauber tells us.

[5]: How could one have tossed a corpse into this kind of flaming inferno? It is clear that this would have been even more difficult than launching a bucket full of boiling fat.

10.2.14 "Cremation Trenches" and Aerial Photographs of Birkenau

According to Tauber, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, there were between four and seven "cremation trenches" at Birkenau, with a surface area of at least 320 m² each. In his Polish testimony he states that five such trenches had been dug in the yard of Crematorium V in May 1944. One would thus have to encounter a flaming surface of some 1,600 m² in that part of the camp. Actually, as I have shown in chapter 8.5.5., between May and August 1944 only one smoking site (and not

[601] Müller (p. 207) speaks of trenches 40-50 meters long and 8 meters wide, hence 320-400 m².

five) with a surface area of about 50 m² (and not 1,600) was observed there, whereas around the so-called "bunker 2" there was no smoking site at all (Mattogno 2005c, pp. 58f.). Hence, not only Tauber's declaration but also those of *all* other witnesses who have spoken of "cremation trenches" are clearly refuted by the aerial photographs taken at that time.

Tauber asserted moreover that for the transportation of the corpses from the gas chambers of Crematorium V to the trenches a narrow-gauge rail track for carts had been laid which, however, was not used, because "the SS considered it a nuisance, and the detainees in the *Sonderkommando* dragged the corpses of those gassed from the gas chambers directly to the trenches" (p. 149). On the aerial photographs of Birkenau taken in 1944 there is no trace of such a track. Such an assertion, besides being false, makes no sense at all: the SS considered it a "nuisance" to transport a certain number of corpses quickly and easily by means of rail carts and felt that it was "more comfortable" to have a single corpse dragged by a single detainee over a distance of at least 20 meters?

10.2.15 Ground-Water Table in the Birkenau Area

The ZBL drawing no. 2534/2 of June 15, 1943, concerning a *Provisorisches Erdbecken* (temporary earth basin) in construction sector III (BA III), shows that the water-table stood at 232.51 m, the ground level itself at 233.71 m and the bottom of the decantation basin 231.01 m, all measured above sea level.[602] Hence, the ground-water stood 1.20 m below ground and the decantation basins were 2.70 m deep. The *Königsgraben* – the effluent ditch of sectors BI and B II at Birkenau – flowed into the Vistula at a point where the river makes a double loop; more precisely, it flowed into the upper or southern part of the loop. This loop enclosed a small sandy beach located at level 232.8 m; the beach formed by the second part of the loop – some 500 m north as the crow flies – is at level 233 m.[603] The river thus ran at practically the same level as that of the Birkenau water-table. The SW corner of sector B I of Birkenau, where the *Königsgraben* joined the river, is at level 235.17 m.[604] The northern portion of the Birkenau camp is slightly lower than the southern one. The point where *Straße B* (road B) which separated

[602] APMO, negative no. 20943/19. Cf. Pressac 1989, p. 169.
[603] Ordnance Survey map 1:25000 of the Birkenau area. APK, Land SP LO/S 467, p. 89.
[604] RGVA, 502-2-24, p. 226.

sectors B II and B III crosses the enclosure (to continue toward Crematoria IV and V some 200 m away) lies at level 234.26 meters.

The area around these crematoria was situated even lower, and the pond which served as water reserve for fire-fighting, located in the birch wood (*Birkenwald*) to the east of Crematorium IV, was nothing but an outcrop of the ground-water, and the water-table there was hardly lower than 1 m beneath the surface.[605]

The entire sector B III was in a similar situation, if not worse, as we can see from a telex sent by Jothann on June 2, 1944. The head of ZBL had refused to allow the occupation of 14 barracks in sector B III of Birkenau, giving the following reason:[606]

> *"Barracks are only partly roofed, the area is swampy and not leveled in any way. A pollution of the ground-water and the formation of further centers of epidemics is feared."*

We may then conclude, as far as the ground-water is concerned, that the situation in the area of Crematoria IV and V was the same, for all intents and purposes, as that prevailing in sector B III, i.e. that the water-table stood some 1.2 m below the surface (see more details in Gärtner/Rademacher and Mattogno 2003a).

Hence, the pit for the recovery of the grease, 4 m down, and probably the same as Tauber's "cremation ditch," would have been full of water.

10.3. The Gassings

10.3.1. The First Homicidal Gassing in Crematorium II

In his Soviet testimony Tauber declared that the first gassing in Crematorium II took place on March 15, 1943, affecting a transport of 4,000 Jews from Cracow (p. 4):

> *"Up to March 15, 1943, we heated the ovens, or rather, we dried them out. From March 15, 1943, onward transports of persons began to appear – whole convoys –* [and the Germans] *started to take most of them to the crematorium to gas and cremate them. The first transport to come to the crematorium amounted to 4,000 persons,*

[605] In photograph no. 174 on p. 194 of Klarsfeld 1983 can be seen a group of deportees on the southern edge of the pond (the one toward the Effektenlager); in the foreground, we have a slight slope going down to the water's surface and, on the left, an old man with a kind of pitcher who is about to reach into the water.

[606] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 2. Cf. Mattogno 2002b, p. 424.

sent from the ghetto of the city of Cracow. They were all gassed at the same time and cremated."

Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989, p. 440) speaks instead of 1,492 victims who were supposedly gassed on March 14. Tauber adds that the victims in the gas chamber were essentially sitting and that "from the situation of the corpses one could see that people had moved away from those columns and had been trying to reach the door" (p. 136). The alleged gas chamber measured 30×7 m in size, or 210 m², leaving aside the space occupied by the seven supporting pillars (0.4×0.4 m) and that of the four alleged introduction devices for the Zyklon B (0.7×0.7 m according to M. Kula). The packing density of the victims was therefore (4,000÷210=) 19 persons per m². Even if one adopted Danuta Czech's (but not Tauber's) figure of seven persons per m², it would not have allowed any "escape" toward the door. Tauber goes on to say (pp. 136f.):

"After the people had been pushed into the gas chamber and were shut in there and before the 'Cyklon' was poured in, the air from the chamber was removed; in fact, the ventilation of the chamber could be used for that purpose."

This is another ludicrous assertion: the ventilation system of the alleged gas chamber was based on the principle of aeration–de-aeration: an extractor fan removed the used air from the room, while a blower of equal performance brought in fresh air from the outside.

Tauber says, further on, that the ventilation system was switched on "*after* the door of the gas chamber had been opened" (p. 137), but even that is nonsense, because the ventilation system had been designed to function with the door closed. Assuming a homicidal gassing in a hermetically closed chamber, the toxic gas-air mixture would have spread through the semi-basement when the door was opened, because of a higher pressure within that room (or if it wasn't hermetically sealed, then by means of heat convection: "it was very warm in the chamber," p. 136).

In the gas chamber, if we follow Tauber, there was "such a stench one could not stand it" (*ibid*.) – he had thus entered without a gas mask, but contradicts himself right away when he says that those assigned to the removal of the corpses from the gas chamber put on their gas masks and that he did not take part in the removal of the corpses of the first gassing: "however, we did not carry away from the gas chamber the corpses of this first transport of mid-March 1943…" (p. 137).

10.3.2. Undressing Barrack

Tauber affirms with reference to the first gassing (p. 136):

> *"These people were herded into the barrack which at that time stood perpendicularly to the crematorium building on the side of the entrance to the yard of Crematorium II. The people walked into this barrack through a door toward the entrance* [to the yard] *and went down the stairs which were to the right of the garbage incinerator (Müllverbrennung). At that time the barrack served as an undressing room. But it was used only for about one week and was then dismantled."*

As I have shown in chapter 2.3.3., this barrack, which was set up around February 15, 1943, as an "*Auskleideraum*" (undressing room) at the request of the *SS-Standortarzt* (the SS garrison surgeon) dated January 21, 1943, had no relation whatsoever with the alleged homicidal gassings but was used to undress the corpses of the registered detainees who had died in the camp.

Tauber, by the way, actually does not explain why the barrack was used as an undressing room on that occasion, nor why it was taken down a week later. Not only that: his description cannot have come from direct observation. He claims, in fact, that as soon as the victims began to arrive, "we from the *Sonderkommando* were locked up in the room in which – as I have explained in my description of the crematorium – the surgeons did the autopsies." (*ibid*.) Then he adds: "After about two hours in the autopsy room we were ordered out and told to go into the gas chamber" (*ibid*.). Hence, together with the other detainees, Tauber was locked up in this room in the southwest corner of the crematorium[607] during the unloading and undressing of the alleged victims. But the undressing barrack was located at the opposite end, in front of the eastern extremity of the crematorium. Hence, Tauber could not have seen what he describes.

10.3.3. The Later Gassings in Crematorium II

Tauber tells us that he stayed at Crematorium II only from March 4 through mid-April 1943. In this span of hardly six weeks the crematorium allegedly had the following schedule (pp. 138f.):

> *"*[1] *During the cremation of the corpses of that first transport of mid-March 1943, we worked without stopping for 48 hours but*

[607] Pressac 1989, p. 491, plan of Crematorium II, room no. 23.

could not cremate all those corpses, because in the meantime a Greek transport arrived which was likewise gassed.

[2] *I worked in Crematorium II until mid-April. During that time there were arrivals of Greek, French, Dutch transports. On top of that we cremated the corpses of persons who had gone into the gas following the selections performed in the camp. We worked in two shifts, day and night. I cannot give a figure for those gassed and cremated during that period.*

[3] *On average, 2,500 corpses were cremated per day."*

[1]: As we have seen, Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989) informs us that 1,492 persons died during that first gassing. A total of 2,500 corpses per day could be cremated according to Tauber, hence the cremation of those victims would have taken less than a day, or more exactly:

- about 16½ hours for a load of three corpses per muffle every half hour
- about 12½ hours for a load of four to five corpses per muffle every 34 minutes
- about 8 hours for a load of four to five corpses per muffle every 20-25 minutes.

Tauber maintains instead that the crematorium squad did not manage to cremate all the victims of the first gassing in spite of 48 hours(!) of uninterrupted work, because "in the meantime" a transport with Jews from Greece had arrived who were also gassed and cremated. But according to the *Kalendarium* (Czech 1989) that happened on March 24, i.e. 10 days later. Tauber's statement is therefore false and contradictory.

[2]: Between mid-March and mid-April "there were arrivals of Greek, French, Dutch transports." But according to the *Kalendarium* (Czech 1989) there were no transports from Holland or France at that time. Referring to the summer of 1944, Tauber added in his Soviet testimony the well-known propagandistic lie of the extermination of French *Résistance* fighters (p. 6; see chapter 17.6.2).

[3]: Within one month, between March 14-15 and mid-April 1943, 2,500 people on average were gassed and cremated in Crematorium II. This would amount to a total of some 75,000 persons. However, during that period only 13 transports with some 29,500 Jews altogether arrived at Auschwitz, so that the total number of those allegedly gassed would have been two and a half times as high as the number of arrivals. Ac-

cording to the *Kalendarium*, just 368 registered prisoners were allegedly "selected" to be gassed. This frenetic extermination activity, or even *any kind* of extermination, is moreover categorically refuted by an important fact which occurred precisely during that span of time and to which Tauber makes only a veiled reference: In the last ten days of March Crematorium II suffered serious damage. On March 24 and 25, 1943, the Topf engineers Prüfer and Schultze, who had been summoned by ZBL, were in Auschwitz to look at the matter: the three forced-draft devices (*Saugzuganlage*) of Crematorium II were beyond repair and (as was discovered in early April) portions of the refractory lining of the flue ducts and the chimney had fallen off (see chapter 2.7.2.). Schultze's task was to verify the state of the three forced-draft devices, while Prüfer assessed the possibility of running the five triple-muffle ovens without them. It was found that the equipment was irretrievably damaged, and on April 16 Topf accepted to take them back and to reimburse to ZBL the sum of 3,705 Reichsmarks. The whole matter is dealt with in Tauber's account in the following way (p. 132):

> *"Initially there were three electric motors in this chimney to increase the draft. Because of the heat in that section and near the oven, they broke down, but there even was a fire at one time, and so they were dismantled and the ducts taking the spent gases away from the crematorium ovens were connected directly to the chimney."*

The three forced-draft devices were taken down by the Topf technician Messing between May 17 and 19,[608] the work of the removal of the damaged refractory lining began around May 24. The job was done by June 1, but it was not possible to continue, because the new blueprints for the chimney lining had not yet arrived.[609] Rebuilding took place between the last ten days of June and the end of August. All of this happened when Tauber had already left Crematorium II (mid-April), but then how could he have known about such technical details, if he was working at Crematorium IV, in a distant part of the camp?

The two Topf engineers had hurried to Auschwitz on March 24, because they were summoned by an urgent telegram. It is obvious that the damage had manifested itself some days earlier and that the crematorium had suspended its operation for safety's sake. Hence, the story of

[608] Topf, Arbeitszeit-Bescheinigung for Messing, May 17-19, 1943: "Im Krematorium II (Bauwerk 30) die 3 Stück Saugzuganlagen abmontiert." RGVA, 502-1-306, pp. 91-91a.

[609] Dringendes Telegramm from Bischoff to Topf dated June 1, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 30.

the cremation of 1,986 Greek Jews on that very day, March 24, in Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989) is totally unfounded.

I have already shown in chapter 8.8.3. that ZBL held an inquiry and summoned both Koehler who had built the chimney and Prüfer who had designed it. As can be read in Kirschneck's final report dated September 13, 1943, it was found that the main cause of the damage was closely related to the fact that only some of the ovens had been operated ("*Heizung nur einzelner Öfen*"), in the sense that the initial design did not take into account the differences in the thermal expansions of the individual chimney ducts when under uneven load, something that was only remedied in the new design. This is in clear disagreement with the mass cremations of allegedly gassed victims reported by Tauber, which would have required an uninterrupted operation of *all* ovens and which is thus historically false.

As far as the alleged "fire" is concerned, I have already explained that, on account of a design error on the triple-muffle oven, the gases arriving in the central muffle from the two lateral ones (plus those from the central muffle itself) moved at such a high velocity that they did not burn and ignited only at the exit from the oven, giving off their combustion heat in the flue duct and the chimney. This heat even caused the melting of the smoke vanes.

Besides, the average number of victims in one gassing given by Tauber is contradictory: 4,000 persons in his Soviet testimony, 3,000 in his Polish testimony (p. 127) and 2,000 in the one made before the Jewish historical commission (Borwicz et al., p. 90).

10.3.4. The Alleged Gas Chamber Door

Tauber describes the door to the alleged gas chamber of Crematorium II in the following words (p. 129):

> *"In this door there was a round glass window at eye level. On the other side of the door, i.e. on the inside of the gas chamber, this little window was protected by a hemispherical grid. This grid had been installed, because it had happened that persons in the gas chamber had broken the window glass before dying. Because not even the grid would prevent this and such incidents still occurred, the window was eventually closed up with a metal plate or a board."*

At the end of his Polish account Tauber stated that, among other things, there was at the *Bauhof* (materials yard) "a gas-tight door of a

gas chamber" (p. 150). Pressac has published three photographs of this door showing a spy-hole protected on the inside by a hemispherical metal grid (1989, p. 486). This is therefore in contradiction with Tauber's statement that the spy-hole was "closed up with a metal plate or a board." As to other issues I refer the reader to what has been explained before in chapter 2.2.

10.3.5. Zyklon B Introduction Devices

On this subject Tauber declared in his Soviet deposition (p. 5):

> *"The Cyklon gas spread throughout the gas chamber via columns of metal wire mesh screens which formed a square channel with double screen walls."*

In the Polish account the witness furnishes a less laconic description of the alleged devices (p. 130):

> *"To the right and left of those pillars there were four columns. The outer wall of those columns was made of a webbing of thick steel wire which extended to the ceiling and the outside. Behind this wall there was a screen of fine mesh and inside a third one fine*[r yet]. *Within this third* [column of] *wire mesh moved a box which collected – aided by a wire – the powder when the gas had escaped* […].
>
> *Above the gas chamber rose four openings, like small chimneys, into which the gas was poured. These openings were closed off with cement covers which had two-handed wooden handles."*

I have already thoroughly dealt with this question in chapter 2.5. Here I will add a few more remarks. First of all, we have the contradiction that the columns consisted, at the same time, of two and of three layers of screens, one inside the other. Tauber says that the lids on the alleged introduction devices for the Zyklon B were made of cement with wooden handles. We see right away that the use of wooden handles on covers more or less similar to concrete man-hole covers is not in line with normal building practices which would require steel handles. As I have already pointed out in chapter 2.5.5., Tauber's assertion as to cement covers is at variance with that of van Pelt who says that the alleged covers were made of wood.

We must also note that, according to Kula, the Zyklon B introduction device measured 70×70 cm and extended through the ceiling of the alleged homicidal gas chamber of Crematorium II (and III) and above

it. If it was surrounded by a brick facing on the outside (necessary both to seal the crudely knocked-in ceiling hole and to accommodate the heavy concrete cover), the overall size would have been 94×94 cm (see Mattogno 2005d, p. 372). Concrete has a specific gravity of 2.1-2.5. Assuming an average value of 2.3, a concrete cover with a minimum thickness of 5 cm would weigh (0.94×0.94×0.05×2300=) 101.6 kilograms. Each gassing would have been a truly Herculean operation!

10.3.6. "Fake" Showers

Tauber asserts (pp. 130f):

> *"I want to stress that initially there were neither benches or clothes hooks in the undressing room nor showers in the gas chambers. Those things were put in only in the fall of 1943 to camouflage the undressing room and the gas chamber by presenting them as a bath and disinfection* [area]. *These showers were mounted on pieces of wood set for that purpose into the concrete ceiling of the gas chamber. No water pipes were connected to those showers, because no water ever came out of them."*

In chapter 4. I have shown that the project of installing real showers in the basements of Crematoria II and III was one of the "*Sondermaßnahmen für die Verbesserung der hygienischen Einrichtungen*" at Auschwitz ordered by Kammler in early May 1943. It was thus a measure of hygiene and sanitation, not a criminal undertaking. The question of the wooden plates encased in the ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II has already been discussed in chapter 4.3. I will add here that Tauber's assertion implies that those plates had been fashioned in the wood-working shop prior to the pouring of this morgue's concrete ceiling. Thus, the ZBL technicians would have included them as part of the job of the false showers, but without thinking about including the openings for introducing Zyklon B!

10.3.7. Split-Up of the Alleged Gas Chamber of Crematorium II

This brings us to the unverifiable declaration by Tauber which, according to van Pelt, is used by the revisionists "to refute the validity of the whole of Tauber's testimony" (p. 130):

> *"At the end of 1943 the gas chamber was divided into two* [parts] *by a brick wall so as to make it suitable for the gassing of smaller transports. In this wall there was a door similar to the one* [leading]

from the corridor to the whole chamber. The smaller transports were gassed in the rear chamber, located farthest away from the corridor."

About this we have first of all Pressac's comment (1989, p. 484):

"One of the very few contestable points in the deposition. It would seem more logical to gas in the gas chamber CLOSEST to the entrance, as this meant less distance to transport the corpses, and the ventilation system at the far end of the gas chamber must have been inefficient because it was poorly designed."

Occasionally Dr. Sigismund Bendel's testimony (see chapter 17.7.1.) is brought in by holocaust historiography as an "external confirmation" of the above split-up. While it is true that both Tauber and Bendel claim that there were two gas chambers in Crematorium II, Bendel claims that they measured 10×4 m[610] or 10×5 m[611] and were 1.60 m high, whereas the actual room from which those two sections were allegedly derived measured 30×7 m and was 2.41 m high. These dimensions are completely at variance with Bendel's figures and cannot be explained as being a simple error of estimation. Besides, Bendel speaks of the presence of two gas chambers in Crematorium II only because he had claimed that each crematorium held two such chambers (Phillips, p. 135):

"In each crematorium there were generally two gas chambers."

As against this, the witness Nyiszli who, just like Bendel, claims to have been a member of the crematorium personnel in 1944, speaks of only one undivided gas chamber (1961, p. 45). In the same way Don Paisikovic, another self-styled member of the *Sonderkommando* who claims to have been assigned to Crematorium II at the end of May 1944, speaks of only one gas chamber, into which some 3,000 victims were allegedly herded.[612] Filip Müller claims the existence of a single alleged gas chamber with a surface area of 250 m² (p. 96). Van Pelt invokes another testimony (2002, p. 193):

"Daniel Bennahmias's memoirs of his imprisonment in Auschwitz provide independent confirmation, however."

He quotes a book by a certain Rebecca C. Fromer entitled *The Holocaust Odyssey of Daniel Bennahmias, Sonderkommando* published in 1993 (*ibid*., note 137, p. 522 & p. 542). How can anyone consider this

[610] Interrogation of C.S. Bendel on March 2, 1946. NI-11953.
[611] Statement by C.S. Bendel on October 21, 1945. NI-11390.
[612] Declaration by D. Paisikovic given in Vienna on October 17, 1963. ROD, c[21]96, p. 2.

story, which was published 48 years after Tauber's deposition, to be an "*independent* confirmation"? Apart, van Pelt misrepresents the facts here, because Bennahmias in fact spoke about Crematorium *III*, not *II*, and he dated this subdivision to August+ 1944 (Fromer, p. 51). Pelt omitted this information in his book and even gets the pages wrong (he cites pages 52f., 2002, p. 193). I will return to Bennahmias later when discussing Filip Müller.

If we look at the material side of the alleged exterminations, Tauber's split-up makes no sense at all, because he tells us that there were three or four gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V with different floor areas, in which smaller transports could thus have been gassed. The strange thing is that Tauber says so himself (p. 7):

> *"Depending on the number of people arriving, the Germans poisoned them simultaneously in one, two, or three chambers."*

But then why spend money, time and effort to cut the gas chamber of Crematorium II in two? From van Pelt's point of view the alleged split appears unreasonable even in strictly economic terms (see chapter 14.1.).

10.3.8. Gassing Procedure in Crematoria IV and V

As I have already noted in chapter 5.7., when questioned both by the Soviets and by the Poles, Tauber declared that the little windows of Crematoria IV and V, which were allegedly used for the introduction of the Zyklon B, were protected by iron bars. This has since been confirmed by documents. It would thus have been impossible to execute gassing operations in the way the witness described them.

10.4. Strength and Events in Connection with the "*Sonderkommando*"

10.4.1. The Strength of the "*Sonderkommando*" in March-April 1943.

In his Soviet deposition Tauber declares that initially (early March to mid-April, 1943) 70 detainees and four physicians worked in Crematorium II (p. 5). He then adds that the crematorium personnel went up to 400 persons in March-April 1943, subdivided as follows:

Table 18: Auschwitz Crematory Personnel, August 1944

Kommando	Designation	Guards	Specialists	Helpers
57-B	Stokers Crematorium I Day	2	1	109
57-B	Stokers Crematorium I Night	3	/	104
58-B	Stokers Crematorium II Night	3	/	110
58-B	Stokers Crematorium II Day	3	/	110
59-B	Stokers Crematorium III Day	2	1	109
59-B	Stokers Crematorium III Night	3	/	110
60-B	Stokers Crematorium IV Night	3	/	109
60-B	Stokers Crematorium IV Day	3	1	109
61-B	Wood unloading at Crematorium IV	/	/	30
	Total:	22	3	900

- Crematoria II and III: 240 detainees
- Crematoria IV and V: 120 detainees
- sick and other tasks: 40 detainees (p. 9).

However, Crematorium III was handed over to the camp administration ready for operation only on June 24, 1943, which means that in March-April 1943 those 120 detainees could not have worked there as part of the *Sonderkommando*. Tauber states also that in May 1944 the "*Sonderkommando*" was brought up to 1,000 detainees, assigned in the following manner:

- Crematorium II: 120 detainees
- Crematorium III: 120 detainees
- Crematorium IV: 60 detainees
- Crematorium V: 300 detainees
- "separate gas chamber No. 2": 300 detainees (p. 10).

But if we add up these figures, we obtain a total of 900, not 1,000. Besides, the documents tell us that the maximum strength of the crematorium personnel in 1944 was 903 detainees indeed, not 1,000. They were distributed as listed in Table 18 (August 1, 1944).[613]

Tauber instead erroneously assigns 120 detainees to each of Crematoria II and III and only 60 to Crematoria IV and V. These documents refute above all the alleged presence of 300 detainees at Crematorium V and of 300 inmates having been assigned to the alleged "bunker 2."

[613] Mattogno 2005c, pp. 80-84; this distribution is valid for the period July 28 through August 8, 1944; from August 9, the Helpers dropped to 870, because the 30 Helpers unloading wood were no longer included. The numbering of the crematoria reflects the fact that, by that time, the "old" crematorium at the main camp had been shut down.

10.4.2. The "*Sonderkommando*" of the "Bunkers"

At the time Tauber was moved to Crematorium II with a group of 20 Jewish inmates, a total of 33 detainees were working there, 26 Jews and seven Poles, if we follow the Soviet deposition (p. 2), which means that six Jews and seven Poles were already there: in his Polish account Tauber speaks instead of seven Jews and three Poles (p. 123). The Soviet testimony states that nine out of the initial 20 inmates stayed at Crematorium I (p. 4), the Polish testimony has twelve out of 20 (p. 127), and the testimony given before the Jewish historical commission has three out of 25 (Borwicz et al., p. 90). In his Polish deposition Tauber declared that at the time of the first gassing (on March 15, 1943), after 48 hours of work, his squad was replaced by "another crew of the Sonderkommando which then also worked at the two bunkers [and] amounted to 400 detainees (p. 139)." It is not clear how this can be made to fit his previous assertion that the incoming squad consisted of 70 detainees (p. 137).

10.4.3. Alleged Gassing of 200 Detainees of the "*Sonderkommando*"

Tauber tells us about an extraordinary event. According to Danuta Czech, the 300 members of the "*Sonderkommando*" who had carried out the cremation of the alleged 107,000 corpses buried in the vicinity of the Birkenau camp were gassed on December 3, 1942, in an effort to eliminate "the witnesses of the cremation of the corpses" (1989, p. 349). On the other hand and incomprehensibly so, the witnesses of the alleged mass gassing (and cremation) in the two Birkenau "bunkers" were not eliminated; they were instead assigned to the Birkenau crematoria. Or perhaps, even more incomprehensibly, half of them were gassed, with the other half assigned to the crematoria. Tauber actually asserts to have heard from his colleagues in Crematorium I that 400 members of the "*Sonderkommando*" were gassed there in December 1942 (p. 126), whereas another 400 were later assigned to the crematoria. This would mean that the "bunker" personnel numbered 800, while Danuta Czech speaks of 300 detainees.

Szlama Dragon, who claims to have worked in the "*Sonderkommando*" in 1942, relates something even more extraordinary: the "bunker" personnel consisted of two squads of 100 detainees each (p. 103 of note

614). After the construction of Crematorium II, "bunker 2" stopped operating, and the respective "cremation trenches" were filled in (*ibid*., p. 106). His squad was moved to sector BIId of the camp. He was reassigned to the "*Sonderkommando*" in the fall of 1943, and in between he worked in the "*Abbruchkommando*," the demolition squad (*ibid*., p. 107).

Danuta Czech, however, tells us that on September 23, 1944,

> *"200 Jewish detainees of the Sonderkommando who had been assigned to work on the cremation of corpses in open pits are gassed – after the pits have been filled in and leveled."* (1989, p. 886)

These victims, again, are "holders of secrets" (*Geheimnisträger*) who must be eliminated as such. This is in any case at variance with what Tauber has to say. He actually does mention the gassing of 200 detainees of the *Sonderkommando*, but in an entirely different context: it allegedly took place as a consequence of the attempted revolt in June 1944. This attempt had apparently been discovered by the SS, and the first victim was *Kapo* Kaminski who was shot (p. 145). The first source used by Danuta Czech is Salmen Lewental's manuscript, which says with respect to the events in September 1944 (Bezwińska/Świebocka, p. 236):

> *"The day, however, arrived on which our situation became more serious, because our entire Kommando was transferred to Crematoria II-IV. As there was no 'work' to be done there, we anticipated that sometime soon the Germans would come and move away a number of our group. And this is precisely what happened. 200 people were grabbed, murdered, and cremated."*

This, then, is the third version: the alleged elimination is said to have occurred, because in September 1944 there was no "work" in "Crematoria II-IV."

All this is, furthermore, in contradiction with what Tauber would have us believe. He declares that both "gas chamber no. 2 and the pyres near it" and "the pyres near Crematorium V" "worked intensively" from May until October 1944 (p. 10.). Therefore, on the one hand the "cremation trenches" were not filled in and leveled before September 23, as asserted by Danuta Czech, and on the other hand there was an enormous amount of "work," which is at variance with what Salmen Lewental

[614] Deposition by S. Dragon, May 10 and 11, 1945, before judge Jan Sehn. Höss trial, vol. 11.

says. Besides, according to Tauber there were at least 540[615] detainees working on the trenches, whereas Danuta Czech mentions only 200 detainees.

From the extant documents we see that on September 7 the crematorium personnel amounted to 874 inmates, and on October 3 to 662, a drop of 212 detainees (Mattogno 2005c, p. 88), but nothing tells us that these people were murdered. In this respect Dragon's account, which I have summarized above, is very informative. For Tauber the alleged gassing is said to have taken place at Auschwitz in the disinfestation chamber of "Kanada" (p. 145), something which Pressac has called "impossible," because the men of the "*Sonderkommando*" who knew the alleged gas chambers of Birkenau well would never have walked into a gas chamber voluntarily. Pressac concludes: "this execution by gassing still remains to be proved" (1989, p. 498).

10.4.4. Alleged Transfer to Lublin-Majdanek

The same uncertainty reigns over another alleged event: the transfer of 300 detainees from the "*Sonderkommando*" to Lublin-Majdanek. Tauber stated that this took place in January or February 1944, but does not give any explanation for this (p. 145).

Danuta Czech writes that this transfer occurred on February 24, 1944, and concerned only 200 detainees. In a note she brings in the explanation by the witness Jankowski: it is said to have been a reprisal for the escape of five detainees of the "*Sonderkommando*," among them a certain Daniel Obstbaum (1989, p. 728).

Jankowski does indeed speak of this fact (without mentioning Obstbaum's name), but attaches it vaguely to early 1944 (Bezwińska/Świebocka, p. 50). In terms of sources, Danuta Czech refers to the manuscript of Lewental who, for his part, does mention this transfer, but has it take place at the time of the alleged revolt of the "*Sonderkommando*," hence early October 1944. This error is noted by Danuta Czech herself who, together with Jadwiga Bezwińska, took care of the publication of the second edition of Lewental's manuscript by the Auschwitz Museum (p. 230 & note 59).

Needless to say that no document speaks of this alleged transfer, which makes no sense at all: 200 detainees were moved from one ex-

[615] At "bunker 2" 300 detainees, at Crematorium V, likewise 300 detainees, 60 of whom probably assigned to the crematorium, as at Crematorium IV. Tauber 1945b, p. 131.

termination camp to another to be killed there? Not even Daniel Obstbaum's escape is mentioned in any document. It is based only on testimonies (Świebocki 1994, p. 510). This creates a vicious circle of circular reasoning, in which Danuta Czech gets caught. Where she got her date of February 24, 1944, is one of the many mysteries of the *Kalendarium* of Auschwitz.

10.4.5. Revolt of the "*Sonderkommando*"

Tauber goes on to declare that, after the attempt at revolt of June 1944 and after the gassing of the above 200 detainees, the situation of the remaining inmates became ever more serious and they were "guarded and controlled with doubled vigilance" (p. 145) – something quite obvious, if there really had been an attempted uprising. In contrast to this the documents tell us that on August 31, 1944, the detainees making up the crematorium personnel were supervised by 22 SS guards, one for every 40 detainees. On October 3, after the alleged gassing of 200 inmates, there were 12 guards for 662 inmates, one for every 55 detainees (Mattogno 2005c, p. 88). Hence, the SS not only had not doubled their vigilance in the crematoria, but had actually reduced it by 25 percent! How afraid they were of a revolt by the "*Sonderkommando*" can be seen from the assignment of guards to the crematoria, which was as follows on October 3, 1944 (see *ibid.*):

Crematoria II and III:

- 1 guard per 84 detainees on the day-shift
- 3 guards per 85 detainees on the night-shift

Crematorium IV:

- 1 guard per 85 detainees on the day-shift
- 2 guards per 85 detainees on the night-shift

Crematorium V:

- 1 guard per 70 detainees on the day-shift
- 2 guards per 84 detainees on the night-shift.

Throughout the month of August 1944 the guards-to-detainees ratio stood at one guard for 40 inmates. In each of the Crematoria II/III there were on average five guards for 209 detainees. Yet the second half of the month is said to have seen the peak of the alleged extermination of

the Jews from the Lodz ghetto – at least 38,000 persons,[616] with an average of 4,750 per transport.

If we assume, with Pressac, that the alleged gas chamber of Crematoria II/III could accommodate 2,400 persons (1989, p. 384), one guard would have had to take care of, on average, [(2,400+209)÷5 =] 521 persons, including the detainees of the Sonderkommando. In fact, there is no document attesting to the average presence of more than the above number of guards in the crematoria. This in itself makes the alleged gassing absolutely unrealistic.

Tauber has the alleged revolt of the "*Sonderkommando*" take place in September 1944 (p. 140), whereas the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* records it for October 7 (Czech 1989, pp. 897-900). Tauber speaks in this context of the killing of 20-30 members of the SS, whereas the documents indicate only three victims of an unnamed event among the SS, and Tauber adds that Crematorium V was blown up, a rather uncertain event, as Pressac writes (1989, p. 498). On the subject of the alleged "*Sonderkommando*" Danuta Czech refers to the *Standortbefehl* no. 26/44 of October 12, 1944, with this comment (1989, p. 900):

> *"In the course of the revolt of the Sonderkommando the following three SS-men are killed by the detainees: SS-Unterscharführer Rudolf Erler, SS-Unterscharführer Willi Freese und SS-Unterscharführer Josef Purke."*

However, the document in question, referring to the three SS-men mentioned, merely states laconically:[617]

> *"While doing their duty as they had sworn in their oath on the Führer… died in the face of the enemy on Saturday, October 1, 1944."*

This wording does not actually prove that it was a matter having to do with a revolt by the "*Sonderkommando*." Still, on the basis of this document the date of the alleged revolt was incomprehensibly proclaimed to have been six days later: October 7, 1944, although for Tauber it all took place in September.

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[616] Piper assumes a minimum figure of 55,000 deportees in 11 transports, of which 3 took place in September; one of these comprised 2,500 persons. The average strengh of the others were thus [(55,000–2,500)÷10=] 5,250 persons each; the 8 transports in August hence concerned (5,250×8=) 42,000 persons of whom about 4,400 were registered and the remaining 38,000 were gassed, on average (38,000÷8=) 4,750 persons for each transport. Cf. chapter 15.4.1.

[617] Standortbefehl Nr. 26/44 dated October 12, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-25, p. 170.

Finally, in his deposition before the Jewish historical commission of Cracow Tauber states contradictorily that the revolt did not start with the "*Sonderkommando*" but originated among the Hungarian Jews who, again in September 1944, "rebelled and fell upon the SS," and that the number of victims among the SS was not 20-30 but even 40 (Borwicz et al., p. 90).

10.4.6. The Survival Mystery of 90 Members of the "*Sonderkommando*"

In the testimony given before the Jewish historical commission at Cracow, Tauber declared (*ibid*.):

> *"This Kommando was liquidated after a few months and the men who had been in it were gassed. At best one of them survived."*

It is from here that the story of the periodic extermination of the "*Sonderkommando*" members – as "holders of secrets" – started to spread among the former detainees. However, this is in open contrast with both Dragon's account and with the incomprehensible survival of 90 "*Sonderkommando*" members who, instead of being shot, were evacuated on foot together with the other detainees and were thus given opportunities to escape and testify to the world! Tauber writes about them (p. 146):

> *"At the liquidation of the camp there were some 90 detainees of the Sonderkommando in block 11."*

10.5. People Burned Alive: Black Propaganda

Tauber repeats also the juiciest propaganda stories invented by the secret resistance movement at Auschwitz (see chapter 19.1.), in particular the most impressive one: the people burned alive. In his Soviet deposition he asserts that part of the "'*Sonderkommando*" detainees were systematically killed by the SS "mostly by cremation" (p. 9), something he then reinforces (p. 10). In the Polish deposition he speaks of incidents that are decidedly nonsense. I have already mentioned the story of the "fire-proof" sack. Tauber develops this propagandistic topic with a number of fanciful examples. When the "dentists" missed a gold tooth in the mouth of a corpse, it was considered sabotage, "and the guilty dentist was burned alive in an oven" (p. 137). Then Tauber shamelessly invents this little anecdote (*ibid*.):

"I witnessed personally the incident where a French Jewish dentist was burned alive in this way in Crematorium V. He defended himself and screamed, but the SS – there were several of them – hurled themselves on him, rendered him powerless and pushed him into an oven alive. The punishment of being burned alive was meted out quite frequently to the men in the Sonderkommando, […]*."*

Tauber has more stories along the same lines (p. 138):

"I remember that another case took place in crematorium no. V in the summer of 1944. At that time, on one of the ordinary laborers, a Jew from Walbrom by the name of Lejb, some twenty years old, dark hair, with an ID number beyond 100 000, they found a ring and a gold watch when the shifts changed. So they called all the men from the Sonderkommando who worked in the crematorium and in front of them he was strung up by his hands – they were tied behind his back – from a steel bar over the gasifiers. He stayed like that for about one hour and then, when they had untied his arms and his legs, he was put into a cold oven in the crematorium and gasoline was poured into the ash container below and lit, so that the flames got into the muffle with Lejb inside.

After a couple of minutes the oven was opened and the condemned man ran out, with burns all over and was ordered to run around the yard of the crematorium and to shout that he was a thief, then he had to climb up on the barbed wire of the fence, which was not electrically charged because it was daylight.[618] *When he had reached the top of the wires, Moll, the chief of the crematorium, shot him. Moll's first name was Otto.*

Another time a man who was late for work at the crematorium was pushed by the SS into a pit full of boiling human fat. At that time the corpses were cremated in open pits, from which the fat flowed into a separate reservoir dug into the ground. This fat was used to soak the corpses with, so as to speed up the cremation process. This poor man was taken out still alive from the fat reservoir and shot. To fulfill the formalities, the body was taken to the block where the 'Totenschein' (death certificate) was established, and it was only on the following day that the corpse was carried to the area of the crematorium and burned in a pit."

[618] Standortbefehl Nr.18/44 dated June 27, 1944, stated: "Das Drahthindernis um die Krematorien III und IV [IV and V] ist ab Montag, dem 26.6.44, 16,00 Uhr, mit elektrischem Strom geladen." APMO, D-AuI-1/61, inventory No. 4591, p. 343.

What is tragic here is that Tauber claims to have been an *eyewitness* to this grotesque propaganda story. He also tells us that Moll "on many occasions threw people into the flaming trenches alive" (p. 144). Pressac "backs up" this assertion by publishing a drawing by Olère, showing Moll aiming his pistol at two women who are close to the edge of a pit from which flames are emanating (1989, p. 497; also in van Pelt 2002, p. 181). As I have explained before, given the temperature near the flaming trenches, the two unfortunate women would have been roasted alive without ever getting into that pit, and Moll himself would have suffered the same fate (apart from the fact that the extant air photos prove that there weren't any such pits in the first place).

Another propaganda story is the one about the *Unterscharführer* who, in the crematorium, "cut off chunks of flesh from the corpses of people who had been shot" (pp. 146f.) and carried them away. Tauber's final story (p. 127):

> *"I remember that Capo Mietek asked Grabner for another detainee to be assigned to the job, because one of our men had died. Grabner told him that he could not give him a 'Zugang' (newcomer), but if he killed another four Jews, he would give him five Zugang* [recte: Zugänge]. *He also asked Mietek with what he had hit the inmate. Mietek showed him a stick. Grabner then took a steel grid* [sic] *and told him he should hit the detainees with that."*
>
> Propaganda rubbish of that sort cannot expect a serious comment.

10.6. Conclusions

As Pressac has already shown, there is no doubt that, as far as the buildings are concerned and in respect of the description of the crematoria, Tauber's testimonies are fully reliable. This also goes for his description of the crematorium ovens, which is accurate and detailed, although he says nothing about the blowers for the triple-muffle ovens[619] – somewhat strange, in that they were regularly switched on during the cremations, were quite noisy and could thus not have remained unnoticed. There is no reference either to the ventilation equipment of the furnace hall in Crematorium II and III. What counts, however, is the fact that all of his statements regarding the alleged homicidal gassings as well as the cremations in the crematorium ovens and in the open air are historically false and technically nonsensical.

[619] Each oven had its own blower no. 275, two on the right and three on the left

Pressac's judgment as cited above is naïve on two counts. First of all, the actual agreement of Tauber's statements with the structure and the equipment of the crematoria is not by itself "proof of the exceptional validity of his testimony," but simply its *conditio sine qua non*, its necessary condition: The correct description of the crematoria does not necessarily imply that the rest of what Tauber tells us did indeed happen. Secondly, the agreement between his testimony and "the historical material available now that was not available in May 1945," i.e. the documentation confiscated by the Soviets, is simply due to the fact that – as his own testimony tells us – Tauber became acquainted with the contents of this documentation through the Soviet investigators. In the Polish testimony Tauber states (p. 124):

> *"I call muffles, in accordance with the terminology accepted by the Soviet commission, the retorts for the cremation of the corpses."*

Actually, the German term "*Muffel*," polonized as "*mufle*," was the usual designation for the cremation chambers, which Tauber ought to have known well; instead, he always uses "*retorty*," retorts. Besides, Tauber was able to view the equipment and devices of the crematoria and the parts of the ovens stored at the *Bauhof*. Tauber's statements also show that he tried to explain the documents he had been shown by the Soviets, and this endeavor makes up a non-negligible portion of his testimony. I will limit myself to the most conspicuous cases:

1) Tauber declares that the fake showers were installed in the gas chamber (and benches and clothes hooks in the undressing room) only in the fall of 1943 "to camouflage the undressing room and the gas chamber by presenting them as a bath and disinfection [*area*]." This assertion, which has no backing in the documents, served simply to explain the reason why, in the inventory attached to the documentation of the hand-over of Crematorium III dated June 24, 1943, there were 14 showers (14 *Brausen*) in the basement (*Kellergeschoss*) of *Leichenkeller 1* (the alleged gas chamber), whereas in the corresponding inventory for Crematorium II (March 31, 1943) no showers are listed. As already explained, those showers were actually part of the "*Sondermassnahmen"* to improve the hygienic installations at the Birkenau camp ordered by Kammler in early May 1943, and for that reason they had no place in a document (the above inventory of Crematorium II) drawn up on March 31, 1943 (see chapter 4).

2) In this context, Tauber claims that the alleged fake showers "were mounted on pieces of wood set for that purpose into the concrete ceiling

of the gas chamber." He speaks of the wooden fixation plates already discussed in chapter 4.3. above. But these plates could only be set into the fresh concrete, i.e. while the concrete was being cast. The plates in question were actually placed among the reinforcing bars of the ceiling of *Leichenkeller 1*, something quite obvious, inasmuch as the lamps for that room were to be attached to them. They could thus not have been set into the hardened concrete "in the fall of 1943," as Tauber wants us to believe. Besides, if those plates had already been placed for the purpose claimed by the witness when the concrete ceiling was being cast, why were the alleged fake showers attached to them only "in the fall of 1943"?

The first official inspection of the ruins of Crematorium II was done by the Poles on May 12, 1945, twelve days prior to Tauber's questioning by judge Sehn; there was another one on June 4. The inspections were very thorough: among other things, they allowed the recovery of some ventilation grids from *Leichenkeller 1* (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 30), so the plates set into the ceiling of the room could not have been overlooked by those participating in the inspection and thus been unknown to judge Sehn who had obviously told Tauber about them, if he had not been personally present during the inspection. It is therefore clear that Tauber wanted to furnish a "criminal explanation" – purely fictitious – of those plates.

3) The story of the undressing barrack, which I have shown above to be nothing but invention, was needed only to explain why on the Birkenau map no. 2216 of March 20, 1943, there was a barrack at the northeastern corner of Crematorium II. Tauber actually does not make clear why the erection of this barrack had become necessary, and Pressac who considers it to be one of the "proofs" of Tauber's reliability gives us two contrasting and inconclusive reasons for it. Actually, as I have explained above, this barrack had been requested by the SS garrison surgeon on January 21, 1943, and was erected one month prior to the alleged inaugural gassing described by Tauber who, by the way, devalues Pressac's attempts at an explanation (see chapter 2.3.).

4) Tauber says that the three forced-draft devices "were dismantled and the ducts taking the spent gases away from the crematorium ovens were connected directly to the chimney." This is true and, as already discussed, the respective work was done after Tauber had left Crematorium II (mid-April): then how could the witness have come to know these technical details if, at the time, he was at Crematorium IV and

never went back to Crematorium II? Obviously from the documents held by the Soviets.

5) What Tauber has to say about the workforce of the *Sonderkommando*, too, comes from the documents the Soviets had shown him. These documents are very fragmentary and begin in January 1944: On January 1, 1944, the workforce of the crematoria (*Krematoriumspersonal*) stood at 383 persons, on January 31 it was 414, and on February 15 at 405 (Mattogno 2005c, p. 80). For that reason Tauber declared that initially (March 1943) this group "numbered some 400 detainees and remained at that level into January or February 1944" (p. 145). For the nine months in between he gives no figures, simply because there are no documents.

6) Even more significant is the fact that Tauber, when testifying in front of the Soviet commission in February 1945, did not yet know of the term "bunker" later used for the alleged makeshift gas chambers at Birkenau. In fact, he refers to them simply as "separate gas chambers" (*otdelnie gazovie kameri*). The term "bunker," allegedly used by both the SS and the detainees as an official designation for the two alleged gassing installations, was coined only when judge Sehn began his work (see chapter 18.4.), and so Tauber started using it in his Polish deposition three months later (May 1945).

Viewed from a historical point of view, Tauber's statements are false, erroneous, or without any object, as for example:

- alleged gassing of the "members of the French Résistance";
- the transports of French and Dutch Jews in April/May 1943;
- the Greek transport allegedly arriving right after the transport from Cracow which had been gassed first in Crematorium II;
- the numerical strength of this transport;
- the presence of Dr. Mengele at Auschwitz in March-April, 1943 (Tauber, p. 139) ;
- the date of the "*Sonderkommando*" revolt;
- the number of SS-men allegedly killed in the revolt;
- the presence of five "cremation trenches" in the yard of Crematorium V in the summer of 1944;
- the existence of a field railway near the "cremation trenches";
- the presence of four or seven cremation trenches in the general area of the Birkenau camp in 1944;
- the gassing of 200 detainees from the "*Sonderkommando*" in the disinfestation chamber at the "Kanada" section of Auschwitz;

- the strength of the "*Sonderkommando*" in 1944;
- its assignment to the various crematoria;
- the split-up of the alleged gas chamber of Crematorium II into two rooms;
- the closure of Crematorium I in February or March 1943 (Tauber, p. 3, 7; it was closed down in July 1943).

To say nothing of his lies about the total number of victims at the camp, which also strictly follows the Soviet propaganda guidelines (pp. 149f):

> *"On the basis of my estimates, the total number of people gassed in the Auschwitz crematoria during the period when I worked there as a member of the Sonderkommando was about 2 million persons. While I was at Auschwitz, I was able to talk to various detainees who had worked in the crematoria or the bunkers of Auschwitz before I got there. I learned from them that, when I started to work in the crematoria, about 2 million people had already been gassed in bunkers no. I and II or in Crematorium I. Thus, altogether I arrive at a figure of about 4 million people who were gassed at Auschwitz."*

Tauber's testimony is historically inconsistent, stuffed with outrageous propaganda stories, and technically nonsensical, which means that van Pelt's assertion that "it did not contain contradictions, and it did not contain improbable allegations," appears pathetic.

In conclusion and by rephrasing Pressac, one can say that Tauber's testimony – to which van Pelt attributes "the highest evidentiary value" – is 95% historically *un*reliable, that is to say: it is historically worthless.

11. Critical Analysis of the Testimonies of Rudolf Höss

11.1. The "Non-Existent" Contradictions in Höss's Declarations

After Tauber, the most prominent witness paraded by van Pelt is Rudolf Höss, the former Auschwitz commander, whom he introduces with the following words:

> *"Höss was an important witness, and therefore any attempt to refute the Holocaust must engage and refute Höss."*

For that reason, according to van Pelt, "negationists decided that it made strategic sense to concentrate their energies on debunking the Höss account and showing that Auschwitz could not have accommodated an extermination program" (2002, p. 5). He adds later (p. 263):

> *"Höss produced much written text and he gave a number of testimonies, and from Rassinier onward negationists have tried to find contradictions in Höss's testimony,"*

allegedly without achieving their goal, because van Pelt concludes that "negationists have not been successful in attacking Höss's credibility by pointing out contradictions" (p. 271). Van Pelt's conclusion is completely wrong, and he knows it, because previously he had already run into one of the most serious contradictions in Höss's testimony, a contradiction which totally refutes the alleged criminal basis of the Birkenau crematoria outlined by Pressac and accepted by van Pelt. On that occasion, as we shall soon see, van Pelt had already spoken explicitly of "internal inconsistencies in [Höss's] statements"!

Let us proceed step by step. At the beginning of his book, van Pelt lists a long uncommented excerpt from Höss's declaration under oath dated April 5, 1946 (PS-3868), the essential elements of which I have summarized below (van Pelt 2002, p. 4):

> *"*[1] *The 'final solution' of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe.*
>
> [2] *I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941.*
>
> [3] *At that time there were already in the General Government three other extermination camps; BELZEK, TREBLINKA and*

WOLZEK. The camps were under the Einsatzkommando of the Security Police and SD.

[4] *I visited Treblinka to find out how they carried out their exterminations.*

[5] *The Camp Commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year. He was mainly occupied with liquidating all the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto.*

[6] *He used monoxide gas and I did not think his method was very efficient. So when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz I, I used Cyklon B, which was crystallized Prussic acid we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening."*

In this quotation I have numbered the sentences for ease of treatment. Before we go into the discussion, it must be made clear that there is no documentary evidence for the alleged summoning of Höss to Berlin. Debórah Dwork and van Pelt gamble on the assertion that Höss was in Berlin on June 13 and 14, 1941, for talks with Kammler at the *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* about the enlargement plans at Auschwitz (p. 214) and also met Himmler at that time (p. 280):

"Himmler too was in town, to celebrate the fifth anniversary of his appointment as chief of the German Police. Given his personal interest in the future of Auschwitz, it seems likely that the completion of the first master plan was an occasion for him to chat with Höss."

The document they cite to sustain their conjecture is a letter written by Kammler and addressed to Höss, dated June 18, 1941, which merely refers to a discussion between Höss and the head of *Amt I* of *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten, SS-Oberführer* Lörner, as well as Kammler himself, without any indication as to where this meeting took place.[620] In his Cracow "*Aufzeichnungen*" Höss spoke of a visit to Auschwitz by Kammler in 1941, when the head of *Bauleitung* was still August Schlachter,[621] hence prior to October 1, 1941, which was the day Schlachter was replaced by Bischoff. Hence the meeting of June 13-14 was almost certainly held at Auschwitz.

[1]: In the manuscript *Die "Endlösung der Judenfrage" im KL Auschwitz* which Höss wrote in Nov. 1946 while imprisoned at Cracow he states (Broszat, p. 157):

[620] RGVA, 502-1-11, p. 37.

[621] Profile of Kammler entitled "Der Chef der Amtsgruppe C im WVHA war der SS-Gruppenführer Dr.-Ing. Kammler" and dated November 1946. AGK, NTN, 103, p. 244.

"In the summer of 1941 – I cannot now recall the exact moment – I was suddenly summoned to Berlin, [to see] *the Reichsführer SS, by his personal staff (Adjutantur). Contrary to his normal habits he told me – in the absence of an aide-de-camp – more or less the following: the Führer has decided on the final solution of the Jewish question, we – the SS – have to carry out this order."*

In June 1941, however, Hitler could not have ordered the "*Endlösung der Judenfrage*" in the sense of a biological extermination (a sense, by the way, not evidenced by any document), because as late as early February 1942 this designation referred to the Madagascar plan. This is borne out by the following letter by Fritz Rademacher, head of the "Jewish" section in the ministry of foreign affairs, to the envoy Bielfeld, written on February 10, 1942 (NG-5770):

"In August of 1940 I transmitted to you for your files the plan elaborated by my department for the final solution of the Jewish question, whereby the island of Madagascar was to be ceded by France, with the practical implementation of this task to be entrusted to the RSHA. In accordance with this plan, Gruppenführer Heydrich was ordered by the Führer to carry out the solution of the Jewish question in Europe.

The war against the Soviet Union has meanwhile opened up the possibility of providing other territories for the final solution. The Führer has decided accordingly that the Jews will not be deported to Madagascar but to the East. Hence, Madagascar need no longer be considered for the final solution."

[2]: In chapter 1.7. I have already touched upon the contradictions which ensue from Höss's chronology. Here we will look in greater detail at van Pelt's interpretation of the matter. Earlier van Pelt had already become aware of the fact that Höss's statement on the subject of the alleged extermination order stood in total contrast to the evolution of the extermination installations outlined by Pressac and shared by himself. As opposed to Pressac, however, who changed the date of the alleged Höss-Himmler encounter by having it take place a year later, van Pelt changed the content of Himmler's alleged order (Dwork/van Pelt, p. 279):

"Höss's Nuremberg confessions seemed to close the case concerning the origins of Auschwitz as a death camp. But internal inconsistencies in his statements, as well as additional indirect but pertinent evidence, suggest that Höss reinterpreted events that in-

deed had occurred in light of the ultimate outcome. Probably, he had a conversation with Himmler in June 1941. Probably, they spoke about the construction of extermination facilities at Auschwitz. But probably, in June 1941, those installations were not intended for the mass murder of Europe's Jews."

This "probability," however, is actually untenable, because Höss always stressed with certainty that the alleged order given by Himmler concerned the European Jews. Even in his first statement he declared:[622]

"I was ordered to see Himmler in Berlin in June 1941 and he told me approximately the following: The Führer ordered the solution of the Jewish question in Europe."

I have already mentioned the manuscript *Die "Endlösung der Judenfrage" im KL Auschwitz*, which says the same thing, and this is confirmed by Höss's notes about Himmler, in which he speaks explicitly of an "order for the mass annihilation of the Jews," an order which the Auschwitz commander says he received from the *Reichsführer-SS* in the summer of 1941 (Broszat, p. 180). Höss also repeats it in the course of the court debates:[623]

"In the summer of 1941 – I cannot remember the date – Himmler ordered me personally to come to his office and told me the following: 'The Führer has ordered the Jewish question to be solved definitively.'"

Van Pelt thus makes use of an underhanded trick to eliminate this vexing question.

[3]: This point is so absurd that even van Pelt had to acknowledge this, writing with D. Dwork (p. 279):

"In his affidavit, saying he 'was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941,' he also explained that 'at that time, there were already in the General Government three other extermination camps: Belzek, Treblinka, and Wolzek (Sobibor).[624]*' These camps, however, came into operation only in 1942. In a detailed account of the role of Auschwitz in the genocide of the Jews that Höss wrote later that year, he again related Auschwitz to the other killing sites and again made the same mistake about the dates. 'Himmler greeted me with the following: 'The Führer has ordered the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. We the SS have to carry*

[622] Declaration by Höss dated March 14, 1946. NO-1210.
[623] Höss trial, second session, March 12, 1947. AGK, NTN, 105, p. 108.
[624] The identification of "Wolzek" with Sobibor is simply an unfounded conjecture.

out this order. The existing extermination sites in the East are not in a position to carry out these intended operations on a large scale. I have, therefore, chosen Auschwitz for this purpose'.' In June 1941 there were no 'existing extermination sites in the East.'"

Actually, the camps at Belzec and Treblinka began operating officially on March 17 and July 23, 1942, respectively.

[4-6]: This anachronism is, however, even more serious than it appears to be at first glance. Höss, in fact, asserts to have gone to Treblinka at a time prior to the first homicidal gassings with Zyklon B which he claims to have introduced at Auschwitz, because the method of "monoxide gas" used at Treblinka was not, in his opinion, "very efficient." The system of the introduction of Zyklon B into the "death chamber from a small opening" referred to Crematorium I, as Höss confirmed during the proceedings:[625]

"After the first gassing in block 11 – the building used as a stockade – transports were gassed in the old crematorium, in the so-called morgue. Gassing took place as follows: a hole[626] *was opened up in the ceiling, and through this hole the gas – a crystalline mass – was thrown into the room."*

As the alleged homicidal activity in Crematorium I is said by Danuta Czech to have begun on September 16, 1941 (1989, p. 122), Höss's alleged inspection of Treblinka would have to have taken place before that date. This means that Höss visited Treblinka ten months before this camp was ever opened. Not only that, but at that time the camp would already have liquidated 80,000 Jews in the span of half a year, which means, in turn, that it went into operation at the latest in March 1941. As the victims are claimed to have come from the Warsaw ghetto, we must conclude, lastly, that the deportations from that ghetto did not start as late as in July 1942, as is firmly established, but actually in March 1941! In the declaration of March 14, 1946, Höss declares (NO-1210):

"I visited the camp Treblinka in Spring 1942 to inform myself about the conditions,"

but this only makes the matter worse, because at the time of this alleged visit to a still not existing camp, Zyklon B was allegedly already being used both experimentally (block 11, Crematorium I) and for mass

[625] AGK, NTN, 105, p. 111. Cf. chapter 18.3.

[626] "dziura." On the subject of the number of the alleged introduction openings for Zyklon B in the roof of the Leichenhalle of Crematorium I the witnesses are in total disagreement: there were 6 for Broad and Müller, 2-3 (sic) for Aumeier, 2 for Jankowski, 1 for Höss. Cf. in this respect Mattogno 2005e.

gassings ("bunker" 1, allegedly in operation from March 20, 1942, onwards; Czech 1989, p. 186). To extricate themselves from this troublesome contradiction, Dwork and van Pelt found no better way than to push back Höss's alleged trip to Treblinka to a point in time later than Himmler's second visit to Auschwitz (July 17 and 18, 1942; p. 321):

> *"It is likely that during his July visit Himmler had advised Höss to seek inspiration from Treblinka, which had been conceived from the outset as an extermination center."*

To all this one must add the fact that in his manuscript *Die "Endlösung der Judenfrage" im KL Auschwitz* Höss wrote that Eichmann had not yet found a suitable gas for the extermination at the end of November 1941. This happened "in the fall of 1941," obviously after the end of November, when *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Karl Fritzsch is said to have used Zyklon B for the "first gassing" in the basement of block 11 (Broszat, pp. 158f.), but this dating is in open contrast with the date for this first gassing in late summer 1941 (September 3-5) as adopted by Danuta Czech (1989, p. 117-120). It is therefore easy to see why van Pelt does not pay the least attention to these later contradictions.

In his declaration of March 14, 1946, Höss asserts (NO-1210):

> *"As the new crematoriums were only to be finished in 1942, the prisoners had to be gassed in provisionally erected gas chambers and then had to be burned in pits."*

This signifies that the crematoria were conceived from the very beginning as places of extermination in order to carry out Himmler's alleged order, as Höss affirmed explicitly during his interrogation on April 1, 1946:[627]

> *"Q. What did you do in Auschwitz?*
>
> *A. I immediately got in touch with the chief of a construction unit and told him that I needed a large crematorium. I told him that we were going to receive a large number of sick people, but I did not give him my real reason.*
>
> *Q. And then?*
>
> *A. And after we had completed our blueprints, I sent them to the Reichsführer. After I had changed them in accordance with the real purpose of his instructions, they were approved."*

[627] Testimony of Rudolf Hoess taken at Nuremberg Germany, on 1 April, 1946, 1430 to 1730 by Mr. Sender Jaari and Lt. Whitney Harris, p. 26. In: Mendelsohn/Detwiler 1982, vol. 12.

This is said to have occurred in June or July 1941, when Höss came back from his meeting with Himmler in Berlin. However, the first design for a new crematorium – later to become Crematorium II – was made by *SS-Untersturmführer* Dejaco on October 24, 1941 (Pressac 1993, his document 9), i.e. three or four months later, which does not fit in well with the adverb "immediately." The second project for the crematorium was drawn in November 1941 by the architect Werkmann of *SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* (*ibid*., document 10f.), which proves that this was not a secret undertaking handled at the local level.

Höss goes on to say that he "changed" the projects "in accordance with the real purpose" of the installations in accordance with Himmler's instructions – i.e. he modified the original blueprints to turn an installation of hygiene and sanitation into an installation for extermination – and sent the modified blueprints to Himmler who approved them. But the definitive project of the new crematorium was realized at Auschwitz in January 1942[628] and contains no "criminal trace" at all!

Höss's humbug fits in perfectly well with the logic of *intentionality* originally announced by judge Sehn and propped up for decades by the Auschwitz Museum: If the extermination order was given to Auschwitz in June 1941, the entire Birkenau camp was conceived from the very start as an extermination camp, and its crematoria were necessarily designed as criminal instruments for the execution of that order. But this is in glaring disagreement with the results of Pressac's study accepted by van Pelt. These authors in fact acknowledge that "nothing in the original conceptual sketches of the crematorium or in the blueprints which date from January 1942 suggests homicidal gas chambers or their use in the Final Solution" (van Pelt 2002, p. 72). Van Pelt also rejects the Polish conjecture on the subject of the camp having an extermination function from the start, when he says that it "was to serve as a transit point [for German and Czech Jews] between Germany, Bohemia, and the projected [Jewish] reservation in the East" (Dwork/van Pelt, p. 291). Actually, for van Pelt, Himmler's ghost-like extermination order was given in July 1942 (2002, p. 352; cf. p. 80):

> *"In July 1942, Himmler visited Auschwitz and ordered that the camp become an important link in the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Problem."*

[628] Plan 936(p), 936 (r), 1173-1174(p), 1173-117(r), 933, 933[-934], 933[-934](p), 933[-934](r), 932(p), 932(r), 934 in: Pressac 1989, pp. 268-288.

But this conjecture is dismissed by Höss himself who says about Himmler "after the tour of Birkenau he watched the whole process of the annihilation of a transport of Jews which had just come in" (Broszat, p. 182). This assertion was taken over almost literally by D. Czech under the date of July 17, 1942 (1989, p. 250):

> *"After inspecting the Birkenau camp he takes part in the killing of a transport of Jews which had just arrived."*

Himmler is said to have witnessed the alleged gassing of a transport of Dutch or Slovak Jews,[629] which means that Birkenau would have been an extermination camp already at that time. Höss states even more clearly (Broszat, pp. 159f.):

> *"Now, at what time the annihilation of Jews began, I can no longer say. Probably still in November of 1941, but possibly only in January of 1942."*

Therefore van Pelt's assertion is groundless. He has by-passed the enormous contradictions I have underlined above by pushing back, as did Pressac, Himmler's alleged extermination order and by bringing in sophistic explanations (see chapter 18). Hence, not only do Höss's declarations contain serious internal contradictions, they are also at odds with cardinal points of historiography shared by van Pelt.

What I have expounded here is still rather little. In one of my first writings I have actually listed 60 counts of contradictions and false statements of the former Auschwitz commander (1987, cf. 2002c, pp. 68-105). In other studies I have treated in a more thorough manner the contradictions and false statements by Höss on the subject of the alleged homicidal gassing in block 11 (2005a, pp. 16-18 and 78f.), in Crematorium I (2005e, pp. 50-53), and in the "bunkers" at Birkenau (2004i, pp. 136-139).

11.2. Errors, Incongruities, and Deceptions by van Pelt

Beyond this systematic attempt at misrepresentation, van Pelt shows his usual superficiality and lack of historical knowledge in the treatment of this witness. He asserts (2002, p. 263):

> *"As he waited for his execution, Höss wrote a 224-page detailed autobiography that expanded on his earlier statements on the gas-*

[629] Actually, the chronology of Himmler's visit makes it impossible for him to have been present at these alleged gassings, as I have shown in Mattogno 2004h, pp. 17-25.

sings and placed them within the context of the larger history of Auschwitz."

Actually, the verdict in the Höss trial was proclaimed on April 2, 1947, and he was executed on April 16, but his notes stem from the period between November 1946 to February 1947. It is really incredible that van Pelt is not aware of such a fundamental matter of holocaust historiography. The same ignorance shows up also in the following statement (*ibid*.):

"Given Höss's full confession, it was no surprise that the court convicted him for mass murder. Remarkably, however, the court did not accept the number of 4 million victims mentioned in the Soviet Report that was assumed in the indictment."

In the argumentation (*uzasadnienie*) of its verdict of April 2 1947, the "Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy" (Supreme National Tribunal) recognized a "minimum" figure of 2,500,000 victims (unregistered detainees) as well as 300,000 registered detainees, plus another 12,000 Soviet prisoners of war, but did not reject the Soviet figure and judged that "the figure of 3-4 million of such victims bears within it all elements of probability."[630]

Van Pelt's silence on the following declaration by Höss during the proceedings is particularly symptomatic (2002, p. 262):

"No improvements could be made to the crematoria. After eight to ten hours of operation the crematoria were unfit for further use. It was impossible to operate them continuously."

Such a statement clashes violently with what van Pelt attributes to Tauber: 8-10 hours per day as opposed to 24! Its significance was quickly recognized by Fritjof Meyer, who made it one of the pillars of his controversial paper on Auschwitz in the sense that it overturns the entire framework of the testimonies on the subject of the crematoria.[631] Van Pelt never worried about this, though. Actually, as I have shown elsewhere (2004n, pp. 131-139), the contradiction stems from a faulty translation (the Polish word "*tygodni*," i.e. weeks, was rendered as "hours"), but van Pelt did not know this. Still, even applying this rectification, Höss's statement continues to be decidedly at variance with the alleged continuous operation of the ovens for 24 hours a day accepted by van Pelt, but rejected by Höss who said that the crematorium ovens

[630] AGK, NTN, 146z, p. 40.
[631] Meyer, pp. 631-641. Cf. in this respect Mattogno 2002d, pp. 378-385.

had an operating period limited to 8-10 weeks and "it was impossible to operate them *continuously*."

Here is another example of van Pelt's method of selective silence. He quotes a passage of the declaration made by Höss to Dr. Gustave Gilbert at Nuremberg:

> *"The killing was easy; you didn't even need guards to drive them into the chambers; they just went in expecting to take showers and, instead of water, we turned on poison gas."* (2002, p. 251)

Therefore, if we follow Höss, the gas in the alleged extermination chambers came out of showers! And van Pelt utters not one word about such an absurdity. Höss's declaration contains further blunders, about which van Pelt says nothing either (*ibid*., p. 252; see chapter 16.1):

> *"It was Zyklon B, cyanide acid in form of crystals, which vaporized immediately, that is to say, it took effect immediately upon coming into contact with oxygen."*

Zyklon B did not consist of "crystals"; instead it consisted of gypsum pellets soaked with hydrogen cyanide. And the hydrogen cyanide did not vaporize immediately and took effect upon contact with oxygen, but it evaporated slowly and was effective no matter what other gas was around (although high air moisture could drastically slow down the process, see Irmscher). The erroneous designation "crystals" is widespread among the witnesses and accepted even by Filip Müller, who speaks of "Zyklon-B-Kristalle" (Müller, p. 184). Here we have the nonsense of "crystals" together with that of their immediate evaporation "in contact with oxygen."

Höss's, as quoted by van Pelt, describes the Birkenau ovens as follows (van Pelt 2002, p. 252):

> *"In five double* [sic] *ovens heated with coke, it was possible to burn at most 2,000 bodies within 24 hours; two smaller installations could eliminate about 1,500 people, with four bigger double ovens to each of them."*

In this manner the triple-muffle ovens of Crematoria II and III become double-muffle devices, whereas the 8-muffle oven (the double oven with 4 muffles each) of Crematoria IV and V becomes a "four muffle oven." However, Höss had said in his declaration of March 14, 1946:[632]

[632] NO-1210. Crematoria II and III as well have "five double stoves" and Crematoria IV and V "four bigger stoves" each.

"The cremation of approximately 2,000 prisoners in five cremating stoves took approximately 12 hours."

Thus, the cremation capacity of Crematoria II and III together was not 2,000 but 4,000 corpses per day. The reason behind Höss's statement to Dr. Gilbert was to demonstrate the possibility of exterminating 2,500,000 people at Auschwitz, a figure which he claimed he had been given by Eichmann. He did it in the following manner (van Pelt 2002, p. 253):

"On the basis of the figure of 2.5 million, which is the number of people who – according to Eichmann – were brought to Auschwitz for extermination, it may be said that on average, two transports arrived daily, with a combined total of 4,000 persons, of whom twenty-five percent were fit for work, the balance of 3,000 were to be exterminated. The intervals in the various operations can be computed together at nine months. Thus there remain 27 months, with 90,000 people each month – a total of 2,430,000. This is a calculation of the technical potential."

But in other declarations, Höss called the figure of 2,500,000 factual, not a "technical potential." For example, in his statement under oath of April 8, 1946, he affirmed (PS-3868, p. 1):

"I commanded Auschwitz up to December 1st, 1943, and would estimate that at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated there through gassing and cremation; another half million died from starvation and disease, which gives us a total of about 3,000,000 dead."

The figure of 500,000 dead from starvation and disease concerned the registered detainees; it is even far higher than the total of all detainees ever registered at Auschwitz: about 400,000 persons (Piper 1993, p. 151). Besides, the figure of 2,500,000 persons gassed was an estimate on the part of Höss himself, not one he had received from Eichmann. Moreover, if 2,430,000 persons gassed represent 75% of all deportees to Auschwitz, their total number would have been some 3,240,000, and the number of able-bodied detainees admitted to the camp – 25% of them – would have amounted to 810,000 persons. Höss's declaration to Dr. Gilbert contains furthermore a table of the "mass deportations" calculated by the former commander of Auschwitz to be "a total of 1.5 million at the most for the period from beginning of 1941 to the end of 1944" (van Pelt 2002, p. 253). In Table 19 I have set Höss's data against the corresponding figures given by Piper (1993, p. 199). How-

Table 19: Comparison of Mass Deportation Figures to Auschwitz – Höss versus Piper

Country of Origin	*Piper*	*Höss*	*Difference*
Hungary	438,000	400,000	+ 38,000
Poland	300,000	250,000	– 50,000
France	69,000	110,000	+ 41,000
Holland	60,000	95,000	+ 35,000
Greece	55,000	65,000	+ 10,000
Slovakia	27,000	90,000	+ 63,000
Belgium	25,000	20,000	– 5,000
Germany, Austria, Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia	69,000	100,000	+ 31,000
Yugoslavia	10,000	–	– 10,000
Italy	7,500	–	– 7,500
Norway	690	–	– 690
Form other camps	34,000	–	– 34,000
Total:	1,095,190	1,130,000	+ 34,810

ever, these figures represent the detainees *deported* to Auschwitz, not those gassed. For that reason, Höss's estimate of 2,500,000 persons *gassed* is both contradictory and historically false.

From this brief sketch we can judge the credibility of someone declaring "negationists have not been successful in attacking Höss's credibility by pointing out contradictions": the same as merited by Höss's own absurd and contradictory declarations.

11.3. Höss was Tortured

It is now a notorious fact that Höss was tortured by the British, but we must understand what this matter entails. In 1987, after having documented 60 contradictions and historical falsifications in Höss's statements, I wondered why the Auschwitz commander had lied so shamelessly (1987a, p. 29). The answer to this question, irrelevant though it is to the *ascertained fact* of the false character of his statements, was given by Höss himself when he talked about the circumstances of his first questioning by the British interrogators (Broszat, p. 149):

> *"I was arrested on March 11, 1946, at 23* [hours…]. *The police ill-treated me seriously. I was sent to Heide, where I was imprisoned in the same barracks from which, eight months earlier, I had been released by English troops.*

My first interrogation was marked by striking demonstrations. I have no idea what the minutes contain, although I did sign them. But alcohol and whipping was too much, even for me"

Martin Broszat, the publisher of the first German version of Höss's notes, writes in his first footnote:

"We have here an 8-page typewritten document (Protokoll) which Höss signed on March 14, 1946, at 2:30 a.m. (Nuremberg doc. NO-1210). Its content does not deviate in a visible manner from what he declared or wrote down later at Nuremberg or at Cracow."

Thus, Höss's first confession, the one which contains the essential elements of all future "confessions," was not written by Höss but drawn up by his British interrogators!

"After a few days, I was transferred to Minden on Weser, the main interrogation center in the British zone. There, I was to undergo more ill-treatments at the hands of an English major, the main prosecutor. The conditions in the prison were absolutely in keeping with his behavior. To my great surprise, after three weeks, I was shaved, my hair was cut, and I was allowed to wash myself. That was the first time from the moment I was arrested that they took off my handcuffs." (Broszat, p. 150)

The fact that Höss was tortured by the British has by now become a historically certified fact (Faurisson 1987, pp. 137-152), having been admitted also by the torturer (Bernard Clarke) and accepted as true by J.-C. Pressac ("arrested by the British in March 1946, was several times violently whipped and ill-treated to the brink of dying," 1993, p. 131) and by Fritjof Meyer ("after three days without sleep, tortured, beaten after each answer, naked and forcibly put under alcohol…," p. 639). Van Pelt tries to trivialize this question and writes (2002, p. 276):

"Irving was right in that Höss's first confession was obtained when the witness was denied sleep for three days, but he did not mention that although this confession was submitted to the tribunal, it was never used in the court. Instead, the tribunal heard on April 15, 1946, extracts from the affidavit which he signed on April 5, 1946, after a few days of civilized interrogation in the witness wing of the Nuremberg prison. On the witness stand, Höss confirmed that the affidavit was true and that he had signed it voluntarily. When asked if he understood the English of the affidavit, Höss declared that he understood 'English as it is written above,' that 'the above

statements are true,' and that 'this declaration in made by me voluntarily and without compulsion.'"

The argument is a little naïve. First of all, the "first confession," too, which even van Pelt acknowledges as having been obtained under torture, is at its end given the blessing of authenticity and veracity (NO-1210):

"I have read the above account and confirm that it is corresponding to my own statement and that it is the pure truth."

But later Höss was to state that he had signed this document without even knowing what it contained. This means that assurances of this fact have only a purely formal value and guarantee in no way the authenticity and veracity of the declarations they refer to. Secondly I note that the declaration made under oath on April 5, 1946, drawn up, according to van Pelt, "after a few days of civilized interrogation," contains all those historical absurdities which I have analyzed above, the same that we already find in the "first confession," which means simply that both of them are false. Should we believe that Höss lied himself onto the gallows "voluntarily and without compulsion"?

Elsewhere in his book van Pelt admits that "then, on March 11, 1946, everything changed: British soldiers treated Höss roughly" (p. 250). In his note 64 (p. 525) he refers us to a page in the proceedings of the Eichmann trial at Jerusalem in which there is the following reply by Höss during his Cracow trial (State of Israel, p. 1310):

"When I was interrogated for the first time in the British Zone, those examining me said to me, all the time, that five – six – seven million people must have died in the gas chambers; all the time they bombarded me with huge numbers such as these, and I was obliged to provide some data, in order to establish how many were put to death in the gas chambers, and the interrogators told me that there must have been at least three million. Under the suggestive influence of these large figures, I arrived at the total of three million. But I was relying on the fact that I could not mention any other number – I always said this – namely that I was unable to mention any figure other than the one which I have now arrived at, and that is two and a half million."

This passage is highly significant. It confirms that the British interrogators already had their propagandistic "truth" to which Höss had to subscribe. After the initial treatment, Höss became "cooperative" and "confessed" to the most glaring absurdities: that Himmler had already

ordered the extermination of the Jews in June 1941, that the Birkenau camp had been built for the implementation of such a purpose, that all the Birkenau crematoria had been built with that purpose in mind, that he had visited Treblinka in 1941, that two and a half million people had been gassed at Auschwitz, that the Birkenau crematoria had had a daily capacity of 7,000 corpses, and so on, and so on.[633] Torture or no torture, one thing is certain: Höss's statements remain false and contradictory.

[633] Pressac himself recognizes that "Höss, in spite of his important part in the "Final Solution" can no longer be considered as a reliable witness on the subject of dates and figures." 1993, note 132, p. 103.

Part Four:
Van Pelt's Technical and Historical Errors

12. Van Pelt and the Crematorium Ovens of Auschwitz

12.1. Van Pelt's Competence Regarding Cremations

Referring to the debates in the Irving-Lipstadt trial, van Pelt writes (2002, p. 383):

> *"It is important to note that, during cross-examination, Leuchter had to admit that he had no expert knowledge of crematories."*

Yet in his own statement regarding his qualifications as author of his report on Auschwitz he does not mention any "expert knowledge of crematories" either (1999, p. 3). What is more, in the bulging bibliography of his text he lists only *a single book* on cremations which, moreover, came out in 1994![634] Hence, if Leuchter's conjectures about the crematorium ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau were inacceptable because Leuchter was not a certified "expert," this also goes for van Pelt's conjectures during the Irving-Lipstadt proceedings. He has, however, pronounced himself on this subject with authority – incredibly even unchallenged by justice Gray – as if he indeed had "expert knowledge." What we must do now is to examine the whole matter in detail.

Whatever van Pelt knows about the technical problems of the crematorium ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau (duration of the cremation process, fuel consumption, design and operation of the equipment) is founded almost exclusively on Tauber's deposition before judge Sehn, to which in fact he devotes several pages based on the English translation published by Pressac (1989, pp. 189-205). Although this deposition, as I have already explained, makes up the backbone of the argumentative structure of his book, van Pelt has not taken the trouble to look at the original Polish text.

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[634] Van Pelt 2002, p. 544. The book is Iserson 1994. My study *I forni crematori di Auschwitz. Studio storico-tecnico con la collaborazione del dott. ing. Franco Deana* is based, among othes, on 250 specialized works (including patents) listed in the bibliography, more than 80 of which are included in the Bibliography of this present work.

The detailed analysis of Tauber's testimony which I have set out above was aimed above all at van Pelt's assertion that the revisionists "preferred to bury it in silence" and – contradicting himself – that they based themselves on an insignificant point "to refute the validity of the whole of Tauber's testimony." The above analysis demonstrates that the testimony contains historical "contradictions" and technical "allegations" which are not only "improbable" but downright absurd. It shows that van Pelt's opinion of Tauber's testimony as allegedly possessing "highest evidentiary value" is pathetically mistaken.

On the other hand, the fact that Tauber's technical absurdities should have been "largely corroborated by the contemporary testimonies of Jankowski and Dragon and by the later memoirs of Filip Müller" (van Pelt 2002, p. 205) and that "Tauber's account was confirmed at that same time by SS man Pery Broad" (*ibid*., p. 190) is only making things worse, because we have here not a "convergence of *proof*" but of *absurdities*, hence a simple "convergence of lies" (see chapter 8.8.7.).

As far as his argumentative method is concerned, van Pelt creates a purely fictitious "convergence of proof" which starts out from the ZBL letter dated June 28, 1943. It involves on the one hand Tauber's testimony itself and on the other a "technical" expert opinion from 1985 and eventually reaches the erroneous conclusion that these three elements of proof are mutually confirmative.

12.2. Cremation Capacity of the Birkenau Crematoria

12.2.1. The *Zentralbauleitung* Letter of June 28, 1943

Let us begin with the ZBL letter. Van Pelt writes in this respect (2002, p. 344):

> *"Two questions must be asked before we continue. First, is there any reason to doubt the authenticity of this letter, and, second, are the figures credible?"*

On the origin of the document, referring to the court debates, van Pelt explains that it "was an exercise in general accounting, reminding the Court that the letter went back to a request which had been made early in January 1943, when Kommandant Höss requested an accounting of total cremation capacity in the camp" (*ibid*., p. 480). This assertion is completely unfounded. On January 29, 1943, Bischoff met the camp commander and summarized the three points discussed at the

meeting in a "note" ("*Vermerk*") the following day. Under item 2 he writes i.a. the following:[635]

> *"The commander wishes* [to receive] *a report (Bericht) on the output of all crematoria."*

It is clear that the words "*the commander wishes*" stand for "the commander has ordered," and there can thus be no doubt that Bischoff asked for such a "report on the output of all crematoria" to be drawn up and sent to Höss. But, in keeping with office practice, such a report should have mentioned as "reference" ("*Bezug*") the subject and the file number of the above letter (Bftgb. Nr. 22213/43Er/L.), whereas the letter of June 28, 1943, does not give a reference ("*Bezug: ohne*"). Furthermore, the letter was written not only five months after Höss's request, but the subject mentioned was "*Fertigstellung d. Krematoriums III*" (completion of Crematorium III). This raises problems which van Pelt, in his stupendous ignorance of history, is not even aware of. The "*Fertigstellung*" (completion) of a *Bauwerk* was an official communication to SS-WVHA in keeping with a precise order from Kammler dated April 6, 1943, which specified:[636]

> *"To allow the evaluation of the activity of construction services and to keep track of the construction dates ordered, it is absolutely essential that all services attached* [to this office] *report immediately on the completion of a building or a construction project. I therefore order the following: 1) after completion of a building and/or its start-up, a transaction meeting must be held with the administrative office concerned. The result of this transaction must be recorded in a document* […]*."*

What Kammler's order entailed was thus the "*Meldung der Fertigstellung*" (report on completion) of a building containing the number of the letter by which the corresponding "transaction document" was transmitted to "*Kommandantur des K.L. Auschwitz*." This report was limited to a few lines, as in the following example:[637]

> *"*[I] *report the completion of SS sickbay barrack BW 17C-4. The building has been handed over to the Kommandantur of K.L. Auschwitz (Bftgb.Nr. 29647/43/Ki/Go)."*

[635] RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 195.
[636] Letter from Kammler dated April 6, 1943 to all Bauinspektionen and Baugruppen. WAPL, Zentralbauleitung, 54, p. 68.
[637] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 269.

A "List of buildings previously handed over to garrison administration"[638] drawn up in accordance with Kammler's order lists the reports concerning the four Birkenau crematoria, which indicate i.a. the covering letter for the "*Übergabeverhandlung*," the building number, the date of hand-over, and a record of "*Meldung an* (report to) *Amtsgruppenchef C*" of SS-WVHA. For Crematorium III the following data have been recorded:

- number of letter of transmittal of "*Übergabeverhandlung*": 31370/43/Ki/Go, identical to that of the original letter;[639]
- number of "*Meldung an Amtsgruppenchef C*": 31550/43/Ja/We,[640] identical to that of Bischoff's letter dated June 28, 1943.

In the document under discussion, however, the most essential number of the letter of transmittal concerning the "*Übergabeverhandlung*" is missing, as is the number of the *Bauwerk* (30a). Instead we have here an entry – the "*Leistung"* (output) of the crematoria – which is out of place because the "*Meldung der Fertigstellung*" was a purely formal act relating to the completion of a *Bauwerk* and not to its technical characteristics. As I have documented elsewhere (2000, pp. 50-56), these remarks shed light on the origin and the significance of this document, but they have no bearing on its authenticity. I will therefore move on right away to the second question raised by van Pelt, "whether the figures are right" (2002, unless stated otherwise, p. 344). For him the figures are obviously right. We will look at what he has to offer in the way of proof. He stresses, first of all, that the cremation capacity of the crematoria at Birkenau mentioned in the above letter was 96 corpses per day and 4 corpses per hour and muffle and goes on to say (p. 345):

> *"The question is now if Auschwitz Crematoria 2, 3, 4 and 5 could have incinerated four corpses per muffle per hour. If one followed normal civilian practice, in which it is absolutely essential to preserve the identity of the remains from the beginning of incineration to the final gathering of the ashes, Bischoff's figures would indeed be absurd. It would be impossible to insert a body in the muffle, cremate it, and remove the remaining bones and ashes within fifteen minutes."*

[638] APMO, BW 30/25, p. 14
[639] Letter by Bischoff dated June 23, 1943, subject: "Übergabe des BW K.G.L. 30a – Krematorium III." RGVA, 502-2-54, p. 21.
[640] Because of a copying error there is "We" instad of "Ne" in the list.

Actually, the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau did allow, thanks to their design, "to preserve the identity of the remains from the beginning of incineration to the final gathering of the ashes." The order by *SS-Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz to Topf for 500 "*Aschekapseln*" (ash capsules) and "Schamottemarken" (refractory markers) is proof of this (see chapter 8.7.2.). As explained above, it happened during continuous operation that two bodies were in the muffle at the same time, but in two distinct phases of their cremation: i.e. the first corpse was in the ash container undergoing post-combustion, whereas the second one was in the muffle itself in the desiccation phase. When the post-combustion of these residues was over (this took some 20 minutes according to the corresponding instructions provided by Topf), the evaporation of water from the corpse in the muffle above was still going on. Van Pelt continues (p. 345):

> *"But the situation changes radically when the identity of the remains ceases to be important. First of all, if the size of the muffle permits, it becomes possible to insert more than one corpse at the same time."*

This assertion is technical nonsense. Only an ignoramus could seriously believe that all it took to raise the cremation capacity was to load more corpses into one muffle. In chapter 8.7.2. I have shown that, if an incineration of several corpses in one muffle had been possible at all, the result in the *best* of cases would have been an increase in the duration of the cremation process and in the consumption of coke directly proportional to the number of corpses loaded into the muffle.

Let us return to van Pelt and his arguments (*ibid*.):

> *"Furthermore, it becomes feasible to create something of a continuous process, in which, after initial heating of the incinerators, the burner can be turned off, thus making full use of the phenomenon that at the right temperature the body will combust and consume itself without any further application of an external source of energy."*

Here van Pelt repeats Tauber's technical absurdities which I have already refuted in chapter 10.2.8. I merely want to add that in his gross technical ignorance van Pelt speaks of a "burner" (instead of a gasifier or gas-producer) that can simply be turned off, as if the Topf ovens were operating with gas or naphtha burners!

Van Pelt goes on to make full use of his "expert" (*ibid*.):

"In his testimony, Tauber gave an extensive description of the incineration procedures and implicitly confirmed the validity of Bischoff's figures."

After having brought forth some of the technical absurdities of his witness (a normal load of four or five corpses per muffle, a duration of five to seven minutes specified by the SS!) van Pelt observes (p. 348):

"According to Tauber's testimony, the incinerators of Crematorium 2 should have burned, according to the regulations, (15×2×3) = 90 bodies per hour. This would mean that the official daily capacity of 1,440 would be reached in 16 hours of operation (90×16 = 1,440)."

Here van Pelt attributes more credence to the witness than to the document itself! He would no doubt be very happy to learn that, according to Tauber's Soviet testimony (cremation of four to five corpses in 20-25 minutes in Crematoria II and III), the five triple-muffle ovens could have burned 180 corpses per hour, and thus the ZBL figures could have been attained in eight hours of operation per day (180×8 = 1,440)! Van Pelt's method is truly mindboggling: to verify whether a document contains data that are *technically* acceptable, van Pelt does not take recourse to *technical* documents, but brings in a witness, unfailingly with a legion of confirmations. In this specific case it is Rudolf Höss. In fact he quotes the assertions of the former commander of Auschwitz who allots 2,000 cremations "in twenty-four hours" to Crematoria II and III and 1,500, again "in twenty-four hours" to Crematoria IV and V (p. 348). We have seen in chapter 11 what these statements are worth.

12.2.2. The Project of the Fritz Sander Oven

Still, there is at least one document that van Pelt does bring in. He writes (*ibid*.):

"A final indication that the testimony of Tauber and Höss may be trusted, and that the Topf oven had a capacity in the range listed by Bischoff, can be found in the patent application T 58240 Kl. 24 for a 'Continuous Operation Corpse Incineration Furnace for Intensive Use,' filed by Topf on November 5, 1942."

On the following page he quotes from "an engineering assessment" established in 1985 by the "engineers Klaus and Christel Kunz" in collaboration with Rolf Decker, "manager of incinerator production at the Ruppmann company in Stuttgart." Before going into a discussion of this

expert opinion, some explanations concerning this project are in order. On October 26, 1942, the Topf chief engineer Fritz Sander wrote a patent application for a "Continuously operating corpse cremation oven for mass applications," which he then rewrote on November 4, 1942. The stamp "PA" (*Patent Anmeldung*, patent application) is dated November 5. The patent application opens with the following words:

> *"In the gathering camps in the occupied territories in the East with their high mortality rate, as they are affected by the war and its consequences, it has become impossible to bury the great number of deceased inmates. This is the result of both the lack of space and staff and the direct and indirect danger to the immediate and farther surroundings caused by the burial of the victims of various infectious diseases. There is therefore a need to quickly, safely, and hygienically dispose of the constantly great number of corpses."*

He then continued that in this case one could not act in accordance with the legal dispositions in force in the Reich, but that it was necessary to cremate several bodies together at the same time and that during the entire process the flames and the combustion products from the hearth would strike the corpses directly in such a way that one could not properly speak of *cremation* but only of *burning* of the corpses. Sander then continues (p. 349):

> *"To realize such corpse burning – following the principles sketched above – a number of multi-muffle ovens were installed in some of those camps, which according to their design are loaded and operated periodically. Because of this these ovens do not fully satisfy, because the burning does not proceed quickly enough to dispose in the shortest possible time of the great number of corpses that are constantly presented."*

The "multi-muffle ovens" clearly designate the Topf ovens having two, three and four muffles which already existed at Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Mogilev. In practice Sander recognized that these ovens were unsatisfactory, because the cremation was too slow. The reference to the "occupied territories in the East " and to "the victims of various infectious diseases" concerned no doubt the concentration camps, Auschwitz in particular, where the mortality was extremely high due to the typhus epidemic which ravaged these camps at that time.

The oven planned by Sander was nothing but an adaptation of the Topf "*Müll-Verbrennungsofen MV*" (garbage incineration furnace),[641] the design of which was practically a carbon copy of the Kori "Furnace with double incineration chambers" (Kori 1930s), whereas the idea of a cylindrical and vertical combustion chamber had been taken from Adolf Marsch's patent.[642] Described in a simplifying manner, the device consisted of a cylindrical vertical combustion chamber with refractory lining; it contained three grid-like slides going down in zigzag fashion. At the base of the oven, away from the combustion chamber, there was a large gasifier linked to the chamber via an opening. At the top there was the loading door through which the corpses were pushed on to the first slide. Once inside the oven, the corpses slid gradually down over the slides under the effect of gravity and were struck by the products of the gasifier along the way, dried out and burned. The ashes fell first on a grid located at the end of the last slide, from there through the openings of the grid into the ash container below, from which they could be removed through a suitable door. The fumes went out through an opening at the top of the oven.

The expert opinion quoted by van Pelt was compiled at the request of Klaus Kunz by Rolf Decker in his quality as "expert of corpse cremation."[643] To visualize the profound knowledge and the technical competence of this "expert," we note that in the drawing of the Sander oven he mistook the gasifier hearth grid for "air feed channels."[644] Decker's calculations are based on the assumption that each slide in the oven was 25 m long and could accommodate 50 corpses at a time, that the evaporation process for the corpse water took 15 minutes, which corresponds to "an incineration capacity of around 4,800 corpses per 24 hours" (p. 349), and that at the level of the second slide the temperature was 1,000°C.[645]

Here now is van Pelt's incredible comment (p. 350):

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[641] J.A. Topf & Söhne, Erfurt, Topf Abfall-Vernichtungs-Ofen (leaflet from 1940).

[642] Deutsches Reich. Reichspatentamt. Patentschrift Nr. 331628. Klasse 24d. Ausgegeben am 11. Januar 1921. Adolf Marsch in Gera, Reuss. Schachtofen zur gleichzeitigen Einäscherung einer grösseren Anzahl von Menschenleichen oder Tierkadavern. Patentiert im Deutschen Reiche vom 30. Sept. 1915 ab.

[643] APMO, Akta ZBL BW 30/44, p. 27, "Internal memo" (Notatka służbowa) dated May 2, 1985.

[644] APMO, Akta ZBL BW 30/44, p. 31, "Luftzuführungskanäle," caption by R. Decker of drawing by F. Sander.

[645] APMO, Akta ZBL BW 30/44, pp. 32-33, "report" by Rolf Decker.

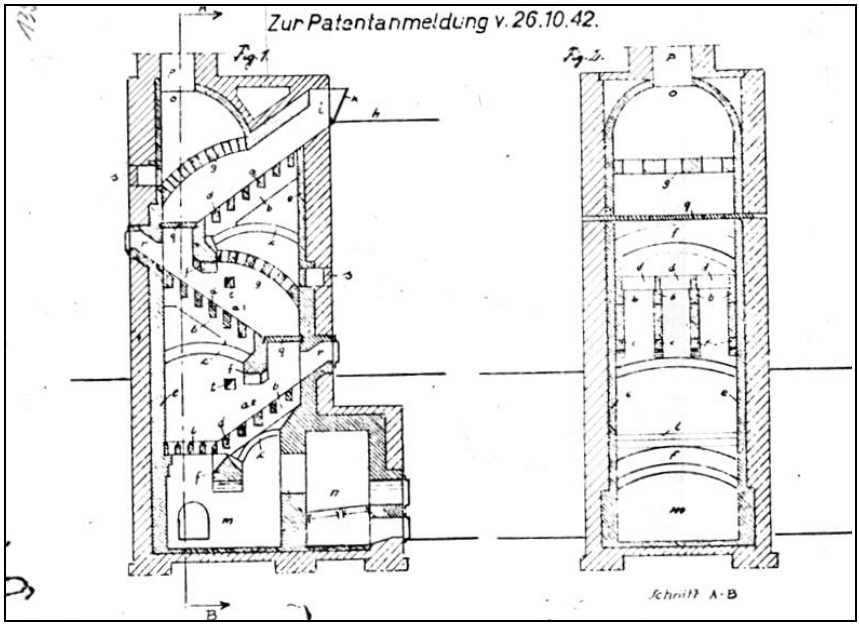

Illustration 1: Patent drawing without dimensions by Topf chief engineer Fritz Sander of October 26, 1942, for a "Continuously operating corpse cremation oven for mass applications." (Pressac 1989, p. 101)

> *"The report ended with the assertion that after some initial experience it should be possible to increase the initial load from 50 to 100 corpses. This would increase the loading rhythm from every 15 to every 20 minutes, and as a result the daily capacity would increase from (50×60/15×24) = 4,800 corpses to, at least theoretically, (100×40/20×24) = 7,200 corpses.*
>
> *It is unclear whether the incineration would ever have worked. What is important, however, is that both the text of the patent application and the design of the incinerator make the incineration process described in Tauber's testimony not merely plausible but, indeed, probable."*

Let us begin with the project. The corresponding drawing (see Illustration 1) contains no dimensions but is drawn to scale, and all parts are in their proper proportions. If the three inclined planes were 25 m long, as Decker claims, then the oven would have been 100 m high and 40 m wide! Not only that, but the opening for the introduction of the corpses would have been over 7 m high! Pressac, speaking of Sander's oven, says (1989, p. 101):

"The dimensions of the furnace are lacking, but it may be estimated as being about 2 m wide, 2.5 m deep at the top and 3 m at the base and 6 m high."

Actually, more or less similar measurements can be deduced from the height of the corpse loading door, which certainly would not have measured 7 m in height, but at the most had the dimension of a door into a normal muffle (60 cm), because the corpses had to be introduced by rolling them in from the floor of the access level. Then each slide would have been about 3.5 m long and could have accommodated 10 corpses, so that altogether the oven would have held about 30 corpses, distributed in the following way from the bottom up:

- First slide: 10 corpses in incineration
- Second slide: 10 corpses in main combustion phase
- Third slide: 10 corpses in desiccation

Under practical conditions the oven would have been able to handle a load of 30 corpses every two hours, or 360 over 24 hours, the theoretical capacity of five triple-muffle ovens.

The "expert" assumes moreover a duration of 15 minutes for the desiccation phase, an assumption going against all practical experience, which instead give us twice that duration. The assumption of a temperature of 1,000°C for this kind of furnace is absolutely off the track, both because of the enormous quantity of heat needed for the vaporization of the corpse water and because of the inevitably enormous amount of excess air.

Before we examine van Pelt's conclusions, I would like to point out that he did not really understand what Decker was saying in his report. The latter wrote that if a double layer of corpses had been placed on the slides, the vaporization phase would have lengthened by only five minutes, going from 15 to 20 minutes (but this is nothing but a faulty conjecture anyway). Van Pelt, for his part, reads that this concerned the "loading rhythm."

Even if we disregard Decker's foolish calculations, van Pelt's conclusion still appears absurd: how can anyone claim that a device designed explicitly "for continuous operation" consisting of three slides, over which the corpses zigzag downwards gradually under the influence of gravity, could make Tauber's "incineration process… probable," a process in a completely different kind of oven that was explicitly designed for individual cremations with the desiccation and the main combustion occurring in a small muffle?

In any case, while Sander's oven did offer a "continuous process," it was certainly not one "without any further application of an external source of energy" – an absurdity which, for obvious reasons, does not appear in the patent application. As I have already pointed out in chapter 9.6.3. and will discuss further in chapter 12.6., there existed no model of a crematorium oven in the 1940s which would have allowed continual cremations without an external heat supply.

Later van Pelt concludes to have established the "credibility of the document" in this manner (p. 386):

> *"A wartime German document states that the daily incineration capacity of the crematoria came close to 4,500 corpses per day, two independent testimonies corroborate this range of cremation capacity, and a wartime patent application by the makers of the ovens corroborates the incineration procedure described in these testimonies."*

Actually, all of van Pelt's assertions are wrong, because the data concerning the cremation capacity in the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943, as well as Tauber's respective utterances, Decker's calculations concerning the Sander oven, and the idea of a continuous cremation without additional supply of heat are technically absurd. Therefore, all the "convergent" testimonies cited by van Pelt "confirm" something technically absurd and are thus necessarily wrong.

12.3. Kurt Prüfer's Note of September 8, 1942

Referring to the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943, van Pelt writes (p. 350):

> *"The only possible challenge to Bischoff's figure is a recently discovered note from Topf engineer Kurt Prüfer to the SS, dated September 8, 1942. Prüfer calculated the daily incineration capacity of the three double-muffle ovens of Crematorium 1 as 250 corpses, the five triple-muffle ovens of Crematoria 2 and 3 as 800 corpses each, and the eight-muffle ovens of Crematoria 4 and 5 as 400 corpses each. In short, according to Prüfer, the daily incineration capacity was to be 2,650 corpses, or 55 percent of Bischoff's number. While much lower than the official daily capacity of 4,756 corpses per day, the crematoria would still have been able to easily incinerate the corpses of 1.1 million people who were killed in Auschwitz. (If Prüfer's conservative estimate was right, and if we*

disregard the use of incineration pyres, the total incineration capacity of the crematoria over the period of their existence would have been 1.4 million corpses.)

When considering Prüfer's figures, it must be remembered that, because the contracts were already signed, it was in his interest to provide very conservative numbers, because the Topf firm was to be accountable for the functioning of the ovens."

Van Pelt mentions the archive reference number ("AEMS, file 241"; note 100, p. 531), but it is clear that he did not know the original text of the document,[646] which itself became known only in December 2004. The translation is as follows:[647]

"TOPF To J.A. TOPF UND SÖHNE

Erfurt, September 8, 1942
Department D IV
Our reference: D IV/Prf./hes

Matter: Reichsführer SS. Berlin-Lichterfelde-West
Re: Auschwitz crematorium

Confidential! Secret!

8.9.42

Obersturmführer Krone called and states that he has been summoned by Brigadeführer Kämmer to report on his inspection of the Auschwitz crematorium from which he returned yesterday. He [says that he] *did not understand the Auschwitz installation and therefore wanted to find out how many muffles are presently in operation there and how many ovens with muffles we are presently erecting there and have yet to supply.*

I informed him that at present 3 pcs. of double-muffles are in operation with a capacity of 250 per day. Furthermore, 5 pcs. triple-muffle ovens with a daily capacity of 800 are now under construction. Today and in a few days the 2 pcs. 8-muffle ovens deviated from Mogilev with a capacity of 800 per day each will be shipped.

Mr. K. said that this number of muffles is not yet sufficient; we should supply additional ovens most rapidly. It is therefore indicated that I should come to Berlin on Thursday morning to discuss further

[646] He takes as a basis Pressac 1998, in which there is an erroneous account of the document identical to that presented by van Pelt.
[647] http://veritas3.holocaust-history.org/auschwitz/topf/

shipments with Mr. K. I am to take along documents concerning Auschwitz to squelch the urgent calls once and for all.

I have promised the Thursday visit."

We must keep in mind that the five triple-muffle ovens mentioned in the document were those for Crematorium II, which was then under construction, whereas the "2 pcs. 8-muffle ovens" were installed later, one in Crematorium IV, the other in Crematorium V at Birkenau. Let me also state that the significance which van Pelt attributes to the figures of the document ("very conservative" because "the contracts were already signed") is historically unfounded. Actually, "the contracts" between ZBL and Topf merely covered the crematorium equipment, as we can clearly read in the Topf letter addressed to (then) *Bauleitung* at Auschwitz on November 4, 1941:[648]

"We acknowledge with many thanks your order for the supply of:

– 5 Topf crematorium ovens with 3 muffles and blower

– 2 coffin introduction devices with rails for the ovens

– 3 Topf forced-draft devices in suction for the flue ducts.

We accept your order on the basis of our cost estimate as attached and of your conditions for a total price of 51,237 Reichsmarks."

This means that there was in fact no "contract" concerning the cremation capacity of a crematorium oven. Van Pelt takes into consideration all four of the Birkenau crematoria, whereas the original document does not actually speak of Crematorium III, only – indirectly – of Crematorium II. Moreover, and this is even more serious, the capacity which the document ascribes – again indirectly – to Crematoria IV and V is not 400 but 800 corpses per day each. Van Pelt does so in spite of the fact that the text does not permit any doubt in this respect, speaking as it does of "2 pcs. 8-muffle ovens […] with a capacity of 800 per day each" and can only mean that *each one* of the two double-muffle ovens – and hence *each one* of the future Crematoria IV and V – could cremate 800 corpses per day. In practice, van Pelt calculates:

Crema I II III IV V

250 + 800 + 800 + 400 + 400 = 2,650 for all crematoria

whereas the original document says:

Crema I II IV V

250 + 800 + 800 + 800 = 2,650 for all crematoria

[648] RGVA, 502-313, p. 81.

This document raises devastating contradictions in van Pelt's argumentation. The most serious one is that the cremation capacity it mentions for the individual installations is in absolute disagreement with the capacities given in the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943. How can one explain that the capacity of fifteen muffles (those of the future Crematorium II) of this letter, as compared to Prüfer's internal memo, goes up from 800 to 1,440 corpses per day, an increase of 73%, whereas the capacity of the eight muffles (those of the future Crematoria IV and V) drops from 800 to 776? This fact is so inexplicable that Pressac, van Pelt's source, has falsified the figures, writing 400 instead of 800, and it is surely not without good reason that he never wanted to publish the document in question (Pressac 1998, p. 41).

Prüfer's memo contains another, even more mysterious contradiction: it attributes to the eight muffles of the future Crematoria IV and V the same cremation capacity as to the fifteen muffles of the future Crematorium II: 800 corpses per day. It follows that the 8-muffle oven had a cremation capacity per muffle nearly twice that of the five triple-muffle ovens (800÷8 =) 100 against (800÷15 =) 53 corpses per day! This is absurd on two counts, not only on account of the figures as such, but also because of the fact that the 8-muffle oven, due to its design (a single gasifier for two muffles, a single smoke trap for four muffles, absence of blowers) was less efficient per muffle than the triple-muffle oven. If Prüfer really had an "interest to provide very conservative numbers," why would he give a figure for the 8-muffle oven that was actually higher than the one in the ZBL letter dated June 28, 1943? Van Pelt's explanations are therefore absolutely inconsistent. His overall figures are nonsensical as well: the cremation of 1,400,000 corpses would actually correspond to (1,400,000÷2,650=) 528 days of continuous cremation, day and night, 24 hours per day![649] Here van Pelt carefully ignores Höss's statement quoted by himself that "After eight to ten hours [weeks] of operation the crematory were unfit for further use" and that "It was impossible to operate them continuously." Besides, van Pelt forgets that Crematorium I stopped its operation on July 17, 1943. Hence, his computations, based on the figure of 2,650, cover actually a period of 15 months during which this crematorium was out of service – July 1943 through October 1944, i.e. 112,500 fictitious cremations.

[649] Argument used by F. Piper in 2003 in an exchange with F. Meyer. See Mattogno 2004n, p. 133.

In reality, as we have seen in chapter 8.8.1, if we do this computation using actual dates and data, we arrive at a theoretical result of 316,368 corpses, which does not take into account, though, the need for at least three complete replacements of the refractory lining of all 46 muffles of the crematoria in such a case. Such a replacement is, however, not documented for even a single muffle.

On September 8, 1942, when the Topf memo in question was written, the Birkenau crematoria did not yet exist. Around August 23, 1942, the first triple-muffle oven went into operation at the Buchenwald crematorium; it was practically identical to those installed at Crematoria II and III of Birkenau. However, at Buchenwald the mortality between August 23 and September 8 stood at an average of 10 deaths per day,[650] and the cremation of (800÷5 ovens =) 160 corpses per day in one triple-muffle oven thus could not, in any case, be the result of an experimental use of this oven (to determine its practical capacity), but only an extrapolation.

We must also keep in mind that one of the two ovens at Buchenwald was designed in such a way as to allow naphtha-heating as well and thus had a higher capacity than the other, which was only built for coke. It is not known, though, which one of the two was built first. One could thus hypothesize on an extrapolation of the results achieved with the naphtha-fired oven, but even that hypothesis would have been technically unfounded. Finally, the cremation lists of the Ignis-Hüttenbau ovens of the Theresienstadt crematorium prove that the cremation (or, more precisely, the initial phase of the cremation) of one corpse took about 35 minutes, even though it actually continued for another 20-25 minutes directly in front of the burner, and this

- in spite of their far more efficient system which employed naphtha rather than coke;
- in spite of the excellent design of their combustion air feeding system (derived from the civilian Volckmann-Ludwig oven), against which the air-feed to the Topf ovens was crude and primitive;
- in spite of their enormous muffle permitting a highly efficient cremation which the Topf ovens could never hope to be able to reach;
- in spite of the forced-draft devices which the Birkenau ovens lacked.

This capacity corresponds to a theoretical cremation capacity of 41 corpses per 24 hours or 615 corpses per day in 15 muffles. Therefore it

[650] At Buchenwald, 335 detainees died between August 3 and 30, and 203 between August 31 and September 27. Internationales Lagerkomitee, p. 85.

is *a fortiori* impossible that the triple-muffle oven at Birkenau with its necessarily lower cremation capacity could have permitted (160÷3 =) 53 cremations per muffle and day, or that the 8-muffle furnace could have handled even (800÷80 =) 100 cremations per day in one muffle.

In conclusion, then, we may say that Prüfer's note of September 8, 1942, does not contain real data. At best it expresses unrealistic expectations for the five triple-muffle ovens and inexplicably absurd figures for the two 8-muffle ovens.

12.4. Coke Consumption for One Cremation

Let us now turn to the question of coke consumption in the crematorium ovens. As we have seen in chapter 8.5.4. and 9.4., civilian employee Jährling's *Aktenvermerk* of March 17, 1943, speaks of a coke consumption "*bei Dauerbetrieb*" of 2,800 kg in 12 hours for Crematoria II and III and of 1,120 for Crematoria IV and V, a total of 7,840 kilograms.

Van Pelt, in a brief paragraph entitled "How many Bodies Could Be Incinerated with 760 Tons of Coke in the Auschwitz Crematoria?" computes (erroneously) that this corresponded to an hourly consumption of (7,840÷12 =) 654.3 (actually 653.3) kilograms. He then goes on to say (p. 122):

> *"the capacity of the crematoria was calculated on a 24-hour basis as being 1,440 for Crematoria 2 and 3 and 756 for Crematoria 4 and 5, or ([1,440+1,440+756+756]÷24) = 183 corpses per hour. This implies that according to Jährling, on average one needs (654.3÷183) = 3.5 kg coke to incinerate one corpse."*

The reference is to the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943, in which, though, the capacity assigned to Crematoria IV and V was not 756 but 768 per 24 hours; the correct computation should thus have been ([1,440+1,440+768+768]÷24 =) 184 corpses per hour and (653.3÷184 =) 3.55 kg of coke per corpse.

This result is one the most evident demonstrations that the above figures are technically absurd. As explained in chapter 8.5.3., the coke consumption for the cremation of one corpse of average of average emaciation stood at about 19 kg in the triple-muffle oven and at about 14 kg in the 8-muffle oven, the weighted average for the four crematoria came to about 17.3 kg in continuous operation.

This value is even lower, not only than that of the average consumption for the H. Kori ovens which needed about 25 kg of coke for one cremation, but also lower yet than that of the best incinerator for slaughter-houses – as explained in chapter 8.7.2 – where 900 kg of organic substance could be incinerated in 13 and a half hours with 300 kg of hard coal; this is the equivalent of the cremation of 13 corpses of 70 kg in an average duration of 62 minutes with an average fuel consumption of (300÷13 =) 23 kilograms.

To claim that one cremation would have required 3.55 kg of coke on average is thus technical nonsense. But then again, nothing would probably appear nonsensical to someone who believes seriously in the autocombustion of corpses!

12.5. Number of Corpses Cremated with the Coke Delivered

Van Pelt then hurries on with a "historical" exploitation of this technical absurdity and writes (p. 122):

> *"As coke delivery in 1943 was around 844 tons, this would have allowed for the incineration of 241,000 bodies. According to Piper's calculations based on transport lists, around 250,000 people died in Auschwitz in 1943."*

Hence 844,000 kg of coke divided by 3.5 kg of coke per corpse equals ca. 241,000 cremated corpses! Here we really find ourselves facing a "convergence of proof." Actually, as we have seen in chapter 8.8.4., during the period in 1943 for which it makes sense to do this kind of computation, the amount of coke delivered was sufficient only for the roughly 13,000 corpses of registered detainees which were indeed cremated at Birkenau. Besides, in 1943 the Birkenau crematoria received only 704.5 tons and not 844 tons of coke. With reference to the legal debate, van Pelt adds (p. 462):

> *"In Court I stated that on the basis of wartime German documents, 'we can calculate the amount of coke which is going to be used per corpse – which is not a happy calculation, I must say – but the bottom line is you came to three-and-a-half kilo of coke per corpse.' Irving responded with scorn: 'Do you really, sincerely believe that you can burn one corpse with enough coke that you could fit in one of these water bottles, is that what you are saying?' I responded that German documents had led me to that conclusion."*

Irving's question was perfectly legitimate: did van Pelt "really" and "sincerely" believe that a corpse could be cremated in the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau with 3.5 kg of coke? This question can be answered affirmatively.

As I have exposed in chapter 8.6.4., the fundamental parameter which I have used to compute the coke requirements of the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau is the documented consumption of the double-muffle Topf oven at KL Gusen. In my reply to Zimmermann's criticism, which appeared on the internet in the year 2000,[651] I have discussed the matter of the Gusen oven in detail (2005f, pp. 123-142), presenting a refutation of Zimmermann's heat-technological aberrations. I have summarized the coke consumption as a function of the number of cremations on the basis of known documents in Table 20.[652]

We see that during the period when the oven operated daily in a continual manner (October 31 to November 13) and cremated an average of 52 corpses per day, i.e. 26 corpses per muffle in about 18 hours of operation each, its average consumption of fuel was 30.6 kg of coke per corpse. From this practical result I have computed the consumption of the Topf ovens at Auschwitz-Birkenau for an average corpse, arriving at 28 kg (double-muffle oven), 19 kg (triple-muffle oven) and 14 kg (8-muffle oven). I have explained the procedure followed in chapter 8.5. How can this practical result be brought into agreement with van Pelt's average consumption of 3.5 kg of coke per corpse? Van Pelt has mentioned Zimmermann as one of his consultants and thanks him in the section "Preface and Acknowledgment" of his book, as has been stated above. The book was published in 2002, whereas my reply to Zimmermann with all the pertinent data had appeared on the internet two years earlier. One cannot imagine that Zimmermann and van Pelt did not discuss the absolutely essential question of the coke consumption at Gusen, and thus the only conclusion one may draw is that the two "experts" decided between them not to mention this point, which by itself would have demolished the whole argumentative structure of the "Pelt Report" of 1999.

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[651] *Supplementary Response to John C. Zimmerman on His "Body Disposal at Auschwitz."* Edited and copyrighted © MM by Russ Granata. Available at: http://vho.org/GB/c/CM/Risposta-new-eng.html

[652] Originally, the total consumption in the table was mistakenly given as 3,400 kg of coke and the average as 14.2 kg per corpse for the period of April 25 –May 25, 1941; cf. Mattogno 2005f, pp. 123-142. Here, data for the period of Sept. 26 – Nov. 31 have been added, which I had dealt with separately.

Table 20: Calculated Coke Consumption of KL Gusen in 1941				
period 1941 (day/month)	coke consumption [kg]	cremated corpses	cremations/day (average)	coke/corpse average [kg]
29/1–24/2	11,300	250	9	45.2
25/2–24/3	13,550	375	12	36.1
25/3–24/4	22,600	380	13	59.4
25/4–24/5	8,450	239	8	35.3
25/5–24/6	8,200	199	7	41.2
25/6–24/7	14,900	369	12	40.3
25/7–24/8	26,350	479	15	55.0
25/8–24/9	23,950	426	14	56.2
26/9–15/10	9,180	193	10	47.5
26/10–30/10	4,800	129	32	37.2
31/10–13/11	20,700	677	52	30.6

This means that van Pelt, at the time he wrote his book, could not "really" and "sincerely" have believed that it was possible to cremate a corpse in the Topf ovens at Auschwitz with a consumption of no more than 3.5 kg of coke.

12.6. Multiple Cremations

Van Pelt's entire argumentative structure on the subject of cremations and crematorium ovens is based on two false conjectures which he borrows from Tauber's testimony:

1. the simultaneous cremation of several corpses in one muffle which brought along an enormous reduction in the duration of the cremation;
2. the use of the heat produced by one corpse for the cremation of others which brought along an enormous reduction in coke consumption.

During the Irving trial the defendants' counsel Rampton, in his effort to "demolish" "Irving's challenge of the incineration capacity on the grounds that the coke delivered to Auschwitz would not have been sufficient to meet the required rate of incineration," expresses these false conjectures in the following words (van Pelt 2002, p. 485):

> *"As Professor van Pelt demonstrated, this challenge is demolished by two considerations which Mr Irving had evidently ignored: first, the procedure for incineration at Auschwitz involved the simultaneous incineration of up to four or five corpses* […] *in every muf-*

fle of the ovens; and, second, in consequence, the corpses themselves served as fuel for the oven […]*"*

As I have already explained, the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens did not allow the simultaneous cremation of several corpses in one muffle, if any kind of *economic advantage* was to be achieved. *If it had been possible at all*, the cremation of four or five corpses in one muffle at the same time would thus have brought about at least a four- to five-fold increase in the duration of the cremation process over the time needed for a single corpse.

As a basis for his conjecture van Pelt primarily makes use of Tauber's testimony and of the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943, interpreted – or rather, disfigured – to suit this testimony. However, in reply to Germar Rudolf's "Critique," van Pelt mentions also a practical item (p. 503, which had been used before by his advisor Keren and which I have already squarely refuted, see 2005f, pp. 190-194):

"In the case of multi-corpse incineration – that is, the illegal practice of reducing two or more corpses to ashes in the same oven – I found in Kenneth V. Iserson's standard work on corpse disposal, Death to Dust *(1994), that one California crematorium had to settle a suit by 25,000 people 'who claimed that their relatives' bodies have been cremated en masse, rather than separately. Another southern California firm* […] *routinely packed nine to fifteen bodies into each oven, which was about the size of the interior of a typical American sedan.' These cases suggested that Rudolf was wrong."*

This is just one more nonsensical argument. How can one seriously propose that the simultaneous cremation of several corpses in an ultramodern oven fired with gas or naphtha would "demonstrate" that in the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens the cremation of four or five corpses in one lot was possible with *economically advantageous* results? Van Pelt's argument becomes even more ludicrous as he indicates neither the duration nor the fuel consumption of these multiple cremations and thus skirts the essential question of *economy in terms of time and fuel*.

By way of a similar erroneous reasoning, van Pelt claims to "prove" that Tauber's absurd cremation system was "confirmed" by Sander's oven design. This brings us to van Pelt's other conjecture, namely that this system made use of the heat produced by one corpse for the cremation of the others. There was a heated discussion on this point during

the Irving trial. In spite of its length it is reproduced here, because it brings into good focus van Pelt's glaring technical ignorance:[653]

"A. (van Pelt): Now, if you challenge, if you challenge the coke use, I will have to bring up, and, I am sorry, I do not have the particular patent, but it is a little technical history. There is a specificity in the design of the ovens in Auschwitz which is, basically, that they worked with compressed – that air was blown into the muffle. Normally, what happens in these ovens is that…

Q. (Irving): The flame does not touch the body?

A. No, actually verbrennen [combustion] *did happen in the Auschwitz ovens; it was not simply incineration.*

Q. Well, they would self-combust? When they were raised to a certain temperature, they would self-combust?

A. That is the idea of a normal incineration. In Auschwitz, actually, the ovens – the difference between the ovens is that one element which is used in normal ovens is with a heat kind of regenerator in Auschwitz was replaced by compressed air which was blown into the oven. Now…

Q. Would this account for the drop of normal coke usage from 35 kilograms in the crematorium Gusen concentration camp per body to 3.5 in Auschwitz, in your opinion?

A. Yes, and I think the normal use for Gusen questions the normal use of what? For one, two, three, four bodies in a day at a certain moment very high intensity use. I just would like to quote here from a piece which John Claude Pressac wrote and I also worked on.

Q. Can I interrupt? I did not quite catch what you said about Gusen. What did you say was the normal rate in Gusen?

A. The normal rate, the question is what is normal rate? If you just fire the ovens in Auschwitz for one corpse, you probably need 300 kilos.

Q. In Gusen they were talking, if my memory of the document is correct, of the order of 100 bodies, or possibly 200.

A. If you bring the documents, we can discuss the documents.

Q. Well, Professor van Pelt, you were not quoting a document there. You were just stating a figure, speculating.

[653] Irving-Lipstadt trial, 9th day, January 25, 2000, pp. 149-152.

A. I am going to state a figure and it is from a patent. I am happy to show you the passage. The big issue in crematorium design is that you need to get the thing going, the oven going, and that takes a hell of a lot of energy. So, if you incinerate one body, and this is a document which is prepared for Dachau in 1939, to cremate one body in Dachau was 175 kilos of coke, far exceeding the 30 kilos. However, it says that, by the time you have started this incinerator, after you have incinerated a number of bodies, and I will quote the thing, 'If the cold room required 170 kilograms of coke to start up a new incineration, it needed only 100 kilo if it had been used the day before. The second and third incineration on the same […] *would not require any extra fuel, thanks to the compressed air.' Those that followed would call for only small amounts of extra energy.*

Q. Are you saying that for the cremations on the second and third day you would not have to put any coke into the machine at all? It would just kind of carry on?

A. No. If you start incinerating on the second day you can still use that heat that had built up from the first day. If you then insert extra bodies in the oven that same day, after the first one, you only need very little extra fuel.

Q. That is not what the document said. You said it needed none at all.

A. Then it says only little, the first, second and third, and then, as you continue, then only very limited amount of fuel.

Q. But of course they had more than just one furnace in Auschwitz. In each of these crematoria you are telling us they had five times three. So they did not have to fire them all up. They could just fire up one of them and keep it running?

A. But it seems that there were more bodies than one could take. We also have, of course, the patent application of Topf from late 1942, which actually operates on that whole principle.

Q. It was not used, was it?

A. No, but it was based on the experience gained. As it very literally says, it is based on the experience gained with the multi-muffle ovens used in the East.[654] *The document – I am happy to try to find it. I do not know where the patent application is."*

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654 Actually, Sander's patent application merely states that muffle ovens were unsatisfactory and not that the design of the oven was "based on the experience gained with the multi-muffle ovens used in the East." Cf. chapter 12.2.2.

Let us summarize all this.

1) The "specificity" of the Topf oven design for Auschwitz-Birkenau was "that they worked with compressed [*air*]," i.e. that they were equipped with a *Druckluftanlage*. But in the 1930s this "specificity" was a common feature of many ovens for crematoria, including the Topf ovens for gas and electric firing and, first and foremost, the Volckmann-Ludwig oven, where it had been perfected.

2) This "specificity" was incorporated only into the double and triple-muffle ovens, but not into the 8-muffle model installed in Crematoria IV and V; these did not have *Druckluftanlagen*. But in spite of this, according to the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943, they had exactly the same cremation capacity per muffle as the triple-muffle ovens; a quick calculation shows this:

- Triple-muffle oven: 1,440÷15 = 96 corpses per muffle in 24 hours.
- Eight-muffle oven: 768÷8 = 96 corpses per muffle in 24 hours.

But then, what was the use of the *Druckluftanlagen?*

3) The "regenerator" of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens "was replaced by compressed air." Van Pelt does not know what he says here. He copies Pressac's unfounded assertion that the blower "had allowed the recuperator to be dropped" (9.6.2.) adding one more mistake. The device fitted on the normal ovens was not a "regenerator" but a "recuperator," and even if the function was the same, the differences in design are noteworthy. In chapter 8.3.5. I have described the design and the functioning of the recuperator. The regenerator (*Regenerator*) was an intermittent heat exchanger consisting of a refractory brick structure containing a number of channels which connected the muffle to the flue duct, as in the recuperator. As opposed to the latter, however, in the regenerator all of the ducts were traversed alternately, downwards by the combustion gases coming from the gasifier and upwards by the combustion air. It did not have separate channels for the combustion gases and the combustion air. The regenerator had to be operated in a discontinuous manner, switching back and forth between heating and cooling phases. The double and triple-muffle Topf ovens had neither a regenerator nor a recuperator and were equipped with a blower (*Druckluftgebläse*) which fed *cold* air to the muffle. Thus, it makes no sense to state that a device feeding *hot* air was "replaced" by a *cold* air feeding device.

4) According to a document from "1939," "the second and third incineration on the same [*day*] would not require any extra fuel, thanks to

the compressed air." Reference is made here to the "Offer for a coke-fired cremation oven as per drawing attached"[511] made by the firm W. Müller Ingenieurbüro/Industrieofenbau at Allach near Munich on June 2, 1937 (and not 1939), and addressed to *Reichsführer-SS*, with which I have dealt in chapter 9.6.3. Here, too, van Pelt takes up a false argument by Keren which I have already refuted in detail (2005f, pp. 190-194). As far as the design is concerned, the oven of the firm W. Müller was structured in such a way that the combustion air was fed to the muffle by means of a blower through the grid bars made of refractory clay, hence from bottom to top. According to the supplier, with this system the quantity of air needed for the combustion of the corpse came close to the theoretical amount of combustion air, and it was on this that the presumed[655] saving of fuel[656] depended. Besides, the oven was provided with a hearth blower, which served to raise the capacity of the grid and thus the hourly availability of heat for the oven. While – according to the supplier – in the case of several cremations, consecutive cremations could be carried out "without or nearly without extra addition of fuel," it is also true that a wooden coffin of about 35 kg was planned for the cremation, which by itself is equivalent to about 21.5 kg of coke! (See chapter 9.6.3., item 3)

The story of cremations without fuel is a tale, against which even Kurt Prüfer, in times more peaceful, drew his sword: When engineer Hans Volckmann wrote in 1930 that the gas-heated oven conceived by himself and Karl Ludwig (the famous Volckmann-Ludwig oven, which became the most dangerous rival of the gas-heated Topf ovens) and which had been installed in the Hamburg-Ohlsdorf crematorium, cremated 3,500 corpses in seven months[657] with a total gas consumption of hardly 103 m³, Prüfer objected (Prüfer 1931, pp. 27-29):

> *"It is maintained that 3,500 cremations have been carried out at Hamburg with a total gas consumption of 100 m³* [103, to be exact]. *This is disputable, first of all because, according to statements made independently to me in Hamburg by two stokers who run the oven, normal gas consumption is 7 m³, perhaps even a little more.* […]

[655] I say "presumed" because experience teaches us that there is a great difference between theoretical statements or manufacturers' advertisements for the ovens and practice.

[656] The crematorium ovens functioned with an excess air coefficient of about 3 (= 3 times the theoretical air), and this was one of the inevitable reasons for the high consumption of these facilities..

[657] This figure is due to a printing error. The real figure was 2,500.

Should the assertions on cremation without additional gas be correct, the temperature of the exhaust gas[658] *would have to be equal to the ambient temperature, which no technical expert on combustion can seriously maintain, since in thermal balance the inevitable losses of heat from the exhaust gas and the cold air which flows in, when the coffin is introduced,*[659] *are disadvantages which cannot be avoided."*

Therefore, not even the Volckmann-Ludwig gas oven – the best of the civilian crematorium ovens in the 1930s and 1940s – could cremate without extra fuel *in addition to the heat supplied by the coffin* even in continuous operation (12 cremations per day on average over seven months).[660] Even though it was promoted as a device which operated without fuel in addition to the coffin, using even the cremated corpses themselves as a source of heat (Stort 1931) – it did actually require on average the equivalent of [(4,500×7)+(35×4,000)]÷6,500 ≈ 26.4 kg of coke per cremation! This refutes categorically van Pelt's outrageous assertion of a continuous incineration in coke-fired ovens without additional fuel.

On the other hand, the Birkenau triple-muffle coke ovens, when compared to the Müller oven, had a rather crude system for feeding combustion air. They were equipped with a single blower (*Druckluftanlage*) that served all three muffles without the possibility of regulating the flow of air into each muffle. The outlet of the air conduit was walled in over the vault of the muffle; the air emerged from the conduit through four rectangular apertures, 10×8 cm in size, set into the refractory masonry, i.e. from top to bottom, exactly the *opposite* principle of the Müller oven! By the 1930s this system of feeding combustion air as used in the double and triple-muffle Topf ovens had turned out to be fairly inefficient even with hot air. Professor Paul Schläpfer writes in this respect (1938, p. 155):

"In addition, the air is fed into the muffle from the top down and then flows along the sides of the muffle absorbing more heat. This means that we have a cooling effect also on the inside of the muffle. The spent gases are conducted directly downwards thwarting the

658 Normally from 500 to 700°C, according to the type of oven.
659 And also when a corpse is introduced without a coffin.
660 In practice, the Volckmann-Ludwig oven – which was advertised as a facility working without supplementary heat – needed on average the equivalent of about ([(4,500×7)+(35×3,500)]÷7,000=) 22 kg of coke for each cremation!

valuable heating of the muffle during the first period of the incineration."

5) The reduction in the coke consumption of the Gusen oven over those of Auschwitz-Birkenau from 35 [recte: 30.6] to 3.5 kg allegedly depended on the way the ovens were heated. This is the central argument in the discussion. The preheating of a crematorium oven to operating temperature is a factor which has an overriding effect on the daily consumption of fuel, as we have seen in chapter 8.5.1. In that chapter I have also mentioned the experimental finding to the effect that, from the fourth cremation in a series onwards, the heat absorbed by the refractory walls has the tendency to stabilize. For that reason I have determined the heat balance of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens on the basis of the practical data obtained at Gusen for an actual continuous operation over 18 hours per day, conditions which are perfectly applicable to the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens under the hypothesis of mass cremations. For an operating time of 20 hours, coke consumption per cremation would have dropped by a mere 0.3 kilograms. As a heat technician would say, the oven was now in a steady state, in the sense that all of the brickwork had now reached a stable temperature and heat was no longer required to make it any warmer, only to compensate for heat losses from the brickwork to the surroundings.

We see from this that van Pelt has made a hefty mistake: he has attributed the decrease in the coke consumption from 35 (actually 30.6) to 3.5 kg to a non-existent factor, for the average consumption of 30.6 kg of coke already contains the amount of coke used for pre-heating the oven. This becomes even clearer when one considers the average consumption of the Gusen oven as a function of the number of daily cremations. As we have seen above, 2,910 corpses were cremated at Gusen in the period between January 29 and October 15, 1941, an average of 10 a day, with a total consumption of 138,480 kg of coke. The average specific consumption was 47.5 kg per corpse.

Between October 26 and 30 a total of 129 corpses (32 per day) were cremated with 4,800 kg of coke for an average of 37.2 kg per corpse. Between October 31 and November 13 exactly 677 corpses were cremated, i.e. 52 on average per day, with 20,700 kg of coke, for an average consumption of 30.6 kg per corpse. We see that, on going from 10 via 32 to 52 cremations per day, consumption dropped from 47.5 via 37.2 to 30.6 kg per corpse. This means that at least (47.5 – 30.6 =) 16.9

kg of coke from each cremation went into the preheating of the oven in the first run of cremations.

In chapter 8.5.4. above I have made clear that Jährling's *Aktenvermerk* says exactly the same thing: "*bei Dauerbetrieb*" (in continuous operation) the fuel consumption of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens went down by a third, hence to 66% in the same way it dropped in the Gusen oven when moving from discontinuous cremations to continuous operation: 30.6÷47.5×100 = 64%. We must take into account, however, that the computations for the *Aktenvermerk* were based on a use of the ovens over 12 hours each day, whereas the data for Gusen referred to 18 hours of use per day.

Even if we disregard the structural differences of the ovens, something which van Pelt does not take into account at all, this signifies that fuel consumption of the Birkenau ovens was proportionally higher than that of the Gusen oven, because the former lost heat over a downtime of 12 hours per day, as compared to only 6 hours for the latter. What is even more disturbing, though, is the fact that van Pelt, when comparing the effective average consumption of the Gusen oven to Jährling's *Aktenvermerk*, draws another conclusion which is even more irrational. Even if we assume that the average fuel consumption of the Gusen oven was based on intermittent cremations – and not on an operating period lasting actually longer than what was assumed in Jährling's *Aktenvermerk* – and if we use van Pelt's erroneous figure of 35 kg of coke per corpse for the Gusen oven and apply Jährling's drop in coke consumption by $^1/_3$ "*bei Dauerbetrieb*," the logical conclusion would be a decrease by $^1/_3$ of 35 kg to 23.3 kg of coke per corpse. But then, how can van Pelt argue that the continuous operation Jährling speaks of in his *Aktenvermerk* would bring about an average consumption of 3.5 kg per corpse? This is obviously more than a mere mistake. It proves that van Pelt could not "really" and "sincerely" believe that in the Topf ovens of Auschwitz-Birkenau it was possible to burn a corpse with a mere 3.5 kg of coke.

Van Pelt confirms this by a careful omission. He blindly accepts Tauber's claim that four to five corpses were cremated together in one muffle within little more than 30 minutes. However, the *Angebot* (offer) from W. Müller states explicitly: "Average incineration time about 1½ hours."[511] This oven, sophisticated as it was to the point of working without fuel in addition to the coffin after the first cremation, needed 1½ hours to incinerate one corpse – but then why could the Birkenau

ovens do away with one lot of four to five corpses within half an hour? This was such an embarrassing question for van Pelt that he preferred to keep quiet about the matter.

During this alleged "refutation of Irving's thesis that there would not have been enough coke to incinerate the victims" by van Pelt, defense counsel Rampton became convinced that the battle had been won (p. 477) – we see how easy it is for a victory to be fallacious.

12.7. Crematoria and Morgues

Van Pelt presents us with a somewhat strange calculation in which he brings together the foreseeable strength of the camp, the assumed monthly cremation capacity of the crematoria, and the holding capacity of the morgues, saying "calculated in terms of morgue units per month of 30 days, in which each unit is one corpse-day, which means that a morgue with a capacity of 100 corpses has a capacity of 100×30 = 3,000 morgue units per month" (p. 350). These arguments, which he also summarizes in the form of a graph (p. 351), are intended to demonstrate that there was a disproportionately high growth of the cremation capacity at Birkenau as against an equally disproportionately high drop in morgue capacity, to the point where the latter had disappeared completely by May 1943. He even speaks explicitly of "no morgue units" (p. 352). Van Pelt concludes (*ibid*.):

> *"If Auschwitz, as negationists have maintained, was a 'normal' concentration camp comparable to Dachau and Sachsenhausen – that is, a camp not dedicated to systematic extermination of large transports – then one should expect an incineration and morgue capacity comparable to those 'normal' concentration camps. If Auschwitz was more lethal than other concentration camps because of the greater prevalence of infectious diseases, then one should expect perhaps a higher incineration capacity, but also a very much higher morgue capacity to provide a buffer between the seasonally fluctuating discrepancy between incineration capacity and mortality. But, as we have seen, morgue capacity actually dropped from August 1942 onward. It seems, therefore, that the numbers suggest that Auschwitz was an extermination camp in which most people were murdered 'on command'."*

Already in principle, van Pelt's arguments are rendered worthless by the fact that he assumes an absurdly high cremation capacity: 10,000

cremations per month for Crematorium I, 40,000 cremations per month for each one of Crematoria II and III, and 20,000 for each one of Crematoria IV and V (pp. 350-352). In practice he takes his numbers from the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943, with suitable adjustments to end up with round figures. For example, the capacity for Crematoria II/III comes out as 1,440×30 = 43,200, rounded to 40,000 per month. What is absurd here is not only the cremation capacity itself, but also the assumption of a continuous operation of 24 hours per day over a whole month!

In my reply to Zimmermann I have dealt in detail with the problem discussed by van Pelt, especially with reference to the Dachau, Buchenwald and Auschwitz camps, and I have summarized in a table the actual data which can be found in the documents (2005f, pp. 161-169):

Table 21: Camp Mortality and Planned Cremation Capacity

mortality during oven planning month:	Dachau	Buchenwald	Auschwitz
	66	337	8,600
planned new muffles:	4	6	31*

* 15 muffles in the future Crema III and 16 muffles in Cremas IV and V

My conclusion is that "the number of new muffles at Auschwitz was 5.1 times higher than that of Buchenwald and 7.7 times higher than that of Dachau, whereas the mortality during the month this new cremation capacity was planned was 25.5 and 130 times higher, respectively. Had the Central Construction Office of Auschwitz adopted the same criterion as that chosen by the Central Construction Office of Weimar-Buchenwald, for instance, the former would have planned an installation with (8,600÷337×6=) 153 muffles!" The reality is therefore the very opposite of what van Pelt claims.

Let us now look at the question of the morgues. The "Explanatory report concerning the tentative draft for the new construction of the Waffen SS PoW camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia"[661] of October 30, 1941, mentions, in the section labeled "cost estimate" a "corpse barrack" (BW 8) measuring 65×11.4 = 741 m². The "Cost estimation for the construction project PoW camp Auschwitz (implementation of special treatment),"[662] drawn up on October 29, 1942, at a time when, according to van Pelt, Birkenau had become a real and true "extermina-

[661] RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 24.
[662] VHA, font OT 31(2)/8, p. 5.

tion camp," covered "4 corpse halls," each one measuring 28.8×13.6 m = 391.68 m², for a total of 1,566.72 m².

In October 1941 the planned strength of the camp stood at 125,000 detainees; by October 1942 it had gone up by 12% to 140,000 detainees, whereas the surface area planned for the morgues had gone up by a factor of (1,566.72÷741 =) 2.11 or 111%. Thus in this case as well the actual figures are exactly the opposite of what van Pelt affirms.

We still have the question of "no morgue units" which, put more explicitly, means that "by the time the crematoria were finished, Auschwitz had virtually no permanently dedicated morgue capacity" (van Pelt 1999, p. 210). I have treated this nonsensical assertion in depth in a specific study,[663] in which I have shown that, on the basis of documents apparently unknown to van Pelt, as early as March 1943 the morgues of the Birkenau crematoria were normally used as depositories for the corpses of detainees who had died in the camp. Let us briefly look at the results. The very first document alone already refutes van Pelt's thesis. It is a letter written on March 20, 1943, by the garrison surgeon, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Wirths, to the camp commander with the following request:[664]

> *"Two covered push-carts must be made available for the removal of the corpses from the detainee sick-bay to the crematorium, each one allowing the transportation of 50 corpses."*

Actually, ZBL refused repeatedly the requests by the garrison surgeon for more morgue space precisely with the argument that the morgues in the crematoria were available. On July 20, 1943, the garrison surgeon wrote a letter to ZBL starting with the words:[665]

> *"In the camps of building section II which are already occupied we still need morgues made of concrete or brick; their installation is urgent."*

Doctor Wirths motivates his request saying:[665]

> *"In the existing wooden sheds the corpses are highly exposed to attacks by rats, and when the corpses are removed, there is hardly a single corpse that does not show signs of such attacks."*

He goes on to underline that rats are carriers of plague, the outbreak of which in the camp could be prevented only by the installation of

[663] Mattogno 2004k, pp. 271-294. Cf. in particular § II, pp. 279-283.

[664] Letter from SS-Standortarzt to KL Auschwitz camp commander dated march 20, 1943 re: "Häftlings-Krankenbau – KGL." RGVA, 502-1-261, p. 112.

[665] Letter from SS-Standortarzt to Zentralbauleitung dated July 20, 1943 re: "Hygienische Sofort-Massnahmen im KL." RGVA, 502-1-170, p. 263.

morgues made of brick, accompanied by an intensive campaign against these rodents.[665] On August 4, 1943, Bischoff replied:[666]

> *"SS-Standartenführer Mrugowski declared in the meeting of July 31 that the corpses are to be removed to the morgues of the crematoria twice a day, i.e. in the morning and in the evening,*[667] *which renders unnecessary the additional installation of morgues in the various sub-sections."*

On May 22, 1944, *SS-Obersturmführer* Jothann, the new head of ZBL, wrote a note for the file in which he stressed:[668]

> *"SS-Obersturmbannführer Höss underlined that according to a regulation in force, the daily load of c*[orpses] *is to be collected by a dedicated cart every day in the morning hours, which means that, if this order is followed, no accumulation of c. can occur, and there is no pressing need for the establishment of the halls mentioned. SS-Obersturmbannführer Höss therefore requests not to pursue for the time being the construction of the halls in question."*

But Dr. Wirths did not stop there and charged again on May 25 with a letter to the Auschwitz camp commander, saying:[669]

> *"A certain number of corpses originate daily in the detainee sickbays of the camps of KL Auschwitz for natural reasons, the removal of which, while it has been scheduled and is taking place twice daily, in the morning and at night* […]*"*

The available documentation on the use of the morgues in the Birkenau crematoria does not only prove that van Pelt's claim of "no morgue units" is wrong, but also that they were always available, in the morning and in the evening, something which would have been impossible if they had really been turned – as van Pelt asserts – into "undressing rooms" and "gas chambers."

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666 Letter from Bischoff to Wirths dated August 4, 1943, re: "Hygienische Sofortmassnahmen im KGL: Erstellung von Leichenhallen in jedem Unterabschnitt." RGVA, 502-1-170, p. 262.

667 This explains why the personnel assigned to the crematoria (the so-called Sonderkommando) was working in two shifts, a day-shift and a night-shift.

668 Aktenvermerk by Jothann dated May 23, 1944, re "Errichtung von Leichenhallen im Bauabschnitt II, Lager II Birkenau." RGVA, 502-1-170, p. 260.

669 Letter from SS-Standortarzt to SS-Standortälteste dated May 25, 1944, re: "Bau von Leichenkammern im KL Auschwitz II." RGVA, 502-1-170, p. 264.

12.8. "Excessive" Capacity of Crematorium Ovens

Van Pelt dedicates a section to the discussion of the question: "Does the Fear of Typhus Justify the Construction of Crematoria 2-5?" He starts out as follows (p. 122, 125):

> *"The number of dead from typhus was great in 1942, but it pales in comparison with the incineration capacity of the crematoria. Of the 68,864 death entries in the Auschwitz Death Books* [Sterbebücher]*, only 1,637 are listed as caused by typhus. Of course, most of the causes of death listed are fictitious, but still one wonders why so few deaths were ascribed if typhus was to be the official justification for building the four new crematoria, which had together a daily capacity of 4,392*[670] *corpses."*

He later adds that "the fear of typhus did not justify the absurdly high incineration capacity of the Auschwitz crematoria" (p. 480). Here van Pelt picks up the argument of "The Typhus Myth" already raised by Zimmerman at the time, to which I have replied extensively (2005f, pp. 159-161), explaining that the small number of deaths attributed to typhus in the Auschwitz *Sterbebücher* was due to the fact that the majority of the detainees who were struck by the disease were already in poor health due to the general conditions prevailing in the camp and thus died from further complications.

Here I wish to add the findings of André Weiss contained in a university thesis dealing with typhus during the Second World War. The thesis is an epidemiological and clinical study of the typhus epidemic which struck the Theresienstadt ghetto between the end of April and early May 1945. It depicts the major complications of the disease: those of the cardio-vascular system (cardiac arrest, circulatory collapse, hypotension, cardiac fibrillations), those affecting the lungs (bronchiopneumonia, lobar pneumonia), and those affecting the kidneys and the digestive tract (diarrhea). To these complications he adds cachexia, i.e. a "normal" weight loss of some 20 kg after two weeks of illness (A. Weiss 1954, pp. 59-70).

This is further confirmed by the note "Remarks concerning the treatment with preparation 3582/IGF/ in cases of typhus." In early February 1943 a new drug against typhus was tested on 50 detainees, prob-

[670] The number resulting from the letter of the ZBL of June 28, 1943, is 4,416.

ably in Auschwitz, who had the disease; 15 of them died during the treatment or soon afterwards. The note states:[671]

> *"The 15 deaths were caused by: 6 cases of cardiac insufficiency, 6 cases of toxic cachexia, 2 cases of encephalitis, 1 case of an ensuing fever the cause of which could not ascertained."*

Thus, none of the 15 detainees officially died directly from "typhus," but this disease was nonetheless their indirect cause of death.

The only known documentary information for the mortality from the typhus epidemic is that, during the period of March 12 through December 31, 1942, a total of 1,792 sick detainees passed through ward 3 of block 20 at Auschwitz, 323 or 18% of whom died, whereas 90, or 5% of them are said to have been gassed – all of 90 of them in eight and a half months! (Kłodziński, p. 51.) Actually, these latter detainees disappeared from the ward strength on August 29, 1942, only because the ward was closed between August 30 and September 7 for disinfestation, and they resurfaced again right on time on September 9, together with three new reconvalescents.

It is well known that the typhus epidemic raged mainly at Birkenau and that the camp's hospital facilities were far more rudimentary in August 1942 than those at Auschwitz main camp, and hence the level of mortality was certainly higher. On the other hand, if over eight and a half months there were 323 deaths from typhus at the Auschwitz main camp in ward 3 of block 20 alone, how could it be that the entire Auschwitz-Birkenau complex should have had only 1,637 such deaths between August 1941 and December 1943, even taking into account that some statistics are missing?[672]

Let us return to van Pelt. He continues to expound his argument citing (incomplete) data for the mortality at Auschwitz during the months of July through October 1942 and comments (p. 125):

> *"With a daily capacity of 4,392, Crematoria 2-5 would take two days to incinerate the inmates who died in the month of August 1942, the peak of the typhus epidemic. At the time, Auschwitz had a size of 24,000 inmates. In other words, mortality of registered inmates in August 1942 was 18.3 percent. For a short time in August 1942, Auschwitz was planned to have a size of 200,000 inmates. If*

[671] Bemerkungen über die Behandlung mit Präprarat 3582/IGF/ bei Fleckfieber, Auschwitz, den 8. Februar 1943. Trial of the camp garrison, vol. 59, p. 61.

[672] The 68,864 death certificates which have been preserved cover some 70% of the deaths ascertained for this period, including those of the Soviet PoWs.

we assume, for the sake of argument, that the crematoria had been designed to deal with a monthly mortality of 18 percent of 200,000 inmates (which assumes that the designers of the camp did not think themselves capable of improving on the catastrophic hygienic conditions in the camp), they should have a capacity of 36,000 corpses per month. Crematoria 2-5, however, had a monthly capacity of 131,760 corpses, or more than 3.5 times the capacity needed to address the August 1942 mortality figure in a setting of 200,000 inmates. By September 1942, the projected size of the camp had been reduced, but all the crematoria continued to be built."

Van Pelt then adds that in his "Report" he had forgotten to include the camp strength of the main camp (30,000 detainees) and that the computation should have been based on a total strength of 230,000 inmates (*ibid*.), but that does not alter the essence of his thinking, which is completely wrong for quite different reasons.

In August 1942 there were 8,600 deaths for a total average strength of some 40,000 inmates,[673] corresponding to some 21.5 percent. In chapter 8.7.4. I have shown that the maximum capacity of the Birkenau crematoria stood at 1,040 corpses per day (for 20 hours of operation), but that Jährling's note for the file of March 17, 1943, based his calculation of the coke requirements on an operation of 12 hours or a cremation capacity of 572 corpses per day. I have also stressed the fact that there were peaks of 500 deaths per day in August 1942.

Applying van Pelt's reasoning to actual data, we thus see that a monthly mortality rate of 21.5% corresponds to 49,450 deaths for a camp strength of 230,000 inmates. The practical cremation capacity of the Auschwitz-Birkenau crematoria stood at (1,040×30 =) 31,200 cremations per month. Even with a purely fictitious operation over 24 hours per day we come to only (1,248×30 =) 37,440 corpses per month. Hence the cremation capacity, in the face of the hypothesis in question, was even lower than the theoretical level of the "natural" mortality.

Van Pelt notes that such a hypothesis would amount to the acknowledgement by that SS that they were absolutely unable to control the hygienic conditions in the camp. This observation only shows that van Pelt's reasoning is unsound. The forecast used by the SS to determine the necessary number of muffles could not be established on the basis of an expected *monthly* mortality, such as had been observed in August

[673] The strength indicated by van Pelt, 24,000 detainees, refers only to the men's camp and does not include the women's camp.

1942; it had to be based on *daily* mortality peaks corresponding to this level.

Technically speaking it does not make sense to set the cremation capacity at a point in keeping with the expected mortality, because any kind of failure of the equipment might cause total chaos. This means that the maximum cremation capacity of 1,040 corpses per day was barely sufficient to cope with daily peaks of mortality twice as high as those observed in August 1942, and this required that the SS felt confident of being able to control the hygienic conditions in the camp over the years to come.

For this reason I have said above that the enlargement of the cremation installations at Birkenau depended upon two concomitant factors: Himmler's order to enlarge the camp for a strength of 200,000 inmates and the extremely high mortality of the detainees during that time. In chapter 8.7.5. I have moreover mentioned Bischoff's letter of July 10, 1942, to the construction office of KL Stutthof which shows that Crematorium II (and III) was to serve 30,000 detainees, i.e. one muffle for 2,000 detainees.

It is quite true, as van Pelt asserts, that "the projected size of the camp had been reduced" in September 1942, but the new expected strength still stood at 140,000 inmates. This would have meant a total of (140,000÷2,000 =) 70 muffles for Birkenau, but their number remained at only 46 such units and was thus even inadequate for the projected enlargement of the camp. The 46 muffles existing at Birkenau were sufficient for (46×2,000 =) 92,000 detainees, but as early as November 1943[674] the Auschwitz camp strength reached about 88,700 and about 86,800[675] in December.

One may thus conclude that by the end of 1943 the number of muffles at Birkenau was fully adequate for the effective camp strength. As against this, van Pelt affirms that there was an enormous disparity between the cremation capacity and the strength of the camp. He states his "firm conclusion that it was absurd to provide Auschwitz with an incineration capacity of 120,000 corpses per month when the whole camp was only designed to hold 150,000 inmates" (p. 461). Van Pelt then re-

[674] Crematorium I stopped functioning in July 1943.

[675] Evaluation by judge Sehn of the corresponding monthly reports of the series "Übersicht über den Häftlingseinsatz im K.L. Birkenau. Monat... 1943." AGK, NTN, 134, pp. 281-282 and 286.

turns to this question within the framework of the court proceedings (p. 485):

> *"Rampton repeated my argument that the potential incineration capacity at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943 far exceeded any possible mortality rate among the registered inmates from 'natural' causes, including typhus."*

This assertion – which is completely at odds with reality – is just another instance of the devastating consequences of van Pelt's blind acceptance of Tauber's absurdities. He does not limit himself to this inconsistent appreciation of the tragic scope of typhus at Auschwitz, but expounds his opinion on the origin of the crematoria (pp. 460f.):

> *"Irving mentioned Himmler's visit to Auschwitz in July 1942 and asked if I had any documentary proof that during this visit Himmler had ordered that the camp take a central role in the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish Problem. I replied that the minutes of meeting held in the SS Central Construction Office in August 1942, which discussed the construction of two extra crematoria adjacent to the 'Bathhouses for Special Actions,' could be interpreted as a direct consequence of decisions taken during Himmler's visit."*

Van Pelt refers to the note for the file written by *SS-Untersturmführer* Ertl on August 21, 1942. In chapter 7.3. I have already shown that the "Bathhouses for Special Actions" had nothing to do with extermination facilities, but were merely of a sanitary nature:

> *"As meanwhile the occupancy has increased and also for a number of other reasons, map no. 1453, attached, was modified to include the following additional barracks:* […]*"*

These additional barracks were: "24 housing barracks, 2 infirmary barracks, 1 warehouse barrack" for construction section I and "36 housing barracks, 4 laundry barracks, 4 infirmary barracks" for each of construction sections II and III. Therefore, we have here 96 additional housing barracks as compared to the map of July 8th. Bischoff adds:

> *"The enlargement project was made known to Amtsgruppenchef C SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr.-Ing. Kammler on the occasion of the visit by Reichsführer on July 17 and 18, 1942."*

In this letter, written – *nota bene* – on August 3, 1942, Bischoff goes on to say:[676]

[676] Letter from Bischoff to Amt CV dell'SS-WVHA dated August 3, 1942. GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 37.

"Furthermore, the location of the new crematorium next to the quarantine camp has been defined."

This means that as late as August 3, 1942, the head of ZBL at Auschwitz knew only of a single crematorium which later became Crematorium II. What strength did the above map assume for the camp? I myself do not know any map of July 8, 1942, but in the letter to "*Amt C V*" of SS-WVHA (i.e. to Kammler) dated June 29, 1942, Bischoff wrote that "on the basis of the order given by *Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei* the camp is to be enlarged from 125,000 PoWs to 150,000 PoWs."[677]

Thus, the map of July 8 was based on a strength of 150,000 detainees. After his visit to Auschwitz on July 17 and 18, 1942, Himmler decided on a further "enlargement" (*Erweiterung*) of the camp. To what extent? Dwork and van Pelt have published the drawing of a "housing barrack for a PoW camp" having a capacity of "about 550 persons." This figure has been struck out by pencil and replaced by a new handwritten entry of "774" (Dwork/van Pelt, Plate 13). Assuming a normal capacity of 550 persons, the 96 additional barracks could accept at least (96×550 =) about 52,800 detainees, bringing the total capacity up from 150,000 to around 202,800 inmates. Thus, the strength assumed for the revised map of July 8, 1942, was 200,000 inmates, as was explicitly mentioned in Bischoff's letter to *Amt C V* of August 27, 1942.[678] Therefore, the "decisions taken during Himmler's visit" of July 17 and 18 concerned solely the enlargement of the camp to 200,000 detainees and a single crematorium for Birkenau.

There is only one point where van Pelt is absolutely right, namely when he states that the alleged extermination found its limits not in the capacity of the gas chambers but in that of the crematoria: "incineration capacity and not gassing was the bottleneck" (p. 306); "in the case of the gas chambers it was the cremation process which invariably went considerably slower than the gassing" (p. 380); "the disposal of bodies, not the killing, proved to be the difficult part" (p. 455); "I responded that the only 'bottleneck' I could see was the speed of incineration in the ovens' (p. 470). This "bottleneck," though, was much narrower than

[677] Letter from Bischoff to Amt CV of SS-WVHA dated June 29, 1942. GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 34.

[678] Letter from Bischoff to Amt CV of SS-WVHA dated August 27, 1942. GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 41.

what van Pelt thought, so narrow in fact that mass extermination at Auschwitz was impossible in practice.

Rephrasing Faurisson's motto "no holes, no holocaust,"[679] one may say with respect to the alleged gassings: "no mass cremations, no mass gassings."

[679] Faurisson referred to the non-existent openings for the introduction of the Zyklon B in the alleged homicidal gas chamber of Crematorium II at Birkenau. Cf. Mattogno 2004l, pp. 385-436. Cf. also Mattogno 2005d. The question will be discussed in the following chapter.

13. The Alleged Zyklon B Openings of Crematoria II And III

13.1. Van Pelt's Conjectures

One of Irving's arguments that proved to be most embarrassing for van Pelt was no doubt the question of the openings for Zyklon B in the ceiling of the alleged gas chambers of Crematoria II and III. The matter is of vital importance, as it is summarized by Faurisson's motto "No Holes? No Holocaust," which we can express more clearly as "No openings, no homicidal gas chambers in Crematorium II."

Van Pelt spoke about the question in the very early days of the proceedings when he expounded his own position regarding this point in his "Report" (p. 2):

> *"In my own expert report to the court, I had stated that 'today, these four small holes that connected the wire-mesh columns and the chimneys cannot be observed in the ruined remains of the concrete slab.'"*

Immediately thereafter, van Pelt explained the reason for the absence of such openings (p. 3):

> *"While there is no certainty in this particular matter, it would have been logical to attach, at the location where the columns had been, some formwork at the bottom of the gas chamber ceiling, and pour some concrete in the holes, and thus restore the slab."*

Throughout the book he adamantly comes back to this explanation numerous times (pp. 370-371, 406, 458-459, 460, 465) and tells us also that defense counsel Rampton had taken it to be "plausible enough" (p. 478). Van Pelt claims that the alleged openings "had probably been backfilled when the gas chambers were dismantled in November 1944 – two months before the destruction of the crematoria in January 1945" (p. 458).

As I have shown elsewhere (2005d, pp. 313f), this conjecture makes no sense and is wrong. It is, after all, unwarranted to assume that ZBL, while preparing the destruction of Crematoria II and III, would have ordered the alleged openings to be patched up before dynamiting the whole structure. It would have meant that this office knew in advance that the destruction of the concrete ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II would yield poor results. In the case of Crematorium III, in

fact, where the work was done properly, the ceiling broke up completely.

It is furthermore wrong to claim that the alleged openings were actually patched up, because this work would have left highly visible traces, as can be observed in the ceiling of the morgue of Crematorium I. Here, in fact, the closure of the round openings for the ventilation system of the "air-raid shelter for SS sickbay with surgery room," into which the crematorium was transformed at the end of 1944, has left easily discernible traces (*ibid*., photos 7-10, pp. 356-358).

In *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II a fairly large surface of the ceiling around pillar no. 1 has escaped destruction; this was the zone in which the first Zyklon B opening should have been located. The area, however, does not show any signs of having been patched up, which would have been all the more visible, as the ceiling still exhibits clearly the profile and grain of the boards which were used for the carpentry work (*ibid*., photo 36, p. 341). The same conclusion was reached, incidentally, by the trio of the "experts," Daniel Keren, Jamie McCarthy, and Harry W. Mazal (their p. 73), with which I will deal in the chapter below.

13.2. Daniel Keren, Jamie McCarthy, Harry W. Mazal

In his "Epilogue" van Pelt tells us on page 495 that in the last months of the year 2000 he had received "a draft copy of a richly illustrated 24-page report, written by Daniel Keren, Jamie McCarthy, and Harry W. Mazal, entitled 'A Report on Some Findings Concerning the Gas Chamber of Krematorium II in Auschwitz-Birkenau'" which was published four years later (Keren et al., pp. 68-103).

Van Pelt stresses that the authors claimed to have discovered, in the concrete roof of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, three out of the four alleged Zyklon B introduction openings (p. 498). However, in a no less "richly illustrated" reply I have demonstrated the complete lack of consistency of such a claim, while at the same time shedding light on the fallacious methods of the authors (2005d, chapter 4). I will summarize here the main points of the archeological "discoveries" made by Keren et al.

The authors claim to have found with certainty in the ruins of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II "strong physical evidence" for three out of the alleged four openings for the introduction of Zyklon B (Keren

et al., p. 73). Before we look more closely at the discoveries, we must make some preliminary remarks.

1) First of all, the authors – just like Charles D. Provan – refer to an alleged "architectural rule" according to which, "when violent stress is put on a concrete structure, cracks show up passing through holes made previous to the violent force, since the holes make the structure weaker in that location" (see Mattogno 2005d, p. 306). For the authors this means in practice that the force of the explosion destroyed the straight edges of the alleged openings to the point where they could no longer be distinguished as such, although their rule does not cover such a claim at all.[680] Actually, though, as I have demonstrated by means of photographs, in spite of the violent explosion which destroyed the rooms themselves, the straight edges of the five rectangular aeration holes in the ceiling of the furnace hall of Crematorium III and the round opening for the de-aeration tube in the ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 2 of Crematorium II stayed practically intact, and the corresponding openings are themselves perfectly visible (*ibid*., photos 11-14, pp. 324-326).

2) The identification of the alleged openings was made by the authors at their desks in a most artificial manner: they simply selected from among the numerous odd-shaped holes in the ruins of the ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 those which were situated closest to their conjectural array of those alleged Zyklon B introduction holes.

3) In this arbitrary identification, the authors have been very careful to exclude the decisive testimony concerning the dimensions of the alleged holes, because none of the holes they have identified corresponds in any way to these dimensions. As I have already mentioned in chapter 2.5.5., Michał Kula, the self-styled craftsman of the alleged wire-mesh columns for the introduction of Zyklon B, declared in fact that they had

[680] The origin of this "rule" in this particular debate is a 1991 statement by Walter Lüftl, then president of the Autrian association of civil engineers, and is based on Neuber; it was incorporated by Germar Rudolf in his expert report when discussing the issue at hand, stating, i.a.: "An opening pierced through the concrete […] at a later time would inevitably have had the consequence, when the building was blown up, that the breaks and fissures caused to the roof by the explosion would have run preferentially through these holes. The reason for this is that explosions exert extraordinarily great forces, and that the formation of cracks is favored by any weakness in the structure, since the tension peaks attain very high values in the vicinity of acute angles (notch effect [...]). Such holes, in particular, which would already have damaged the structure of the concrete due to their incorporation following completion of the structure, represent not only points of likely fracture, but points of inevitable fracture." Rudolf 2003b, pp. 126f. Hence it refers only to the probability(!) of cracks forming at the corners of angular, but not to round holes, and most certainly not to the fate of a hole's edges, which are not affected by this.

a square cross-section of 70×70 cm and were 3 m high; they thus reached through the ceiling and stood (300–241–18 =) 41 cm above it (*ibid*., pp. 303-306, 309). For the installation of such rigid columns it would therefore have been necessary to open up passages in the concrete ceiling slightly larger than 70×70 centimeters. Any outer chimneys would have measured, taking into account the width of the standard bricks in use in the *Reich* of 12 cm, (2×12+70 =) 94×94 cm on their outside, and not 60×60 cm as claimed by the authors.

4) Lastly, the authors assume that, at the time of their investigations (1998 – 2000), the ruins were exactly identical to the state they were in at the end of 1944 when the SS blew up Crematorium II, but this assumption is absolutely wrong, as we shall see. We will now look at the individual openings.

a) Opening 1

The authors state (Keren et al., pp. 74f.):

> *"Hole 1 is the opening in the roof near Pillar 1 (Figure 11a). The pillar remains standing and protrudes through the surface of the roof (Figure 10b), which shifted as it collapsed. While it might appear at first glance that the opening could just as easily have been created by the explosion, careful examination proves this was not the case. Portions of straight, flat edges and a 90-degree angle survive intact, though most of the concrete around the edge was damaged by the explosion. The center of this hole is 4.1 m from the southern end of the roof slab, and 0.75 m west of the roof's center. We estimate its size as approximately 0.5 m square; this places its eastern edge at 0.3 m west of the west edge of the central support beam."*

This opening corresponds to Provan's opening no. 2. In the article cited earlier I have demonstrated in detail that this is not an original opening but one made by the Soviets and the Poles in 1945 in order to gain access to the cellar (2005d, pp. 307-311). Let me add here that the assertion of the authors that for this opening "portions of straight, flat edges and a 90-degree angle survive intact, though most of the concrete around the edge was damaged by the explosion" is true, although only to a minute extent, but that – as I have been able to show by means of photographs I took over time – this rough square was chopped out sometime between 1992 and 1997 by a gentle helping hand from the Auschwitz Museum that apparently wanted to make the little tale of the

openings for Zyklon B slightly more believable. I stated, in fact (*ibid*., photo 18, p. 329):

> *"Between 1992 (photograph III. 17* [p. 328]*) and 1997 (III. 18), the hole has been coarsely enlarged and squared by blows with a chisel. As can be seen from a comparison of the Illustrations 19-21* [pp. 330f.]*, hole no. 2 appearing in the photograph of 1945* [#5, p. 319] *has been successively enlarged, especially in its eastern part* [p. 309]*."*

On the subject of the size of the opening the authors assert that its area was 0.5 m². In June 1990 that opening had a trapezoidal shape with a long side of 86 cm and a *maximum* width of 50 cm; the narrowest part was 43 cm, but, as Kula tells us, the openings had to measure at least 70 cm × 70 cm. It is thus easy to see why the authors keep quiet about Kula as a witness.

In chapter 2.5.5. I have already exposed the trick van Pelt used to solve this problem: his drawing of the alleged Zyklon B introduction device with its reduction in size at the level of the ceiling from 70×70 to 48×48 centimeters! As Keren et al. collaborated with van Pelt in the preparation of his book, we may assume that this trick is the fruit of their joint strategy, agreed on by the four "specialists" for the purpose of smoothing out Kula's above statement to some extent.

Let me add here that the cross-sectional area given by these authors – 0.5×0.5 m² – is wrong: the effective area is in fact necessarily smaller than the one resulting from its two large dimensions (0.82×0.5 = 0.41 m²) due to the trapezoidal shape of the opening.[681]

b) Opening 2

Opening 2, as can be seen from fig. 12 shown by the authors (Keren et al., p. 85), is identical to Provan's opening no. 6. Here we are actually dealing with a simple crack caused by the impact of that part of the ceiling on pillar no. 6 below, as my corresponding photographs clearly show (2005d, photos 30 & 31, pp. 336f.). In order to create the illusion that this crack actually was an opening even before the explosion, the authors are obliged to make use of a laborious trick: they superimpose a dotted square on the photograph of this shapeless hole to show the edges of the alleged original opening! They assign to their imaginary square a dimension of 50×50 cm (Keren et al., p. 75), measurements

[681] Ca. (0.82×0.43)+(0.07×0.82÷2) = 0.38 m².

that are likewise in disagreement with Kula's indications that the opening measured 70×70 cm.

c) Opening 3

The authors write in this respect:

> *"Hole 3's projected location is in an area of the roof that is badly damaged and covered with rubble."*

The Auschwitz Museum unfortunately did not allow them to remove the rubble (*ibid.*), so that in theory there is such an opening, but it cannot be seen! The truth of the matter is, though, that yet again the authors make use of a little sleight of hand. The field of view of their photograph is very narrow and viewed from west to east. All it takes to get a better look at this area is to widen the view and reverse the perspective (looking from east to west; 2005d, photos 31-33, pp. 337ff.). Then one realizes that this area is not "badly damaged and covered with rubble" at all but that one can see two large cracks (one of which is Provan's opening no. 8). These cracks are in such disagreement with an alleged Zyklon B opening that the authors have preferred to keep quiet about them and make us believe that there is an invisible alleged opening no. 3!

d) Opening 4

The identification of opening 4 is arguably the most fanciful one. The authors explain (Keren et al., pp. 75f.):

> *"Hole 4 can be identified by a pattern in the rebar (Figure 16) at the very northern end of what remains of the roof.* […]. *Hole 4 can be identified by the unimpeded square opening set in the rebar in 1943. The surrounding edges were shattered by the explosion and the folding of the roof, leaving only the telltale rebar latticework. Its measurements are 0.5×0.5 m.* […]. *The deliberately looped rebar proves that this hole, as almost certainly the other three, was cast at the time the concrete was poured in January 1943."*

This argument so impressed van Pelt that he has published the corresponding photograph (p. 500). All we now have to do is look at it (Mattogno 2005d, photos 7 &7a, pp. 389f.). The first thing that strikes the eye is that a supporting pillar of the *Leichenkeller* roof juts out of this hole and that the vertical traces of the form-work used for the casting of the pillar are clearly visible, as are the ends of rebars coming out of the top of the pillar. The hole was obviously caused by the ceiling crashing

onto this pillar. Actually, as the authors themselves acknowledge, "the roof shifted considerably when it collapsed after the explosions" (Keren et al., p. 74), which means that the ceiling was lifted up and then shifted sideways when it fell back, causing the central supporting beam to move away from the pillars which had supported it, with some of the pillars subsequently piercing the roof. This is clearly evident in the vicinity of the alleged opening 1 where the top part of the first concrete pillar has broken through the morgue ceiling creating another hole (Mattogno 2005d, photo 8, p. 391).

Secondly, this hole has *no* well-defined edges, to say nothing of them being straight. If this hole had been "cast at the time the concrete was poured," then these smooth, well-defined edges would be somewhere. They cannot have vanished into thin air, as shown by the photographs of the aeration openings of the furnace hall of Crematorium III and of the de-aeration duct of *Leichenkeller* 2 in Crematorium II. Hence this hole was certainly not cast together with the entire roof.

Thirdly, in the square formed by the rebars, to which the authors assign such importance, the lateral rebars have not been cut off, as would have been necessary for the construction of the brick cladding around the opening; they have only been bent, most likely by the violent impact of the pillar piercing the roof.[682] The thesis that the bending of the lateral rebars demonstrates that the alleged opening was included as of 1943 during the casting of the concrete ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 is also historically unfounded, as I have already shown in chapter 2.4.

The authors' other thesis, *viz.* that this square of rebars reflects exactly the situation as of January 1943, is completely groundless. The ruins of *Leichenkeller* 1 underwent several phases of work and changes. I will mention here the cases that are best documented. First of all, as early as 1946 these ruins were searched by Roman Dawidowski, the expert who worked on behalf of judge Jan Sehn (Mattogno 2005d, p. 310). In 1968 a group of Germans undertook detailed archeological studies, which also included diggings. Pressac has published four such photographs (1989, p. 265). Furthermore, sometime between 1990 and 2000 the alleged opening 1 – as I have already explained – was enlarged and made square. Provan's opening 7 underwent similar alterations: in 1990 it showed five rebars, up to 40 cm long and bent backwards, but in 2000 the opening had been coarsely straightened out to make a square, and

[682] Mattogno 2005d, photograph 7a on p. 390. I have labeled here with numbers 1-5 the most visible rebars, the letter "P" stands for the pillar.

four rebars had been cut or broken off (Mattogno 2005d, photos 23-28, pp. 333ff.). One can thus not seriously assert that the state of the rebars of the alleged opening number 4 in 1998 corresponded to the original state.

13.3. "Converging" Testimonies

In an effort to demonstrate the existence of the alleged Zyklon B introduction openings, van Pelt moreover invokes an alleged "convergence" of four testimonies: those by Bakon, Olère, Tauber, and Kula (p. 173). I have already dealt with the latter two and will therefore limit myself here to Bakon's and Olère's statements.

13.3.1. Yehuda Bakon

Yehuda Bakon testified at the 68th session of the Eichmann trial at Jerusalem, which took place on June 7, 1961, on the subject of the alleged Zyklon B introduction devices (van Pelt 2002, pp. 172f.):

> *"Yes, there were two of these in each gas chamber in crematoria Nos. 1 and 2* [= II and III] *– that is to say, there were four; their dimensions were 40×40 centimeters; below were the ventilators and also holes for cleaning with water. Afterwards, when they dismantled the crematoria, we saw the ventilators separately."*

These claims are at variance with those of Tauber and of Kula and are, moreover, architecturally wrong. First of all, Bakon states that *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III was split into two sections (State of Israel, p. 1250):

> *"In crematoria Nos. 1 and 2, there was a very long hall divided in two. I asked them the reason for this and they explained that sometimes there were not enough people and it was a pity to waste the gas, so the people were put into only one half of the hall."*

Tauber, however, states that this was the case only for Crematorium II. Secondly, the expressions used by Bauer make us believe that he was familiar with the original state of the hall, which cannot have been the case. Without this knowledge the witness would have seen only "two halls" and not "a very long hall *divided* in two."

As against this, the dimensions of the openings given by Bauer – 40×40 cm – are at variance with those of Kula – 70×70 cm. Referring to the two alleged gas chambers, the witness says moreover that "below were the *ventilators*," which means that he even claims to have seen

them when the crematoria were being demolished. Here he picks up the little propaganda story already related by Janda Weiss (see chapter 17.8.).

Bakon, who was born on July 28, 1929, was deported to Auschwitz on December 15, 1943, at the age of 14.[683] His tender age notwithstanding, according to van Pelt, he "survived three consecutive selections" (p. 169): a real miracle! The first miracle: At the time of the alleged gassings of the Jews from the Theresienstadt family camp at the beginning of July 1944 he was "selected together with a group of some 80 youths 12 to 16 years old and sent to the men's camp B IId."[684] The SS must have had some strange ideas about who was able to work and who was not! Not only that – here is what happened then to these miraculously saved youths: "We boys – as I have already said – then went to the men's camp where we were treated in a privileged way. We were allowed to let our hair grow. At first, we did not even have to work. The strangest thing was that even the SS took good care of us. They even went so far as to bring us a ping-pong table. We also received better clothing and shoes to measure. That was something that we had not experienced for a long time. Of course, it did not last long, because we were assigned to the various *Kommandos* (Bakon, p. 122).

The tale of Bakon's *Kommando* being invited by the detainees of the "*Sonderkommando*" to warm themselves in the "*Kleidungskammer*" or in the alleged gas chambers, which I have already examined in chapter 2.7.3., or even to have toured the inside of the crematoria including the furnace hall (State of Israel, p. 1251) is simply unbelievable and is only a literary tool to back up the propaganda which went around in the camp and which included the tale of the "usual flames" that came out of the chimneys and "reached a height of four metres" (*ibid*., p. 1249) or that of the "human ashes" spread on the ground in the wintertime "so that people could walk on the road and not slip" (*ibid*., p. 1248). Van Pelt shows three drawings of the Birkenau crematoria done by Bakon in June 1945 (*ibid*. p. 1249), which van Pelt considers to be "important as evidence about the gas chambers" (p. 171). This alleged importance depends on the fact that one of these drawings shows a schematic view of the section of an alleged gas chamber. Bakon describes it as follows (State of Israel, pp. 1250f.):

[683] Kárný, vol. II, p. 971. Bakon was liberated at the Gunskirchen camp.
[684] Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, 106th session on October 30, 1964, p. 23147.

> *"This is a view of the gas chambers and also Nos. 1 and 2* [= II and III] *which were underground, and what one saw above. They looked like water sprinklers; I was curious and examined them closely. I saw that there were no holes in them, this was just a sham; at first sight it seemed to be an actual shower-head. Above there were lights covered with wire, and in each gas chamber there were two pipes leading from the ceiling to the floor, and around them there were four iron columns surrounded by strong wire. When the operation was over and the people were forced inside, the SS opened some device above, like a drainage pipe, and through it introduced Zyklon B."*

Van Pelt, who praises "the precision of Bacon's [sic] memory" (p. 172), comments on the drawing by calling attention to the upper rounded angles, which he claims constitute Bakon's recollection of the ventilation, to the fake showers and to the lights (p. 170). But this is not very precise at all. Leaving aside the question of the alleged fake showers (see chapter 4.3.) and of the alleged split of *Leichenkeller* 1 into two halls, the description of the Zyklon B introduction device given by this witness – "pipes" around which were arranged "four iron columns surrounded by strong wire" – is in flagrant disagreement with those by Kula or Tauber. This version is a hodge-podge of Kula's and Tauber's versions and of that given by Nyiszli, who speaks of "square sheet-iron pipes" (1961, p. 45).

The position of the lights given is inexact (see chapter 4.3.), and van Pelt's conjecture that the drawing took into account the upper edges of the alleged gas chamber, smoothed-out by the ventilation ducts, is not supported by Bakon's testimony. The witness does not, in fact, speak of a ventilation system but rather, as we have seen, of the ventilators being located "below" the holes.

I will add that Bakon knew nothing about the alleged brick chimneys above those openings. At the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial he declared:[685]

> *"They*[686] *measured some 40 by 40 cm, with steel bars and, inside, solid wire-mesh. They ended at the ceiling, and above there was what seemed to be a duct. Yes, a lid. It was lifted, and from above the Zyklon B was simply poured in."*

In his drawing which shows a section through the alleged gas chamber the chimney is missing and the lid rests directly on the ceiling. Be-

[685] Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, 106th session on October 30, 1964, pp. 23181-23182.
[686] The shafts (Schächte) for the introduction of Zyklon B.

sides, Bakon's description of the introduction device clashes with the one given to van Pelt where there is no mention of a wire-mesh structure but of a tube "riddled with little holes" (see chapter 2.7.3.). Here we also have the "wooden covers," which are in disagreement with Tauber's concrete lids. Bakon's declaration is hence unreliable, and his drawing is nothing but a graphical illustration of the propaganda spread by the resistance movement (see next chapter).

13.3.2. David Olère

We now come to Olère. In chapters 10.2.4. and 10.5.1. I have already shown the lack of any historical basis for two of Olère's drawings. Van Pelt refers to two more drawings said to furnish "a very important visual record of the design and operation of the gas chamber and the incinerators of Crematorium 3" (p. 173). They consist of a plan view (p. 174) and a vertical section of Crematorium III (pp. 176f.). Van Pelt asserts that the *former* "is fully corroborated by the plans that were found by the Russians in the building of Central Construction Office" (p. 174), but this does not prove that a detail of Olère's *latter* drawing corresponds to reality. This detail actually consists of the four alleged Zyklon B introduction devices which appear on *Leichenkeller* 1 staggered along the north-south axis. In this respect van Pelt claims an alleged photographic "confirmation" (*ibid*.):

> *"Olère's staggered arrangement is confirmed by air photos of Birkenau taken by the Americans on August 25, 1944, and can be explained by assuming that these wire-mesh columns were located on the west side of the first and fifth structural columns, which supported the roof of the gas chamber, and on the east side of the third and seventh structural columns."*

As usual, van Pelt picks up an argument previously raised by Pressac (1989, p. 430). Both authors, though, provide a rather superficial analysis of the documents in question. Let me say, first of all, that in a specific study I have already demonstrated that there never were any introduction chimneys for Zyklon on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematoria II and III nor any respective holes in them (2005d, pp. 279-394).

A detailed discussion of the aerial photographs mentioned by van Pelt will be undertaken in the next chapter. Here, in order to refute his arguments, we will say only the following: The photographs show the presence of four dark blurry blotches on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1,

which van Pelt considers to be proof for the existence of four Zyklon B introduction devices. Such an interpretation is unwarranted, though, because these blotches are some 3-4 m long (those on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium III cover an area of some 3 m² at least) and, what is more, have a north-south axis whereas the axis of the shadow of the crematorium chimney lies northeast-southwest, hence they cannot even be shadows.

If we follow Pressac (1989, p. 253), the brick chimneys allegedly installed on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1 allowing the Zyklon B to be fed in from the outside had a height of 40-50 cm, while Kula gives the inner dimensions as 70×70 cm; they are hence in disagreement with the 3-4 m long blotches discernible on the aerial photograph of August 25, 1944, which thus proves nothing at all in this respect. This inevitably refutes also the alleged "confirmation" brought in by van Pelt. Hence, Olère's drawing does not demonstrate anything as far as the existence of the four alleged Zyklon B introduction openings are concerned.

Finally, if we look at Olère's drawing of the vertical section of Crematorium III, we have van Pelt's comment (p. 176):

> *"The most important information contained in this part of the drawing are the four hollow wire-mesh columns (E)."*

The caption of the drawing says in French "*Grille pour bombes à gaz*," translated by van Pelt as "[metal] grates [columns] for gas bombs" (pp. 176f.), which is an unmistakable reference to the mythical "bombs filled with Prussic acid" invented by Jerzy Tabeau (see chapter 16.1., 17.8.2., 18.4.6.1.). I shall return to Olère in the next chapter, in which I will show the real significance of his drawings.

13.3.3. Aerial Photographs of August 25, 1944

Keren et al. have looked in a somewhat more careful manner at the two aerial photographs taken on August 25, 1944.[687] I will summarize here my interpretation of their arguments as published elsewhere (2005d, chapter 4). The two above photographs, in particular the one labeled 3185 (*ibid*, photo 4, p. 387), show on the morgues' roofs four dark spots of irregular shapes, which the authors explain as follows (Keren et al., p. 72):

> *"The smudges are too large to belong just to the holes themselves. They probably correspond to the tamping down of a trail on*

[687] Mission 60 PR/694 60 SQ. Can F 5367. Exposure 3185, 3186. NA.

the roof by SS men detailed to introduce the canisters. The photograph shows the smudges alternating slightly, Holes 1 and 3 to the west, 2 and 4 to the east. A Sonderkommando survivor, Henryk Tauber, considered a reliable witness on technical issues, testified that the holes in Crematorium II were on alternating sides."

The authors have had the two photographs analyzed by "an expert on aerial photo interpretation, Carroll Lucas" (*ibid*.). On pages 95f. they report his findings:

"It is impossible to observe the Zyklon B holes themselves in any of the aerial photographs. […] *Mr. Lucas analyzed the two August 25 photos showing the roof of the Crematorium II.* […] *After careful study Mr. Lucas identified four small objects within the smudges, all slightly elevated above the level of the roof. Stereo imaging allows observation of even small objects in grainy images, very difficult or impossible to detect in separate images, as is well demonstrated by 'random dot stereograms.' In all probability, these correspond to the four 'chimneys' above the holes in the roof, as clearly visible in the Train Photograph. Thus, the aerial photographs add further support to the witness testimonies and to the Train Photograph. With regard to the dark smudges and related findings Mr. Lucas summarized his conclusions as follows:*

a) 'The roof of the partially underground wing of the Crematorium contains four raised vents, possibly with covers larger than their exits.'

b) 'The four dark areas observed on the Crematorium II roof (on positive prints) are compacted soil, produced by the constant movement of personnel deployed on the roof, as they worked around the vents' […].

c) 'The thin dark lineation (on positive prints) interconnecting the dark areas is a path of compacted earth produced by personnel moving from vent to vent.'

d) 'The dark area connecting this path to the edge of the roof from the vent nearest to the Crematorium roof is an extension of the path which shows where personnel gained access to the roof – possibly using a short ladder leaned against the roof.'

e) 'The evidence provided by this analysis lends credence to the fact the vents existed and were used in a way consistent with statements from multiple witnesses."

We will look at the soundness of these observations. I note, first of all, that the claim of the authors that "the photograph shows the smudges alternating slightly, holes 1 and 3 to the west, 2 and 4 to the east," is wrong. It is sufficient to delineate the shape of the *Leichenkeller* and to draw in the central beam that ran through it lengthwise to see that in reality the four smudges are all on the eastern half of the roof slab (Mattogno 2005d, photo 4b, p. 387). This deals the authors' thesis a decisive blow.

Their comment on Lucas' observations is really incredible: they state that "it is impossible to observe the Zyklon holes themselves," but still Lucas is said to have identified "four small objects within the smudges" which however are "very difficult or impossible to detect in separate images." In other words "the four small objects" cannot be seen, but – in an act of faith – they still have to be there! Finally, these objects, invisible as they are, correspond "in all probability" to the chimneys for Zyklon B!

What are Lucas' observations?

a) He claims that the cover of *Leichenkeller* 1 shows "four raised vents, possibly with covers": but how can he make a statement like that if it is impossible to observe the four alleged objects in separate images? And how was he able to see even the covers (!) of the alleged chimneys? Here, our "expert" has been somewhat imprudent, because he uses the term "vents," a clear reference to the first study of the aerial photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the one by Brugioni and Poirier, who on one of the two photographs taken on August 25, 1944, designate each of the above blotches – *a priori* and without any proof – by the very term "vent" (Brugioni/Poirier, p. 11). As the alleged objects are invisible and hence unidentifiable, Lucas' statement is not technical but purely propagandistic: he simply claimed to have seen what the authors had wanted him to see. This ideological and propagandistic character of Lucas' declarations also clearly shines through in his further statements.

b) He claims that the smudges visible on the cover of the *Leichenkeller* "are compacted soil, produced by the constant movement of personnel deployed on the roof, as they worked around the vents." Even assuming that this is technically sound – which, as we will see, it is not – we again run into the propagandist motivation: the smudges were caused by the personnel assigned to the gassings! How does he know that? Another act of faith for the holocaust.

Let us analyze his technical explanation. The Birkenau area is known to be sandy. On the photograph in question the soil of the inner yard of Crematorium II (but also at Crematorium III) is white, except for areas with flower beds or vegetation. Hence, by what extraordinary physico-chemical phenomenon would the white sand have become black when it was repeatedly walked on by a pair of SS[688] men? And why did those walking SS men cause dark blotches only in a certain area of the morgues, but not in a similar way on the claimed path from and to those areas? This is particularly true for morgue 1 of Crematorium III, where the blotches run in inexplicable angles with no connections to one another. Did the SS men jump from one blotch to another?

The authors come up with yet another and even more nonsensical explanation for those blotches. The "inner core" of the columns, i.e. the alleged movable "can" into which the Zyklon B was poured (according to Tauber; see chapter 10.3.5.), had been "temporarily removed and propped against the small chimney that housed the Zyklon insertion devices" (Keren et al., p. 97). But according to Kula this "can" "was an empty column of thin zinc plate of about 150 mm square" (see Mattogno 2005d, pp. 303f.). It was correctly drawn by Pressac (1989, p. 299). But if the Zyklon B chimneys, which according to the authors measured "about 60×60 cm" (Keren et al., p. 95; purely invented dimensions), are completely invisible in the photographs in question, how can anyone claim that devices 15×15 cm and at most one meter long could create smudges of some 3-4 meters in length and 1-1.5 m in width?

c) Lucas's statement that the four smudges are linked to "a path of compacted earth produced by personnel moving from vent to vent" is likewise propagandist. As long as the objection in relation to the change of color of compacted sand remains valid, on what grounds can one assume that the presumed compacting had produced "a path" and that it had been produced by the SS personnel allegedly assigned to the gassings?

d) Lucas claims furthermore to have identified, west of the fourth dark spot, the access "where personnel gained access to the roof." It takes some imagination to see in this extension of the smudge a footpath, all the more so since this extension finishes half-way between the smudge and the outer edge of the *Leichenkeller* (Mattogno 2005d, photo

[688] Acc. to M. Nyiszli there were two SS guards assigned to the alleged gassings. Nyiszli 1961, p. 45.

4a, p. 387). That Lucas' observations have no technical relevance but are only propagandist in nature results finally from an important fact to which he has obviously paid no attention at all. The ground of the yards in Crematoria II and III consisted of the same sand which (presumably) covered *Leichenkeller* 1 and 2. From the point of view of official historiography, if Lucas' explanation were true, the thousands upon thousands of Jews who had trodden this sand before being gassed in these two crematoria should have created a literal highway of dark sand from the gate of the yard to the entrance to *Leichenkeller* 2, the alleged undressing room. But the aerial photographs do not show even the slightest trace of supposedly compacted dark sand. But then how can anyone seriously argue that the smudges on *Leichenkeller* 1 have been caused by the sand being compacted under the boots of two men?

The aerial photographs of May 31, 1944, are known for not showing any dark blotches on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1 of the crematorium, but only one dark spot on its western edge. Van Pelt publishes this photograph (p. 449), but does not mention this fact in any way. Keren et al. give an explanation which is even more inconsistent than those analyzed above (see Mattogno 2005d, pp. 370f.).

As I have mentioned elsewhere, the dark spots were most probably discolorations of the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1. This cover consisted of a slab of reinforced concrete 18 cm thick, protected from the rain by a coat of black bitumen which was shielded from the atmosphere by a thin layer of cement which probably later crumbled in certain areas, leaving the bitumen layer exposed, thus creating the blotches which can be seen in the aerial photographs. This explanation relies on the assumption that the roof in question, in 1944, was devoid of sand, something which is shown clearly by the first photograph of the ruins of *Leichenkeller* 1, taken in 1945 (*ibid*., photo 5, p. 319). The aerial photograph dated December 21, 1944 (*ibid*., photo 6, p. 388), confirms this fact. It shows Crematorium II being dismantled. *Leichenkeller* 2 appears to be uncovered; the roof and a large portion of the chimney have been taken down. *Leichenkeller* 1 shows fairly angular contours, which means that the concrete cover was surely laid bare.

On the roof slab one can see two dark spots, more or less where spots 3 and 4 appeared in the photograph taken on August 25, 1944. Parallel to them there are two more spots along the eastern edge of the roof slab. Another, fainter spot appears roughly where the first spot shows up in the photograph of August 25, 1944, but it extends eastward

into another equally faint spot. The second spot of the photograph of August 25, 1944, does not show up this time. Together, this confirms that the explanation of the spots given by the authors is completely unfounded.

13.3.4. The "Train Photograph"

As "converging" evidence in favor of the existence of the alleged Zyklon B introduction devices on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II van Pelt also brings in a photograph from the *Kamann* series[689] said to date from December 1942 (pp. 340f.). He again takes over Pressac's remarks on this subject, the latter having published and analyzed the photograph, but assigning it to the period between February 9 and 11, 1943 (1989, p. 340). Van Pelt comments on it as follows (p. 340):

> *"One can see the basement space known in the plans as Morgue 1 projecting outward from the long side of the building. It is not yet covered with earth, and as a result one can easily see (just right of the smokestack of the locomotive in the foreground) the more or less cubical tops of three of the four wire-mesh Zyklon B insertion columns made by Kula, drawn by Olère, and described by Tauber. Again, by itself the photograph would not be conclusive evidence, but in combination with eyewitness evidence it proves the existence of these columns beyond reasonable doubt."*

This photograph has also been analyzed by Keren et al., and so I will also answer their arguments in this case. Because of the presence in the foreground of a small locomotive with several little cars, the authors call it the "Train Photograph." Farther away this photograph shows *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, on top of which there are some unidentifiable objects which the authors take to be the chimneys for the introduction of Zyklon B. As results from their Fig. 4 (Keren et al., p. 80), they claim to have identified the first two chimneys, starting from south; the third one is said to be "entirely occluded by the smokestack" of the engine, whereas the fourth appears for them "just to the left of a locomotive's smokestack" (both *ibid*., p. 71). The analysis of this photograph by the authors is extremely superficial and therefore intentionally skirts many essential elements.

[689] SS-Unterscharführer Dietrich Kamann, in charge of Gartengestaltung (landscaping) at ZBL.

1) First of all, let us state that the presence of chimney no. 3 behind the smokestack of the locomotive is pure conjecture and does not result from the photograph.

2) Secondly, the claim that the three indistinct objects which one can see on the roof slab of *Leichenkeller* 1 are introduction chimneys for Zyklon B is likewise an undemonstrated and indemonstrable assumption which is even, as we shall see under item 7, contrary to the evidence. The authors attempt to lend weight to their claim by bringing in two likewise known aerial photographs of the Birkenau area taken on August 25, 1944 (with which I have dealt in the preceding chapter), thereby creating, instead of a "convergence of proof," nothing but a circular reasoning. Anticipating their later arguments, they in fact state the following conclusion (*ibid*., p. 72):

> *"That the holes alternate in Crematorium II is supported by the aerial photograph, the Train Photograph, the physical findings, and Tauber's testimony."*

3) The indistinct objects taken by the authors to be chimneys 1 and 2 for Zyklon B are both situated on the eastern half of the roof of the mortuary, as shown by the corresponding diagram (Mattogno 2005d, photo 2b, p. 383), which conflicts with their basic thesis.

4) If, on the basis of this diagram, we calculate the positions of objects 1 and 2 along the median of the surface of the *Leichenkeller*, we see that they stood at 7.2 and 10.5 m from the southern end of the *Leichenkeller*. This is fully borne out by the diagram prepared by Provan, on which I have marked by numbers 1 and 2 the position of the respective objects (*ibid*., document 2i, p. 385). This means that object 1 is situated next to pillar no. 2 and east of the central beam, whereas Keren et al. claim that the alleged chimney 1 was next to pillar no. 1 and west of the central beam. Object 2 is about 3.3 m away from object 1, whereas the Zyklon B chimneys 1 and 2 as hypothesized by the Keren et al. should be located some 7.60 m apart (see *ibid*., p. 381).

5) According to the authors, object 4 should be located slightly in front of the last pillar of the *Leichenkeller*, hence some 4 m from the wall of the crematorium. If it were standing right next to the wall, as in fact it is, it would be less than 40 cm high, because its height corresponds to half the distance between the pair of windows to its left and the level of the *Leichenkeller*, as the windows of the crematorium were some 100 cm above ground level and *Leichenkeller* 1 rose 26 cm from the ground (Pressac 1989, pp. 286, 325), which means that the windows

were located at a height of (100 – 26 =) 74 cm, and the object would thus have measured about half that value. If instead the object had been at the position indicated by the authors, it would be even lower because of the perspective.

Already on blueprint 936 of January 15, 1942 (*ibid*., pp. 268f.), and in the later ones as well, a layer of earth had been specified for the top of *Leichenkeller* 1; blueprint 933[-934] of January 19 gives the precise thickness of this layer: 45 cm (*ibid*., p. 279). It follows that object 4, rising less than 40 cm above the concrete surface of the *Leichenkeller*, would have been buried in this layer of earth, therefore it could not have been a chimney for Zyklon B.

6) What may these objects have been? The photograph in question does not allow us to solve this riddle, but there is another photograph, also from the *Kamann* series, taken a few weeks earlier, which shows the *Leichenkeller* of Crematorium II in greater detail (Mattogno 2005d, photo 3, p. 386). On this photograph the objects that are claimed to be chimneys for Zyklon B do not appear at all. In chapter 2.4. I have already demonstrated that the hypothesis of a creation of holes in the ceiling of *Leichenkeller* 1 for the introduction of Zyklon B is technical nonsense and also in total disagreement with one of the principal tenets of the official thesis shared also by the authors. In the photograph just mentioned there is, on the roof of the *Leichenkeller*, an object with square sides, leaning against the wall to the left of the third pair of windows, which seems to be made up by a pile of boxes (*Ibid*., photo 3 & 3a, p. 386). Curiously the position of this object corresponds exactly to the alleged chimney 4 of the "Train Photograph." We may have here an alternative explanation for chimney no. 4.

7) Let us move on to the other two objects. The authors assume as an established fact that they were rectangular parallelepipeds and answer D. Irving's hypotheses as follows (Keren et al., p. 71):

> *"David Irving has speculated that the holes are really 'drums containing sealant,' but it is obvious that this cannot be the case: a cylindrical object would produce a gradual light pattern, while the objects above display a sharp change between uniform light and uniform shadow."*

Actually, this is anything but "obvious." As is shown by an enlargement of objects 1 and 2 (Mattogno 2005d, photo 2c & 2d, p. 384), they have a shape that is rounded at top and bottom, which is absolutely incompatible with the shadow zones of a parallelepiped. This also re-

sults from a comparison with one of the ventilation chimneys of the crematorium and the chimney of the ovens (*ibid*., photos 2e & 2f, p. 384). It is therefore possible that the objects have a cylindrical shape.[690] But an object, cylindrical in shape, appears clearly just in front of the south wall of the *Leichenkeller* (*ibid*., photo 2g, p. 385). Its dimensions, considering that the cylinder is standing right against the wall, are compatible with the two objects located on top of the *Leichenkeller*. We have here, no doubt, drums that were used during the construction. A similar cylinder, identifiable as a metal barrel, appears also in a photograph which shows the erection of the chimney of Crematorium III.[691]

Supporting the hypothesis that objects not associated with Zyklon B chimneys were temporarily stored on or near this roof is the fact that there are two more objects on the Train Photograph diligently ignored by Keren et al. One of them is on the roof to the left of object no. 2 (Provan's object no. 3), yet because it has a conspicuously lighter shadow than the others and is located too close to the other two objects to be Zyklon B chimney no. 3, it is ignored, just like a smaller object of different color to the right of object no. 1, which obviously is located behind the roof.

David Irving's hypothesis therefore remains the most reasonable one, and the objects were probably barrels of tar or bitumen used for the insulation of the roof of that morgue. A request for insulating materials from *Zentralbauleitung* dated October 8, 1942, mentions in fact a requirement of 11,000 kg of bitumen and 4,500 kg of tar-based adhesive (*Teer-Klebemasse*).[692]

We may therefore conclude that the "convergence of proof" claimed by van Pelt is nothing but a collection of false and contradictory testimonies and of aerial and terrestrial photographs wrongly and deceptively interpreted which do not prove anything.

[690] The camera was located above the level of the Leichenkeller and was inclined by a few degrees; this explains the fact that the two objects should also show a rounded top.
[691] Pressac 1989, photograph 11 on p. 337. Mattogno 2005d, photograph 2h on p. 385 (enlargement).
[692] RGVA, 502-1-313, illegible page number.

14. Zyklon B

14.1. HCN Concentration in the Alleged Homicidal Gas Chambers

One of the strategies adopted by van Pelt and defense counsel Rampton in their endeavors to refute the *Leuchter Report* was to assume, for the alleged homicidal gassings, an HCN concentration far lower than the one postulated by Leuchter, against whom they argued (p. 387, similar p. 415):

> *"Then he wrongly reasoned that, in accordance with American practice, the Germans had used a high concentration of 3,600 parts of hydrogen cyanide per million parts of air – the concentration used in United States gas chambers to ensure that the condemned will die a quick death – while in fact the German used a concentration of 300 parts per million to kill their victims."*

Where does this assumed *effective* concentration stem from? From the *Leuchter Report*, although Leuchter mentioned 3,200 ppm, not 3,600 (Leuchter et al., p. 33). Van Pelt himself writes (p. 388):

> *"In American gas chambers, inmates were killed with 3,200 ppm, the effect of which the critique describes as 'one-gulp-and-you're-dead.' A concentration of 300 ppm brought about 'rapid and immediate death.' Given the fact that there were accounts that it took people up to 30 minutes to expire, concentrations at Auschwitz could have been as low as 100 ppm."*

We see that van Pelt deduces the HCN concentration from the time it took the alleged victims to die, but choosing a duration which is categorically denied by many of the witnesses he cites:

J. Weiss (Hackett, p. 350):

> *"Then the gas was let into the chamber. The lungs of the victims slowly burst, and after three minutes a loud clamoring could be heard. Then the chamber was opened, and those who still showed signs of life were beaten to death."*

C.S. Bendel:[693]

> *"To kill a chamber full of people required 3-5 minutes."*

M. Nyiszli (1961, p. 45):

[693] Statement by C.S. Bendel on October 21, 1945. NI-11390, p. 3.

"Within five minutes everybody was dead."

R. Höss:[694]

"It took from 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber depending upon climatic conditions."

F. Müller instead speaks of "*zehn Minuten*" (ten minutes, p. 183). In judge Sehn's report which the judge compiled with the help of the engineer Dawidowski, it is said that "the death of the victims occurred within 3-10 minutes, depending on the concentration of the hydrogen cyanide, but to make sure the gassing went on for about 20 minutes" (Höss trial, vol. 11. p. 45).

As far as hydrogen cyanide is concerned, we may use as a basis for our calculations the alleged gas chamber of Crematorium II or III which measured 30×7×2.41 m or 506.1 cubic meters. Subtracting the volume occupied by the supporting pillars and the central beam, we are left with about 499 cubic meters. For a gassing operation involving 1,500 persons of an average weight of 60 kg (see chapter 1.9.), we have, for the volume they occupy, (0.06×1,500 =) 90 cubic meters. The effective empty space is thus (499–90 =) 409 m³ which means that, for a theoretical concentration of 300 ppm by volume or 0.36 g/m³, one would have needed (0.36×409 =) about 147 grams of hydrogen cyanide.[695] For 100 ppm (or 0.12 g/m³) we would instead have about 49 grams of HCN.

These amounts, as we will see in the next chapter, are in total disagreement with the quantities of Zyklon B used in the homicidal gas chambers according to van Pelt. We must note, moreover, that for van Pelt the HCN concentration actually used in the alleged homicidal gas chambers went up or down depending upon the requirements of the moment. Dr. R.J. Green, replying to G. Rudolf in the expert opinion requested from him by van Pelt, calculates the HCN concentration in the alleged homicidal gas chambers as a function of time on the basis of a *minimum* concentration of 5 g/m³ (or 4,165 ppm) and a maximum of 20 g/m³ (or 16,660 ppm; Green), thus introducing an irreconcilable contradiction into van Pelt's critique of the *Leuchter Report*. The whole of this critique is, in fact, based on this *effective* concentration of 300 or 100 ppm of HCN (van Pelt 2002, pp. 411f.):

"Leuchter's conclusions were fatally flawed because of his totally mistaken premise that a far higher concentration of cyanide would

[694] Van Pelt 2002, 4. Sworn statement by R. Höss dated April 5, 1946. PS-3868.
[695] 1ppm = 0.0012 g/m³.

be required to kill people in the gas chambers than would be required for the purpose of delousing. […].

He [Irving] *would have picked up the fundamental fallacy of the Leuchter Report and realized that many of Leuchter's reasons for denying the existence of the killing chambers were invalid. For example, Leuchter had argued that the ventilation system of the chambers would have been wholly inadequate. But if the concentration required was much lower than he assumed, it follows that the ventilation requirements would be correspondingly reduced. Similarly, Leuchter's argument that the high concentration of cyanide required to kill humans would have created a high risk of toxic contamination of the sewers would be invalidated if the concentration required was a fraction of that assumed by Leuchter."*

In the same way van Pelt's refutation of Leuchter's hypothesis regarding the explosive nature of HCN in air was based upon the idea that the concentration used in the alleged homicidal gas chambers "was around 300 parts per million" (p. 362). Van Pelt bolsters the argument saying (p. 388):

"Because the gas chambers were operated with a low (but lethal) hydrocyanide concentration of 100 ppm, there was no danger of explosion."

Finally, this low concentration would also explain the minute concentration of cyanides found by Leuchter in the walls of the alleged homicidal gas chamber of Crematorium III (p. 442). This conjecture by van Pelt is also at variance with Tauber's assertion as to the splitting of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II into two gas chambers in order to save Zyklon B in cases of small transports. Taking an extreme case, the gassing of a *single* detainee in this room would have theoretically required only some [(499–0.06)×0.36 =] 180 grams of HCN, if we assume van Pelt's HCN upper concentrations (300 ppm), as against 147 grams for a group of 1,500 persons for that concentration, or [(499–0.06)×0.12 =] about 60 grams against 49 grams for a concentration of 100 ppm. Hence, in order to save 1 kg of Zyklon B, between [1,000÷(180–147)=] 30 and [1,000÷(60–49) =] 90 gassings would have had to be carried out. With Zyklon B available in 1944 at a cost of 5 RM per kilogram[696] it is highly unlikely that ZBL would have built a

[696] PS-1553, pp. 15-26, Invoice from Degesch concerning the supply of Zyklon B to KL Auschwitz and Oranienburg addressed to SS-Obersturmführer Kurt Gerstein.

wall in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, complete with a gas-tight door, to save 5 RM every 30 or 90 days![697]

The most "precise" and, from a mainstream point of view, most authoritative witness on the amount of Zyklon B employed for the alleged gassings is Höss. In his sworn declaration of May 20, 1946, he states (NI-034):

> *"Of the Zyklon B, between 5 and 7 cans of 1 kilogram each were needed for the gassing of 1,500 people; the number of cans varied, depending on the size of the gas chamber and on the weather conditions, i.e. when the weather was cold and humid, an extra 2 or 3 cans were needed."*

He explicitly mentions an average amount of "6 cans for 1,500 people" (*ibid*.). In his interrogation of may 14, 1946, Höss, speaking of the gassing of 1,500 to 1,600 persons, specified (NI-036):

> *"For this, one needed – it varied by crematorium, in the large crematoria 7, in other rooms 5 cans. But it also depended on the weather. If it was very cold and wet, one had to take an extra 2-3 cans."*

Hence, for the alleged homicidal gas chambers of Crematoria II and III, 7 kg of Zyklon B (or even 10!) would be needed to gas 1,500 persons. This amounts to a theoretical concentration maximum of (7,000÷409 =) 17.1 g/m³ or circa 14,250 ppm. We see that van Pelt selected an effective concentration (14,250÷300 =) 47.5 or (14,250÷100=) 142.5 times lower than the one given by the most authoritative holocaustic source and used this glaring aberration to "demolish" the *Leuchter Report*!

We should not forget either that the most authoritative historian on the subject of Auschwitz, Pressac, has stated that "the gaseous poison used in the homicidal gas chambers was hydrogen cyanide at a high concentration (20 g/m³)" (1993, p. 71), corresponding to 16,666 ppm, i.e. 55.5 or even 166.6 times higher than van Pelt's values.

I will close this chapter with another quotation of the same vein directed against Leuchter by van Pelt (p. 387):

> *"Then he took no account of the fact that the gas chambers of Crematoria 2 and 3 had been purposefully demolished in 1944, that their remains had been exposed to the elements for forty-five years,*

[697] By definition, during one day not more than one gassing of a very small number of detainees would have been carried out, otherwise the victims would have been grouped to be killed together.

and that the walls had been washed with acid rain – a fact of some importance because, contrary to Leuchter's belief, ferro-ferri cyanide is not stable under all conditions but tends to slowly dissolve in an acidic environment."

These assertions show up van Pelt's crass technical and even archeological ignorance. As any visitor to Birkenau can see, the *outer* walls of the gas disinfestation chambers of BW 5a still exhibit vast areas stained blue with ferric ferrocyanide or Prussian Blue (less so at BW 5 b), even though they, too, have been "washed with acid rain" for decades. As Germar Rudolf has shown, Prussian Blue has its highest stability in a slightly acidic environment as produced by acid rain (Rudolf 2003b, p. 170).

In this context van Pelt refers to the chemical expert report commissioned by the Auschwitz Museum in 1994 to the *Jahn Sehn Instytut Ekspertyz Sądowych* (Institute for Forensic Research) based in Krakow (Markiewicz et al.) and states that its results "positively demonstrate that the alleged gas chambers were used to kill people" (van Pelt 2002, p. 355). I will not go into chemical matters here and would merely like to point out that the chemist Germar Rudolf has shown this expert report in question to be methodically and scientifically flawed and thus unfounded (Rudolf/Mattogno 2005, pp. 45-67; Rudolf 2003b, pp. 270-273).

14.2. Zyklon B Deliveries to Auschwitz

In his book van Pelt mentions his 32-page supplementary report entitled "Deliveries of Zyklon B to Auschwitz and Consumption Rates of Zyklon B in Auschwitz and Other Camps" (p. 428), from which he summarizes the results: in 1943 12,000 kg of Zyklon B were shipped to Auschwitz, of which "a maximum 9,000 kg could have been used for 'ordinary' delousing procedures (2,730 kg would have been used for the delousing of clothing, blankets, and other items in use by the prisoners, while some 6,270 kg could have been used for the delousing of barracks)." The remaining 3,000 kg "would have been available for purposes above and beyond those engaged in at other camps." Out of these 3,000 kg, according to van Pelt's calculations, 400 kg "would have been used for the delousing of the clothing of the deportees in the delousing chamber in Canada I before shipment to the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi) for redistribution among the ethnic Germans," 940 kg at the

most "could have been used for the occasional delousing of the railway freight carriages before their dispatch back to origin," and the remaining 1,660 kg were used for the alleged homicidal gassings (p. 427). Summarizing all this, the consumption of Zyklon B can be split up as given in Table 22.

Table 22: Zyklon B at Auschwitz by van Pelt	
Disinfestation of barracks	6,270 kg
Disinfestation chambers	3,130 kg
Disinfestation of freight cars	940 kg
Homicidal gassings	1,660 kg
Total:	12,000 kg

Let me say, first of all, that the extreme lack of any documents makes any kind of reconstruction of the applications of Zyklon B most conjectural. Van Pelt's figures are therefore completely arbitrary, as we can see from a verification of the data concerning the gas disinfestation chambers, for which we at least have some basis from which to start.

Bischoff's letter of January 9, 1943, tells us that at that time the following disinfestation chambers using Zyklon B were in operation at Auschwitz:

- 1 in the so-called "Kanada I" section, in operation since the summer of 1942;
- 1 in BW 5a, in operation since autumn of 1942;
- 1 in BW 5b, in operation since autumn of 1942.[698]

On July 30, 1943, the civilian employee Jährling compiled a "List of the disinfestation units, baths and disinfection devices installed at KL and KGL Auschwitz," in which he also indicated their "daily throughput (24 hours)." According to this, the operational gas disinfestation chambers using Zyklon B had the following throughput:

- 1 in block 3 of Auschwitz "for about 20,000 pieces of laundry";
- 1 in "Kanada I" "for about 30,000 pieces of laundry, blankets, etc.";
- 1 in BW 5a,[699] "daily throughput 8,000 blankets."[700]

How many gassings had to be carried out to accomplish these daily throughputs? On July 4, 1944, the head of the Weimar ZBL, in reply to a request for information from Jothann on the local disinfestation gas

[698] Letter from Bischoff to Kammler dated January 9, 1943, re: "Hygienische Einrichtungen im K.L. und K.G.L.." RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 46-46a.

[699] The document generally mentions BW 5a and 5b, but in the second half of 1943, the gas chamber of BW 5b (the one on the east side) was transformed into a "Heissluftentlausung" (hot-air delousing). Cf. plan 2540 dated July 5, 1943 in: Pressac 1989, p. 58.

[700] RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 9-10.

chambers using the *Degesch-Kreislauf* system, gave the following information:[701]

> *"The disinfestation is radical and absolutely effective. The rule is: small and well stacked loads – short treatment time; dense loads – long duration of the gassing. Using a 200 g can, the times thus vary between 1 and 12 hours. We figure for 100 working outfits including all accessories (shoes and such) about 3 hours per chamber, degassing ½ hour. A chamber packed full with suitcases and bags (without carts) is left under gas for one night.* […]
>
> *The normal kind of hangers, specially made in sturdy construction, have been most useful. 100 pieces have to be made available per chamber."*

The *Degesch-Kreislauf* chambers measured 1.35 m × 4 m × 1.90 m (w/l/h) and thus had a floor area of 5.4 m² and a volume of 10.26 m³. Hence, the use of 200 g of Zyklon B corresponds to a concentration of 20 g/m³. The gas chamber of BW 5a and 5b measured 9.90×10.90 = 107.9 m²; the height was 3 m over $^2/_3$ of the floor area and 4.7 m over $^1/_3$, giving a total volume of some 384 m³. It had three stoves for heating and two ventilators,[702] and at least two complete gassings of 12 hours each could be carried out daily. The consumption of Zyklon B was thus (384×0.020 =) about 7.6 kg for each gassing and about 15.2 kg per day. In 1943 the consumption would thus have been (15.2×365 =) 5,548 kg for the gas chamber in BW 5a and another 2,774 kg for at least six months of operation of the gas chamber in BW 5b, for a total of 8,322 kilograms.

The gas chamber of block 3 measured 4.92×17.65 m,[703] for a height of about 2.5 m, giving it a volume of some 217 m³. It was equipped with a ventilator in suction but had no means of heating; one may thus assume only one daily gassing with a consumption of (217×0.020 =) 4.3 kg per day or about (4.3×365 =) 1,570 kg per year. According to Pressac, the daily consumption was 5.15 kg for a concentration of 24 g/m³ of hydrogen cyanide.[704] The dimensions of the gas chamber in "Kanada I" are not known; from its daily throughput of "30,000 pieces of laundry," as compared to the 20,000 for the gas chamber in block 3, one

[701] RGVA, 502-1-333, pp. 17-17a.
[702] The three stoves are still present in the room, as are the two round openings in the eastern wall in which the ventilators were set.
[703] Plan 1046 dated February 19, 1942, in: Pressac 1989, p. 24.
[704] *Ibid.*, p. 25. Because of a printing error, the consumption is indicated as 51.5 kg instead of 5.15.

may deduce that it was 1.5 times the size, but even if we assume the same consumption, it would have absorbed another 1,570 kg of Zyklon B in one year. Thus the total consumption of Zyklon B in the disinfestation gas chambers mentioned could have been as high as some 11,462 kilograms in 1943.

We do not know, though, over how many days the chambers were in actual operation, which means that we cannot say with certainty how much Zyklon B was actually consumed, but for that very reason van Pelt's calculations have no value. Thus we may say in conclusion that it is totally unwarranted to attempt to demonstrate, on the basis of the shipments of Zyklon B which reached Auschwitz, that any particular fraction of this chemical was used for homicidal purposes. The 1,660 kg arrived at by van Pelt are thus pure fantasy.

Let us examine van Pelt's estimate of the Zyklon B required to disinfest the barracks. In 1944 the following inmate housing existed:[705]

- 190 accommodation barracks (*Unterkunftbaracken*) of the type *Pferdestallbaracken* (horse stable barracks) type 260/9, which measured 40.76 m × 9.56 m × 2.65 m = approximately 1,032 m^3 each, with a total of (1,032×190 =) about 196,000 m^3;
- 41 barracks, same type yet used for other means = about 42,300 m^3;
- 10 barracks with a volume of 580 m^3 each, total = about 5,800 m^3;
- 16 barracks with a volume of 400 m^3 each, total = about 6,400 m^3;
- 29 barracks with a volume varying from about 470 m^3 to about 2,100 m^3, total = about 27,000 m^3.

The total volume was therefore ca. 277,500 m^3. There were 28 two-level brick blocks with basement in the Auschwitz main camp externally measuring 45.10 m × 13.84 m = 624.18 m^2 each. The average level height can be assumed to be on average ca. 3 m, so that the total volume of each block was 624.18 m^2 × 3 (levels) × 3 m = about 5,600 m^3; with 28 blocks we get (28×5600) about 156,800 m^3, which can be rounded to 150,000 m^3 to account for partitions. At Monowitz there were 67 barracks plus a few other buildings, so that a minimal volume of (1,032× 67) ca. 69,200 m^3 can be assumed. The total volume was therefore approximately 503,500 m^3. If assuming an HCN concentration for disinfestations of 8 to 10 grams per m^3,[706] one complete disinfestation would have required some 4,024 to 5,035 kg of Zyklon B.

[705] Kostenvoranschlag zum Ausbau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS in Auschwitz, October 1, 1943, RGVA, 502-1-238, pp. 15-18.
[706] NI-9912, p. 1.

Van Pelt asserts that 1943 was "a year that typhus in Auschwitz was very much under control" (p. 427), insinuating that the consumption of Zyklon B for disinfestation was not overly high. From the documents which have come down to us, a completely different picture emerges, however. In chapters 2.1.4. and 2.6.3. I have given an account of the sanitation activities on the part of the camp authorities in their fight against typhus. Let me summarize and complete the image.

On February 12, 1943, Bischoff informed Kammler that "due to a strong increase in typhus cases" Glücks had ordered a "total camp closure" for Auschwitz on February 9 and that "in this connection all detainees have been undergoing disinfestation since February 11, 1943." On February 11 and 12 a disinfestation of all inmate Kommandos was in progress, and the disinfestation of the PoW camp and the women's camp was to follow right away. On February 13 an increase in typhus cases was noticed even among the civilian employees. On February 14 Höss announced the measures of the SS garrison surgeon for the disinfestations. On February 16 the disinfestation of the detainees was terminated, and work was again resumed. On February 25 the SS garrison surgeon suggested "to close the main camp, the men's and the women's concentration camps at Birkenau as well as the PoW camp, section 2, for three weeks" and to carry out "two runs of thorough delousing and disinfestation for these camps" during this period. As the typhus cases continued to increase, the SS garrison surgeon decided to perform a "total delousing" of the 1,300 civilian workers stationed at Auschwitz; it took place between April 3 and 10 and concerned the workers themselves, all their goods and their lodgings.[707]

On July 22, the *1. Schutzhaftlagerführer* of the Birkenau men's camp, *SS-Untersturmführer* Johann Schwarzhuber, wrote a letter to *Kommandantur* which mentions the large-scale disinfestation measures undertaken at camp BI b in the early months of 1943:[708]

> *"By mid-May 1943 the old* [former] *men's camp at Birkenau, camp BI b, was almost free of lice and also free of typhus except for a few cases. This could only be accomplished by a continuous passage of the blocks through the delousing installation located there.*

[707] Letter from SS-Standortarzt to Zentralbauleitung datd April 1, 1943 re: "Gesamtentlausung der Zivilarbeiter." RGVA502-1-332, pp. 222-224. Letter from Bischoff "an den Vorstand des Reichsbahn – Neubauamtes" at Kattowitz dated April 9, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-178, p. 40. Letter from Bischoff to SS-Standortarzt dated April 10, 1943 re: "Gesamtentlausung der Zivilarbeiter." RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 227.

[708] RGVA, 502-1-336, pp. 101-101a.

From mid-May onwards this installation was also used for the delousing of the gypsy camp and of the straw mattresses, wool blankets, underwear, and dresses of the women's camp. These delousings, which had to be accomplished in addition to our own, brought in lice again in spite of all precautions, and the number of typhus patients went up. […]

In the old men's camp BIb this delousing of the blocks was carried out by myself in this way and the camp would have become free of lice, if the circumstances mentioned initially had not occurred."

This shows that all the blocks of camp BIb were disinfested and that the gas chamber of BW5a operated continuously at least from before mid-May and after mid-July. Still, in spite of this feverish disinfestation activity the camp was again infested. On June 26 the SS garrison surgeon ordered the isolation of block 1, "because of the accumulation of typhus cases in block 1."[709] From a letter of the *Lagerarzt* of camp BIa to *Kommandantur*, dated July 25, 1943, we learn that the situation had worsened: disinfestation of blocks 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9 was scheduled for the following day, and on July 27 blocks 5, 6, 11, 12 and 16 were to be treated; in addition the "delousing of the sickbay" was to take place on July 28 and 29.[710]

In *Kommandantursonderbefehl Nr. 16/43* dated July 23, 1943, Höss gave detailed instructions "for the implementation of the delousing of camp BIa," which was to take place on July 24 and 25, including the order not to loiter in the vicinity of camp BIa "because of the danger of vapors of toxic gas" (Frei et al., pp. 314f.). He gave the same instructions in *Kommandantursonderbefehl Nr. 17/43* dated July 30, 1943, "for the implementation of the delousing of camp BIId," which was to take place on July 31 and August 1 (*ibid*., pp. 319f.). In his "Report on the continuation of the work on special measures in the PoW camp and in the main camp," Bischoff wrote the following on July 31:[711]

"Building section I. Work has been stopped in BAI since July 26 because of the delousing action scheduled. For this reason a continuation of the work is impossible until the end of the delousing action."

In a report dated August 7 Bischoff stated:[712]

[709] Letter from SS-Standortarzt "an die Lagerführerin des Lagers BIa Birkenau" dated June 26, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-65, p. 74.
[710] RGVA, 502-1-65, pp. 62-62a.
[711] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 99.
[712] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 237.

> *"On account of the implementation of the delousing, the details (Kommandos), in particular the expert details* [*Facharbeiterkommandos*]*, could not move out during the week of August 2 through 7, 1943.* […] *According to the camp command, the details are to move out in full force after the termination of the delousing on next Monday. It must be pointed out, though, that so far the delousing could not be implemented as planned due to a lack of gas, which means that a complete deployment by the beginning of next week cannot yet be envisaged with certainty."*

Even at the end of 1943, disinfestation of the "housing barracks" was still going on, as we can see from a letter to Bischoff (at the time *Leiter der Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei "Schlesien"*) written on December 10 by SS garrison surgeon and signaling an incident which had occurred the previous day: a civilian worker had forced open the door of a room being gassed and had been near death.[713]

From this fragmentary documentation we may deduce that in 1943 various disinfestations were carried out throughout the Auschwitz complex and in sections of the Birkenau camp, which required unknown but certainly enormous amounts of Zyklon B. This is another confirmation of the fact that van Pelt's calculations concerning the consumptions of Zyklon B are pure fantasy.

Pressac asserts *ex cathedra* that only 2-3% of the Zyklon B supplied were sufficient for the alleged homicidal gassings, "so that 97-98% of the gas could be devoted to delousing" (1993, p. 47), whereas for van Pelt the percentage of Zyklon B used for the alleged homicidal gassings is arbitrarily set at (1,660÷12,000×100 =) 13.8%. But neither Pressac nor van Pelt back up their assertion with even any fanciful invented figures.

14.3. Number of Potentially Gassed Victims

Van Pelt then wonders how many people could have been gassed with his fantasized 1,660 kg of Zyklon B and presents a further calculation (pp. 427f.):

> *"The German Health Institution of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in Prague calculated that 70 mg of Zyklon B is sufficient to kill one person. This meant that, in theory, the surplus of 1,660 kg of Zyklon B, if used with 100 percent efficiency, could have*

[713] RGVA, 502-1-8, p. 25.

killed (1,660×14,000 =) 23.2 million people. But, of course, the efficiency was much lower. Pery Broad testified that the SS used two 1-kg tins to kill 2,000 people, or 1 kg per 1,000 people. It is important to note that in his report written before war ended, Kurt Gerstein mentioned that 'I have with me invoices for 2,175 kilos, but in truth the amount involved was around 8,500 kilos, enough to kill eight million people.' In assuming that 8,500 kg of Zyklon B would be sufficient to kill 8 million people, Gerstein used the same ratio of [i.e. as] *Broad. This implies that 1,660 kg of Zyklon B could have killed 1.6 million people. When he testified in Hamburg, Dr. Bendel stated that a 1-kg tin was good for the murder of 500 people, which means that 1,660 kg of Zyklon B was sufficient to murder 830,000 people. I concluded that in 1943 Auschwitz had a surplus of Zyklon B of between three to six times what was necessary to kill the 250,000 people murdered in Auschwitz that year."*

First of all, "the German Health Institution of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in Prague" "calculated" nothing at all. Van Pelt refers to the "*Richtlinien für die Anwendung von Blausäure (Zyklon) zur Ungeziefervertilgung (Entwesung)*" (Directives for the application of hydrogen cyanide (Zyklon) for the extermination of pests (disinfestation)), which simply states a passage from the specialized literature saying that "hydrogen cyanide is one of the strongest poisons. To kill a person, 1 mg per kg of body weight is sufficient."[714] Hence, 70 mg of HCN (not of Zyklon B!) are enough to kill a man weighing 70 kg. When dealing with HCN vapors, the lethal concentration in the air also depends on the breathing intensity, hence the values can vary. They are generally given as follows (Szadkowski, p. 5):

"An HCN gas concentration of 270 ppm in the air is immediately lethal. Concentrations of approx. 180 ppm cause death after an exposure time of 10 minutes; concentrations of 135 ppm cause death after 30 minutes."

A concentration of 270 ppm corresponds to 0.324 g/m³ or 0.324 mg/liter. Other specialized texts confirm these values.[715] Van Pelt's

[714] NI-9912, p. 1. HCN was "one of the strongest poisons" only until the invention of nerve gases, which are up to two orders of magnitude more poisonous; the most lethal of them, VX, has a median lethal dose of only some 0.7 mg; see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VX_(nerve_agent).

[715] Fumasoni/Rafanelli 1960, p. 8: concentration "rapidly fatal": 0.3 mg/liter; Berufsgenossenschaft 1985, p. 9: "180-270 ml/m³ rasch tödlich." 1 ml = 1 ppm; 180-270 ml = 0.2-0.3 mg/liter.

statement regarding "23.2 million people" thus has no scientific basis. At the Tesch trial Broad declared that "two of the bigger tins were needed or were sufficient to gas a large gassing room" (p. 27 of [716]) and that the alleged gas chambers of Crematoria II and III (the "large" ones) took in 3,000-4,000 people (*ibid*., p. 24); thus, 1 kg of Zyklon B would have been sufficient for 1,500-2,000 and not 1,000 people. Van Pelt's manipulation was obviously intended to produce a non-existent "convergence" between Broad and Gerstein. How reliable such a declaration is, can be seen from Broad's following reply (*ibid*., p. 23):

"Q. As a rough estimate what was the total number of people exterminated by gas while you were at Auschwitz and Berkenau [sic]*?*

A. I would think 2½ millions to 3 millions."

It is true that Bendel declared at the Tesch trial that in May and June 1944 "two tins[717] for one thousand persons" were used, but he goes on to say:[718]

"Q. You have said that the gas chambers were ten metres by four metres by one metre sixty centimetres: is correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it right that are 64 cubic metres?

A. I am not very certain. This is not my strong side.

Q. How is possible to get a thousand people into a room of 64 cubic metres?

A. This one must ask oneself. It can only be done by the German technique."

One thousand grams of HCN in a room of 64 m³ would produce a concentration of (1,000÷64 =) 15.6 g/m³. If one were indeed able to squeeze 1,000 persons into this room thanks to the legendary "German technique," the volume occupied by their bodies would be 60 m,³ and in the remaining 4 m³ of air space we would have a theoretical concentration of (1,000÷4 =) 250 g/m³, whereas van Pelt assumes an actual concentration of 0.36 or 0.12 grams of HCN per m³! The 64 m³ mentioned above stem from the fact that Bendel claimed that the alleged gas chambers of Crematoria II and III measured 10×4×1.60 meters – this gives us a good yardstick by which to measure his trustworthiness (see chapter 17.7.1.).

[716] Interrogation of P. Broad dated March 2, 1946, p. 27. NI-11954.
[717] Presumably of 500 grams.
[718] Interrogation of C.S. Bendel dated March 2, 1946, pp. 30f.

Let us now look at Gerstein. He wrote that "freight-cars with hydrogen cyanide were needed all the time" at Auschwitz and Oranienburg, yet not for homicidal aims, but "for the purpose of disinfection." He added that at "Auschwitz millions of children alone were killed by means of a wad [soaked with] hydrogen cyanide held under their noses" and that the director of Degesch had actually told him "he had supplied hydrogen cyanide in vials for the killing of people."[719] Gerstein in actual fact knew nothing about homicidal gassings with Zyklon B, because his estimate (8,500 kg of Zyklon B would have been enough to kill eight million people) has no technical foundation.

Hence, van Pelt's alleged "convergences" work only after proper manipulation of spurious sources, a manipulation which includes the elimination of "discordant" sources, such as Höss's declarations to the effect that in Crematoria II and III at least 7 kg of Zyklon B were used to kill 1,500 people, i.e. – using van Pelt's method – 1 kg for 214 persons.

But there is another, more striking disagreement. Van Pelt claims, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, that the effective concentration employed in the alleged gas chambers was 300 or even 100 ppm. For a hypothetical gassing operation involving 1,500 people, 147 or even 49 grams of HCN would have been sufficient.

Taking van Pelt's reasoning somewhat further, the theoretical 1,660 kg of Zyklon B would have been enough to kill ([1,660÷0.147]×1,500 =) about 16,939,000 or ([1,660÷0.049]×1,500 =) 50,816,000 persons! Van Pelt accepts Bendel's assertion (2 kg of Zyklon B for 2,000 persons) – but turning it around we see that we obtain a concentration of 5.27 g/m³ or 4,391 ppm for *Leichenkeller* 1 of the Crematoria II/III, which is 14 to 43 times higher than the one van Pelt himself takes to be effective.[720]

I will close this chapter with a remark which still concerns the concentration of HCN, but seen from a different point of view. The trial against Bruno Tesch, Karl Weinbacher and Joachim Drosihn, accused of having supplied Zyklon B to the SS for extermination purposes, took place in Hamburg between March 1 and April 26, 1946. It was at this

[719] German report by K. Gerstein dated May 6, 1945. PS-2170, p. 9; no such vials ever existed, though.

[720] Assuming as before an average weight of the victims of 60 kg, the volume they occupied was (0.06×2,000=) 120 m³, the available air volume was thus (499–120=) 379 m³; 2,000 g of HCN therefore produced a concentration of (2,000÷379=) 5.27 g/m³ or (5.27÷0.0012=) 4,391 ppm.

trial that P. Broad and C.S. Bendel were called as witnesses. Tesch and Weinbacher were sentenced to death by the British Military Court. 960,000 Jews were gassed at Auschwitz with the Zyklon B supplied by Tesch & Stabenow according to van Pelt (p. 116). It is strange to note, indeed, that, in spite of such monstrous gassings and in spite of the "human material" available in abundance for any kind of experiment, nobody at Auschwitz undertook any toxicological experiments involving hydrogen cyanide and human beings, which means that the toxicological knowledge concerning the lethal dose prior to the alleged homicidal gassings carried out at Auschwitz turns out to be the same as that available once the alleged exterminations at Auschwitz had ended.

15. The Number of Victims

15.1. The Soviet Commission of Investigation

Van Pelt devotes a voluminous chapter to "A Short History of Scholarship concerning the Number of Victims of Auschwitz" (pp. 106-122). He begins with the Soviet Commission of Investigation, which "ascertained" four million victims for the Auschwitz camp. It is well known that the story of the four million appeared for the first time in *Pravda* on May 7, 1945, and was officially accepted at the Nuremberg trial in its session of February 19, 1946, thanks to the Soviet prosecutor L.N. Smirnov.[721] The origin of this story is less well known.

Within the framework of the investigations of the Soviet Commission of Investigation at Auschwitz between February 14 and March 8, 1945, the engineers Dawidowski and Doliński (Poles) as well as Lavrushin and Shuer (Russians) drew up an assessment concerning the alleged gas chambers and the Auschwitz-Birkenau crematoria, which included a brief "Appendix 1" entitled "Calculations for the determination of the number of persons exterminated by the Germans at the Auschwitz camp."[722] The genesis of the figure of four million victims is fully contained in those three pages. The "assessment" opens with the following introduction:[723]

> *"On the basis of the findings of the inquiry it can be said that, when they painstakingly obliterated the traces of their crimes and misdeeds in the Auschwitz concentration camp, the Germans destroyed all documents and data, thanks to which it would have been possible to establish more or less accurately the number of persons who died in the camp at the hands of the Hitlerite villains.*
>
> *Thus, for example, the Germans destroyed the data concerning the arrival at the camp of rail transports of persons, destroyed the data concerning the quantity of women's hair, eye-glasses, clothing as well as other objects taken away from the camp, which, using statistical methods of calculation, would have permitted to shed light on the number of persons who actually died in the camp.*

[721] IMT, vol. VII, p. 589.
[722] GARF, 7021-108-14, pp. 18-20.
[723] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Still, we believe that it is possible to make a computation to establish the order of magnitude which determines the scale of the extermination of the detainees of the camp carried out by the Germans."

Not disposing of any documents, the Polish-Soviet "experts" resorted to a method which is not only inappropriate as such, but into which they introduced moreover vastly exaggerated parameters: the number of corpses cremated in the alleged extermination facilities at Auschwitz-Birkenau. They divided, first of all, the activity of these installations into three periods:

- First period: from the end of 1941 through March 1943, a period of 14 months.
- Second period: from March 1943 through May 1944, a period of 13 months.
- Third period: from May 1944 through October 1944, a period of 6 months.

"During the first period, Crematorium I and gas chambers[724] *1 and 2 as well as the pyres near them were active. In the second period, Crematoria II, III, IV and V. In the third period, Crematoria II, III, IV and V, gas chamber 2 and the pyres near it."*[725]

All computations concerning the cremations in the ovens are based upon the assumption that the Auschwitz crematorium cremated 9,000 corpses per month and that the Birkenau crematoria had the following monthly cremation capacities:[726]

- Crematorium II: 90,000
- Crematorium III: 90,000
- Crematorium IV: 45,000
- Crematorium V: 45,000

Total: 270,000 corpses per month.

Such a cremation capacity, amounting to 9,000 per day overall (3,000 each for Crematoria II and III and 1,500 each for Crematoria IV and V) is actually eight times as high as the maximum theoretical capacity of those installations! (See chapter 8.7.)

[724] "Gasovie kameri": this is what the so-called bunkers 1 and 2 were labeled in all the Soviet documents, the designation bunker was introduced by Stanisław Jankowski in his statement on April 13, 1945 and picked up by Szlama Dragon in his Polish deposition of May 10 and 11, 1945, and by Henryk Tauber in his Polish deposition of May 24, 1945.

[725] GARF, 7021-108-14, pp. 18-19.

[726] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Surprisingly, the "experts" assigned to Crematorium I a cremation capacity hardly twice that of the theoretical maximum, giving one muffle in the double-muffle ovens a capacity of two corpses per hour, which was only one fourth of what they ascribed to one muffle in the triple and 8-muffle devices (*viz.* eight corpses per hour). This makes no sense at all, because not only were the double-muffle ovens in no way inferior to those of Birkenau, they were in fact more efficient. Van Pelt makes the same mistake when saying that "the old crematorium had a lower capacity[727] of 57 corpses per muffle per day, because the ovens were of an older design and construction" (p. 345).

The "experts," first of all, computed the number of those cremated during the third period of operation using the following parameters:

- 270,000 = monthly number of corpses cremated in the Birkenau crematoria
- 6 = number of months of activity of the crematoria
- 0.9 = availability coefficient for the crematoria

yielding (270,000×6×0.9 =) 1,450,000 victims.

For the second period of 13 months the "experts" set the availability coefficient at 0.5, hence the computation was: (270,000×13×0.5 =) 1,755,000, rounded to 1,750,000 victims. The same availability coefficient was used also for the first period of 14 months, during which only Crematorium I was in operation, resulting in (9,000×14×0.5 =) 63,000 victims. Thus, for all three periods together a total of 3,263,000 corpses of gassed victims were said to have been incinerated in the crematoria.

For the so-called "gas chamber 2," i.e. the so-called "bunker 2," which was allegedly active for six months in the third period, the "experts" imagined a killing capacity amounting to 3,000 persons per day or 90,000 per month, with an availability coefficient 0.5, arriving at (90,000×6×0.5 =) 270,000 victims.

"Gas chamber 1," i.e. the so-called "bunker 1," operated during the first period of 14 months and had a killing capacity of 5,000 persons per day or 150,000 per month in the estimation of the "experts," with an availability coefficient of 0.25; the corresponding result was (150,000×14×0.25 =) 525,000 victims. Hence, the number of dead assigned to the two "bunkers" would thus be 795,000. Adding this figure to that of the

[727] With re. to the alleged capacity of one muffle in the triple and 8-muffle ovens, 96 corpses per day.

victims who died (and were cremated) in the crematoria, one obtains a figure of 4,058,000 which the "experts" rounded to 4,000,000 victims.

Summarizing, the "experts" concocted the number of victims in the following way:

➢ Crematorium I:	63,000
➢ Crematorium II-IV:	3,200,000
➢ "Gas chamber 1":	525,000
➢ "Gas chamber 2":	270,000
Total:	4,058,000
Rounded to:	4,000,000

It is clear that this figure was nothing but propaganda: it was not the result of any computation, but its basis – all the "experts" were supposed to do was cloak the propaganda in a pseudo-scientific garb. It is incredible that van Pelt considers this outrageous propaganda to be an "engineering approach to the question of how many people had died in Auschwitz" (p. 107).

15.2. Nachman Blumental and Others

Van Pelt then mentions "a second method" of calculation, this one "based on an analysis of the number of deportations to the camp," which he introduces in the following manner (p. 107):

> *"As early as 1946, Nachman Blumental, using this method, came to an informed guess that the number of victims ought to have been somewhere between 1.3 and 1.5 million."*

Actually, Blumental's assessment, dated March 25, 1947 (and not "as early as 1946"), is nothing but a "guess" and not an "informed" one in any way, as it is based on assumptions which are even more conjectural:[728]

> *"Hence, about 3,000,000* [persons] *died in the large death camps: Bełżec, Chełmno, Auschwitz, Sobibór and Treblinka*.
>
> *Estimating, in accordance with the findings of the judicial investigation, the number of victims at the Chełmno and Treblinka death camps to be about 1,000,000 (to be precise 731,600 at Treblinka and 340,000 at Chełmno), plus about 400,000 for Majdanek and its subcamps, about 400,000 altogether for Sobibór and Bełżec, about 1,500,000 victims remain for Auschwitz."*

[728] AGK, NTN, 113, p. 48.

This latter figure is, by the way, an exaggeration (the remainder is 1,200,000 and not 1,500,000). Thus, this "second method" is just as nonsensical as the first.

Moving along in his search, van Pelt brings in Gerald Reitlinger's figures: 840,800 deportees to Auschwitz, between 550,000 and 600,000 of whom were gassed, plus an unknown fraction of the 300,000 registered detainees who died (p. 107). Van Pelt devotes an entire page to "explaining" why the figures are so completely at variance with the previous ones, but neglects to report Reitlinger's dry comment regarding the pretentious "engineering approach" of the Soviet-Polish experts (1953, p. 460):

> *"The world has grown mistrustful of 'rectified coefficients' and the figure of four million has become ridiculous."*

Van Pelt then mentions the various figures given by Höss: the 2,500,000 victims allegedly based on information received from Eichmann and the 1,100,000 stemming from Höss's own data (p. 108). More precisely the former commander of Auschwitz declared:

> *"In Auschwitz, I imagine about 3,000,000 people were put to death; about 2,500,000 were put through the gas-chambers."*

These figures are said to have come from a mysterious report Eichmann sent to Himmler.[729] The lowest figure is 1,195,000, including "70,000 Russians."[729] Eventually van Pelt summarizes (pp. 108f.):

> *"Thus, by the beginning of the 1950s, there were basically three estimates of the number of victims, each based on different sources: a high one of 4 million based on the assumed capacity of the crematoria, a low one of around 1 million based on the number of transports and Höss's final assessment, and a middle one of around 2.5 million, based on Eichmann's number as related by Höss, which he initially substantiated in his Nuremberg affidavit."*

Van Pelt forgets the no less authoritative estimate by judge Sehn (1946, p. 128):

> *"This witness (F. Stanek* [730]*) declared that over three years, in the same period of 1942-1944, 3,850,000 detainees had arrived at Auschwitz by rail transports. If we take into consideration the remaining years of existence of the camp and the great many transports by truck, the number of victims at the Auschwitz camp effectively amounts to some five million."*

[729] Deposition by R. Höss dated January 13, 1946. NO-1210, p. 6.
[730] An employee who had worked at the Auschwitz railway station.

Summarizing all this, the estimates at the time were: 5 million, 4 million, 3 million, 1.2 million and less than 840,800.

15.3. Revisions by Wellers and Piper

Van Pelt tells us that the situation remained unchanged up to the late 1980s when George Wellers produced "new figures": 1,613,455 deportees and 1,471,595 dead (Wellers 1983). At that time Piper, too, "who had been banned until then from researching the issue" (van Pelt 2002, p. 109) and who published the final results of his work in a book from which van Pelt quotes generously (Piper 1993), began to look at this question.

During the preparation of the Höss trial judge Sehn had run into the so-called transport lists – simplified transcriptions of original documents prepared secretly by the detainees who worked at the Political Department of the camp. In an account dated Cracow, December 16, 1946, he copied and analyzed the lists which comprised:

a) 2,377 transports of men from May 20, 1940, to September 18, 1944, covering the assigned inmate ID numbers 1 through 199531;
b) 1,046 transports of women from February 26, 1942, to March 26, 1944, covering the assigned ID numbers 1 through 75697;[731]
c) the 78 RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) transports of Jewish men[732] between May 13 and August 24, 1944, covering the assigned ID numbers A-1 through A-20000;
d) the 60 RSHA transports of Jewish men between July 31 and September 21, 1944, covering the assigned ID numbers B-1 through B-10481;
e) the 90 RSHA transports of Jewish women between May 15, and September 20, 1944, covering the assigned ID numbers A-1 through A-25378;
f) the 171 transports of *Erziehungshäftlinge* (education detainees, mostly prisoners who had refused to work or were accused of working unsatisfactorily) between October 21, 1941, and September 10, 1944, covering the assigned ID numbers E-1 through E-9339.[733]

Even though they are incomplete, these lists still permit a reasonably good approximation of the order of magnitude of transports sent to

[731] These lists were transmitted by K. Smoleń on December 16, 1947 to the American Council for War Crimes and became document NOKW-2824.
[732] Transports of Jews organized by Reichssicherheitshauptamt.
[733] AGK, NTN, 95, pp. 12-13. The list runs from p. 12 to p. 123.

Auschwitz. In fact, the lists form the basis for Danuta Czech's "Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau," the first German edition of which appeared between 1959 and 1964 (Czech, 1959-1962, 1964). It is important to note that Wellers based his computations on this series of articles by Czech, yet enlarging the figures with gross fabrications which I have discussed in 1987 in a specific study of the matter (1987b). This shows not only Sehn's bad faith, but also Piper's opportunism.

The first tool for the verification of the propaganda figure of four million victims was forged at the Auschwitz Museum itself in 1964; Piper entered the historical section of the museum in 1965, but as late as 1978 he still completely embraced the Soviet propaganda, writing (Piper 1978, p. 127):

> *"Throughout the almost five years of the camp's existence about 4,000,000 people lost their lives as a result of disease, execution, and mass gassing, including 340,000 of the over 400,000 men, women and children registered in the camp."*

On the other hand, as early as 1956 the so-called memoirs of Höss were published in Poland itself; here, the former Auschwitz commander lists the "major actions," i.e. the most important deportations, which yield, however, a total of only 1,130,000 deportees.[734] This would have been one more reason for the Auschwitz Museum and for Piper to question the official propaganda figure of four million. But the Auschwitz Museum shored it up wholeheartedly, even though it had good reasons to correct it, and it thus adopted a propagandistic and quite unscientific position.[735]

The method of calculation which van Pelt attributes to Piper is surprising. Van Pelt explains first of all that the Soviet figure of four million victims was based on the assumption "that the crematoria had operated at four-fifths [of their] capacity." He deduces this value from the fact that the maximum number of corpses allegedly cremated in the Auschwitz-Birkenau crematoria (without the "activity coefficients") was given as 5,121,000 in the final report of the Soviet Commission of Investigation and that the figure of 4,058,000 was arrived at by applying a correction factor of $^4/_5$. But, says van Pelt, "Piper knew that the investigators had probably [sic!] overestimated the incineration capacity of the crematoria," because the Polish-Soviet "experts" had assumed a to-

[734] Główna Komosja 1956, p. 193.
[735] For a more detailed treatment of the question cf. Mattogno 2003g, pp. 393-399.

tal capacity for all crematoria of 9,300 corpses per day, whereas from the ZBL letter of June 28, 1943, one obtains a figure of 4,756 (van Pelt 2002, p. 111).

This reasoning is already infected by a fundamental mistake: The figure of the four million was not based on the assumption "that the crematoria had operated at four-fifths [*of their*] capacity," but at maximum capacity for four-fifths of their existence. Precisely because the figure of 5,121,000 refers *solely* to the crematoria, van Pelt's explanation becomes even more arbitrary. Actually, this figure does not take into account the alleged 525,000 victims of "gas chamber no. 1" and the alleged 270,000 of "gas chamber no. 2," which were moreover arrived at with an activity coefficient of 0.25 and 0.5, respectively. Without this coefficient, the corresponding figures would have been 2,100,000 and 540,000, and the potential extermination/cremation potential of Auschwitz would have been (5,121,000+2,100,000+540,000 =) 7,761,000 victims! Van Pelt's "four-fifths" argument is thus nonsensical. Van Pelt continues (*ibid*.):

> *"After multiplying the monthly incineration rates of the crematoria with the number of months each had been in operation, Piper knew that the maximum number of corpses that could have been incinerated would have been 2.6 million, or half the Soviet estimate."*

This is not a calculation actually done by Piper, but one which – van Pelt feels – Piper *could* have done. However, this is impossible, because Piper did not share the essential assumption. In fact, as we have seen above, the Polish-Soviet "experts" had arrived at 3,263,000 corpses incinerated on the basis of a total cremation capacity of 9,300 corpses per day, but if one assumes a capacity of only 4,756 corpses per day, then the result comes down to 1,669,000 cremations.

Piper, though, did not accept the capacity of 4,756 corpses per day as late as 1994 (1994, pp. 165f.):

> *"A letter from the Zentralbauleitung to group C of June 28, 1943, indicates that the capacity for a 24-hour period was estimated at 340 bodies for Crematorium I; 1,440 each for Crematoria II and III; and 768 each for Crematoria IV and V. Thus the five crematoria could incinerate 4,765* [recte: 4,756] *bodies each day. This estimate coincided with the guidelines established in 1941 concerning the capacity of a five-retort crematorium for prisoners of war, according to which two bodies could be incinerated in one retort within 30*

minutes. The next month, however, Crematorium I was shut down, reducing the capacity to 4,415 [recte: 4,416].

In their efforts to increase the burning capacity of the ovens, the camp authorities recommended that the incineration time be reduced to 20 minutes and the number of bodies be increased to three, depending on the size of the body. As a result, the capacity of the crematoria almost doubled, reaching about 8,000 bodies in 24 hours, according to the statement of a Sonderkommando prisoner, Feinsilber [alias Jankowski]*."*

This means that the capacity of the Birkenau crematoria assumed by Piper was not very far off from the one given by the "experts" (8,000 corpses per day as against 9,000), and in Piper's view this fact could bring about a reduction of the figure of four million by about $^1/_9$, yielding some 3,555,000 victims.

Also in his study on the number of dead at Auschwitz, which van Pelt calls upon, Piper defends the full validity of the Soviet assessment and writes (1993, p. 92):

"Concerning the credibility of the data listed in the table[736] *mentioned, we may say that, by and large, they agree with the actual facts. This is true both for the capacities of the individual crematoria (even though it is 100% higher than the German data but still corresponds roughly to the figures given by the member of the Sonderkommando, Feinsilber) and for the operating periods (the differences are of the order of one to three months, except for Crematorium I for which the period had to be reduced by eleven months."*

The above calculation was taken over by Piper – from van Pelt! – only in November of 2003 and only in order to reply to a similar argument by Fritjof Meyer: at that time Piper accepted 4,756 corpses per day over a period of 547 operating days to get 2,601,532 corpses (see Mattogno 2004n, pp. 131-139, here p. 133), but this has nothing to do with the revision of the propaganda figure of four million victims.

Van Pelt then summarizes Piper's statistical data on the number of Jews deported to Auschwitz arrived at on the basis of the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* (Czech 1989) but cautions (p. 112):

"The Kalendarium must be regarded as the basis of any research into the history of deportations to Auschwitz, but it must be pointed out that it is not perfect."

[736] A table which lists the complete data of the Soviet Commission on the monthly and total cremations in the crematoria.

The "single greatest anomaly" which he finds in the *Kalendarium* concerns the deportation of the Jews from Lodz, for which there is no total figure (*ibid*.):

> *"The transport of September 18, 1944, had a size of 2,500 deportees. If this was a typical transport, this would mean that the ten listed transports account for a total of 25,000 deportees. However, the Statistical Office of Lodz shows that in August and September 73,563 Jews were deported from Lodz; most of them were sent to Auschwitz. This means that all records of a maximum of twenty transports (some 50,000 people) are lost, at least in the account of the Kalendarium."*

Van Pelt is not bothered by any doubt that documents concerning these alleged missing transports could be missing because these Jews were never sent to Auschwitz, as I have shown in a specific study (2003h, pp. 30-36). Only some 22,500 Jews were actually deported from the Lodz ghetto, out of whom 11,500 Jewish women were transferred from Auschwitz to Stutthof.

15.4. Piper's Statistics

15.4.1. Number of Deported Jews

Piper's statistics – which van Pelt accepts blindly – speak of a total of 1,305,000 deportees, 1,095,000 of whom were Jews – a figure Piper himself has rounded to 1,100,000 and van Pelt to "1,095,000 (1.1 million)" – and of 1,082,000 victims of whom 960,000 were Jews (van Pelt 2002, pp. 115f.). Piper then investigates the deportations of Jews to Auschwitz by country of origin (1993, unless stated otherwise, pp. 119-143) and summarizes them in tables, listing the corresponding transports (pp. 182-198). Then he summarizes his conclusions (p. 199). Let us look, first of all, into the veracity of these conclusions:

1) *Hungary*. Number of deportees: 438,000 (p. 182, 199). Between May and July 1944 a total of 437,402 Jews were deported from this country, but according to what is known today, not more than 398,400 were sent to Auschwitz (see Mattogno 2001a, p. 389). Hence Piper has 39,600 deportees too many.

2) *Poland*. Number of deportees: 300,000 (pp. 183-186, 199). Table 23 contains the transports from Polish ghettos for the period of May to August 1942 as listed by Piper, which he claims have been completely gassed. These transports have been completely invented (see Mattogno

Table 23: Piper's Transport from Polish Ghettos to Auschwitz		
Arrival Date [d/m/y]	Origin	Number of deportees
5/5/1942	Dąbrowa Górnica	630 G
12/5/1942	Sosnowiec	1,500
5/1942	Zawiercie	2,000
5/1942	Będzin	2,000
17/6/1942	Sosnowiec	1,000
20/6/1942	Sosnowiec	2,000
6/1942	Biesko-Biała	5,000 G
6/1942	Olkusz	3,000 G
6/1942	Krzepice	1,000 G
6/1942	Chrzanów	4,000 G
1-3/8/1942	Będzin	5,000 G
15/8/1942	Sosnowiec	2,000
16/8/1942	Sosnowiec	2,000
17/8/1942	Sosnowiec	2,000
18/8/1942	Sosnowiec	2,000
	Total:	35,130

2001b, pp. 42f.; Engl.: 2004h). There is not the slightest trace of them in the existing documentation. In her Auschwitz *Kalendarium* (1989), Danuta Czech is absolutely unable to furnish us with even the slightest documentary hint concerning the reality of these transports. The transports marked with a "G" stem from Martin Gilbert's well-known *Atlas* (1995, pp. 100, 105), a work completely devoid of any references to sources where fact and fiction are indistinguishable and which is therefore of no scientific value.

The Grodno transport of November 1942 (Piper gives no date) with 1,000 persons, all said to have been gassed on arrival, is taken from the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*,[737] as is the Białystok of November 8, 1942. For both transports D. Czech cites Dr. Kremer's diary as her source (1989, pp. 335f.):

> *"This is the twelfth special action (Sonderaktion) in which Dr. Kremer takes part. (KL Auschwitz in den Augen der SS, op. cit., Kremer's diary, p. 232).* […] *This is the thirteenth special action (Sonderaktion) in which Dr. Kremer takes part. (KL Auschwitz in den Augen der SS, op. cit., Kremer's diary, p. 232)."*

[737] Czech 1989, p. 335. D. Czech assigns to this transport the date of November 8, 1942, and has it coming "from the ghettos of the so-called district of Zichenau."

This source is refuted by the very book referred to by Czech, which she has co-edited(!). In the book *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS* (1997 edition) we read, in fact:

> *"November 8, 1942. Participated tonight in 2 Sonderaktionen*[738] *in dark and rainy fall weather (12th and 13th)."*

We see that Dr. Kremer mentions neither the arrival of two transports nor does he give the number of any deportees; these data have simply been invented by D. Czech. In a footnote the editors J. Bezwińska and D. Czech themselves(!) explain (p. 164):

> *"On that day, Jews from the Lublin (Majdanek) concentration camp were received; 25 men were registered as detainees in the camp, the others (one does not know how many) were gassed."*

In other words, D. Czech never had any evidence for the arrival at Auschwitz of the two transports mentioned above, which must hence be considered fictitious. The same goes for the transport from Chrzanów on February 18, 1943, with its 2,500 Jews, the source for which is again M. Gilbert's *Atlas* (Czech 1989, p. 416).

The transport from Łomża on January 14, 1943, with 4,000 Jews does not come from the *Kalendarium* either. The same goes for the transports from Częstochowa with 1,000 Jews on June 25, 1943, for the transport of 5,000 Jews from Tarnów on September 2, 1943, for the transport of 3,500 Jews from Przemyśl on September 2, 1943, for the transport of 1,000 Jews from Rzeszów in November 1943, for the transport of 600 Jews from Borysław on March 28, 1944, and for the transport of 700 Jews from Borysław on June 22, 1944. This second group of transports thus contains another 20,300 fictitious deportees.

The case of Lodz is even more characteristic for Piper's working methods. The subtotal for his table concerning Poland is 225,464 deportees. The table includes 11 transports from the Lodz ghetto, for which Piper gives the figure of 4,818 deportees registered at Auschwitz. He then adds 55,000-65,000 Jews deported from this ghetto in August and September 1944 and arrives, as we know, at a total of 300,000 deportees. However, if we deduct the subtotal from the one he arrives at, we obtain (300,000 – 225,464 =) 74,536, to which we must add the 4,818 already contained in the table, which would bring the number of Jews from Lodz deported to Auschwitz to 79,354, whereas Piper states that 60,000 to 70,000 Jews from Lodz were deported to Auschwitz (p. 127).

[738] For the real meaning of this term cf. Mattogno 2001b., pp. 101-116 (Engl.: 2004h).

This means that he counts 9,354 deportees over and above the maximum number assumed by himself! The facts are quite different. As I have shown elsewhere (2004c), there were some 22,500 Jews from Lodz who were deported to Auschwitz, and Piper thus has invented another (79,354 – 22,500 =) 56,854 fictitious deportees. Altogether we therefore have (35,130+20,300+56,854 =) about 112,300 fake deportees from Poland.

3) *France*. Number of deportees: 69,114 (rounded to 69,000; pp. 187f.). The source mentioned by Piper gives the number of Jews deported to Auschwitz as 68,921 persons (Klarsfeld 1978, p. 13). Piper, however, does not take into account the Jews who were selected at Kosel and not sent on to Auschwitz, whose number was between 3,056 and 4,000 according to Klarsfeld and which we may take to be around 3,500 persons. This brings the number of Jews deported from France to Auschwitz down to (68,921 – 3,500 =) 65,421 or about 65,400 persons. Piper thus counts some 3,600 deportees too many.

4) *Holland*. Number of deportees: 60,085 (rounded to 60,000; pp. 189f.). In this case, too, Piper keeps quiet about the Jews selected at Kosel, which the Dutch Red Cross estimates at 3,540 persons.[739]

5) *Greece*. Number of deportees: 54,533 (rounded to 55,000; p. 191, 199). The corresponding table lists a transport of 2,500 Jews from Rhodes on August 16, 1944. The same transport appears also in the table concerning Italy, but under the date of July 23, 1944, and with 1,805 Jews on board. As Liliana Picciotto Fargion explains (pp. 62f.), a transport from the Dodecanese Islands (Rhodes and Kos) with 1,820 Italian Jews left on July 23, 1944, passing through Athens on August 3, and arriving at Auschwitz on August 16. Hence Piper counts it twice with different figures: once as a departure from Italy (Dodecanese) on July 23, 1944, (with 1,805 Jews) and once as an arrival from Greece on August 16 (with 2,500 Jews). This transport must thus be assigned to Italy, and 2,500 deportees must be deducted accordingly.

6) *Theresienstadt*. Number of deportees: 46,099 (rounded to 46,000; p. 192). According to the memorial of the Theresienstadt ghetto, there were 42,454[740] Jews deported to Auschwitz between 1942 and 1944, and Piper has thus counted 3,400 Jews too many.

7) *Yugoslavia*. Number of deportees: 10,000 (p. 196, 199). Piper has a total of 4,000 deportees for the transports from Zagreb on May 7 and

[739] Het Nederlandsche Roode Kruis. Auschwitz, Deel III. 's-Gravenhage, 1952, pp. 12-15.
[740] Kárný, vol. I, pp. 67-73 (list of transports).

13, 1943, whereas D. Czech mentions only 2,000 (1989, p. 488, 493). Again, Piper has raised this figure arbitrarily by 2,000 deportees.

8) *Belgium*. Number of deportees: 24,906 (rounded to 25,000; p. 197). Piper's source is the "Memorial for the deportation of the Jews from Belgium" which does speak of 24,906 deportees to Auschwitz (Klarsfeld/Steinberg, p. 13), but explains also that 1,380 were selected at Kosel (p. 197). Thus, Piper again counts roughly 1,400 deportees too many.

9) *Italy*. Number of deportees: 7,422 (rounded to 7,500; pp. 198f.). There were 5,951 Jews who were deported from Italia proper, plus 1,820 from the Dodecanese (Rhodes and Kos; Piciotto Fargion, p. 26, 32) for a total of 7,771 persons. In this case, Piper's figure is too low by about 300 Jews.

10) *Concentration camps, auxiliary camps and other places*. Number of deportees: 34,000 (p. 199). Here Piper limits himself to giving only this figure without any details regarding the origins and the strengths of the transports. According to the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* (1989), the deportees belonging to this category numbered about 12,500,[741] to whom we must add the 7,500 Jews from Płaszów who arrived on August 6, 1944 (Czech 1989, p. 842), and another 1,400 Jews likewise from Płaszów who arrived on May 14, 1944,[742] for a total of 21,400 persons. Thus, Piper has counted 12,600 deportees to many.

If we take into account all these deviations, Piper's figures contain at least 180,600 fictitious Jewish deportees. Hence this figure must be deducted from the grand total of 1,095,190 Jews deported to Auschwitz appearing in table 28 of his study (p. 199), and this yields Piper's new grand total of some 914,600 deportees, about 205,000 of whom were registered (p. 103).

15.4.2. Number of Registered, Unregistered, and Allegedly Gassed Persons

Piper has published a table which gives a total of 400,207 inmates registered at Auschwitz (p. 102). A different table, based on the ID numbers assigned to the detainees according to the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*, yields a total of some 390,500 registered detainees (p. 118), but

[741] Transfers on the dates: 22.5.1942, 30.6., 6.10., 21.10., 24.10., 24.10., 24.10., 25.10., 8.11., 26.6.1943, 1.7., 8.7., 11.7., 23.10., 17.12., 12.1.1944, 16.4., 29.4., 13.5., 29.7., 11.8., 22.8., 29.8., 11.10., 2.11. These transfers did not concerns only Jews.

[742] Czech 1989, p. 774. Kunicka-Wyrzykowska 1982, p. 68 (transport of 1,400 Jews).

Table 24: Piper's Fate of Surviving Auschwitz Inmates					
Year	Transfers	Releases	Escapes	Liberated	Page
1940	92	?	3		152
1941	2,282	?	6		154
1942	2,916	997	48		156
1943	19,859	0	139		160
1944	163,000	500	300	8,000	163
Totals: 188,149		1497	496	8,000	= 198,142

this figure does not take into account the roughly 11,000 (11,186) Educational detainees" (*Erziehungshäftlinge*), which would bring the total up to about 401,500 inmates. In Table 24 I have summarized the data furnished by Piper with respect to the surviving detainees. The total number of survivors thus comes to 198,142 persons. To this figure one must add the "25,000 non-registered prisoners who were transferred to other concentration camps after a brief stay at KL Auschwitz" (pp. 163f.). There was therefore a total of some 223,000 survivors according to Piper and hence (1,300,000 – 223,000 =) 1,077,00 victims, a figure rounded off by Piper to 1,100,000 persons.

Furthermore, the total number of deportees adopted by Piper – 1,300,000 – contains other groups of non-Jewish detainees who were allegedly killed in the camp without having been registered previously: 3,000 Soviet PoWs, 1,700 Gypsies, 10,000 Poles (pp. 149f.), for a total of 14,700, which Piper rounds off to 15,000 persons (p. 200). However, except for a few dozen Poles, these deportations have no backing in documents and must therefore be considered fictitious.

The number of unregistered Jews who were sent to the transit camp (*Durchgangslager*) at Birkenau in 1944 was much higher than Piper's figure. In fact at least 79,200 Hungarian Jews (Mattogno 2001a, p. 385) and some 19,400 Jews from Lodz (Mattogno 2004c, p. 34) belong to this category. On October 2, 1944, there were still 17,251 Jews in the transit camp who were counted into the camp strength[743] without, however, being given an ID number. Hence there were at least 98,600 unregistered detainees. Andrzej Strzelecki confirms the reliability of this figure when he writes (1995a, p. 352):

> *"Between May and October 1944, several tens of thousands, probably up to one hundred thousand Jewish prisoners went through the Birkenau camp without registration."*

[743] APMO, Stärkemeldung. D-AuII-3a, p. 53a.

Piper has furthermore seriously underestimated the number of Jews transferred from Auschwitz in 1944, which is actually at least 192,300 up to January 17, 1945, when there were still 67,000 detainees in the camp, out of whom 58,500 were transferred and 8,500 remained in the camp (Mattogno 2004f, pp. 5-16).

15.4.3. Number of Deaths Among the Registered Detainees.

a) 1940-1941

For this period Piper has computed 21,000 deaths. As the available (but fragmentary) documentation begins on July 29, 1941 (death certificate no. 1 for detainee Peter Pakosch),[744] Piper makes use of the difference between the registered detainees and those present in the camp, taking into account those transferred, escaped or released. A more accurate calculation yields a total of 19,500 deaths, including those of Soviet prisoners of war.

b) 1942

Piper uses the highest number of the last – incomplete – *Sterbebuch* (register of deaths) of 1942, no. 45616 (p. 156), which was assigned to the detainee Erna Haubenstock on December 31, but which concerned a death that had occurred on the 23rd of the month. As this *Sterbebuch* has an average of 128 deaths per day, one would have to assume another 1,000 deaths up to the end of the year, and the number of deaths would thus be around 47,000.

Actually, the highest registration number for 1942 was no. 47020, assigned to the Jewish detainee Jacques Caufmann, as can be gathered from an *Alphabetisches Namensverzeichnis zum Sterbebuch* (alphabetical name list for the register of deaths), a fragmentary list of detainees deceased in 1942 and entered in alphabetical order,[745] yet apparently unknown to the Auschwitz Museum. Not included in this figure are the 1,427 Soviet PoWs who died in 1942 and whose deaths were recorded in the *Totenbuch* (register of the dead).

Piper then asks himself whether this figure is reliable and carries out the following proof: From the opening of the camp through December 31, 1942, a total of 126,000 detainees were registered, 29,630 of whom were still there on January 1, 1943; hence, (126,000 – 29,630 =) some 96,500 detainees have disappeared. Of these, 23,500 disappeared in the

[744] Sterbebuch 1/1941, p. 1.
[745] RGVA, 502-4-48, p. 73.

years 1940-1941, while in 1942 2,916 were transferred to other camps, 48 escaped, and 997 were released. In 1942, therefore – concludes Piper – about (96,500 – 23,500 – 2,916 – 48 – 997 =) 69,000 detainees died, or 22,000 more than those registered in the *Sterbebücher*. Trying to explain this apparent excess of deaths, Piper quotes the following statement of Klari Weiss, a former detainee who had worked in the Political Department at Auschwitz (p. 227):

> *"Thanks to the access I had to the files, I am able to estimate that in 1942 there were about 48,000 cases of natural death in the camp. In 1943, the cases of natural death were no longer recorded, but the files concerning the deaths of another 35,000 Aryans were preserved. In 1944, the cases of natural death for Aryans amounted to about 30,000."*

Piper stresses the fact that Klari Weiss spoke only of "cases of natural death," hence the 22,000 excess deaths found by him must have been "*non natural* deaths – these detainees were murdered in the gas chambers or by means of phenol injections" (p. 158). Piper's computation does not demonstrate anything, though, because it would have been necessary, first of all, to show that there was a double system of bookkeeping for the deaths at Auschwitz – an official one using the *Sterbebücher* and one for the "*non natural* deaths," something for which there is not the slightest hint in the documents. Actually, of all the document sources for the mortality at Auschwitz in 1942 – *Leichenhallenbuch*[746] (13,526 deaths), *Stärkebuch*[747] (22,168 deaths), *Totenbuch*[748] (8,320 deaths), and *Sterbeurkunden* (death certificates, 4,839 deaths, Piper, p. 155) – none has even a single death that appears in a registration system different from the official one. On the contrary, as has been shown by Thomas Grotum and Jan Parcer, the *Sterbebücher* contain explicit entries for "*non natural* deaths," such as the 67 cases of detainees "shot while trying to escape" (vol. I, p. 247). The two authors go so far as to declare (p. 242):

> *"The major part of the causes of death recorded in the death registers are fake in an effort to hide the true circumstances of the deaths of the detainees in Auschwitz, and those who kept* [the registers] *were under orders to choose from an existing list of possible diseases."*

[746] Ledger of the morgue in Block 28 at Auschwitz.
[747] Ledger of the strength of the men's camp.
[748] Ledger of the deaths among Soviet PoWs.

On the next page they add:

> *"Among the 68,864*[749] *entries of deceases there are 2,727 where the cause of death is given as 'sudden heart attack.' In many of these cases, however, one can demonstrate that they were actually cases of unnatural death."*

Thus, according to T. Grotum and J. Parcer, "non natural deaths" were included in the *Sterbebücher*, either explicitly or implicitly using a false cause of death. On the other hand, the examples these authors give are so few that they do not, in fact, justify their assertion that "*the major part* of causes of death" have been falsified. It is likely, rather, that the falsifications were used to avoid the laborious bureaucratic procedure applying to such cases under the rules for concentration camps set up in 1941. Actually, "in the event of cases of non-natural death and of suicides" it was necessary to fill out the following documents in duplicate:

- 1 account of the questioning of witnesses
- 1 report from the *Kommando*
- 1 medical certificate of death
- 1 report on the results of the autopsy
- 1 report of the SS and police tribunal on the cremation [*of the corpse*]
- 1 decree of closure [*of the case*] by the SS and police tribunal.[750]

Obviously, in some cases it was much simpler to falsify the cause of death of the detainee in order to avoid such complicated procedures.

In conclusion we may say that Piper's hypothesis of 22,000 unnatural and unrecorded deaths is unfounded. Moreover, since the documentation on the Auschwitz camp is notoriously incomplete, there is no reason to believe that the data concerning transfers, escapes and releases used by Piper and based on the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* are complete in themselves. D. Czech actually mentions only less than half of the total of detainees transferred from Auschwitz to other camps in 1944.

We must therefore reverse Piper's argument: because all of the deaths are indeed recorded in the *Sterbebücher*, the 22,000 missing detainees belong to the other three categories, and for the greater part of them probably to the transferees.

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[749] Refers to the authentic death certificates in the death registers (*Sterbebücher*) which are preserved.

[750] AGK, NTN, 131, p. 186.

c) 1943

Piper states that the highest entry number in the last *Sterbebuch* for 1943, no. 36991,was assigned to the detainee Zelik Gieclik who died on December 18. As the average mortality at that time was 105 deaths per day, another 1,400 detainees would have died up to the end of the year, which means that the total for 1943 would be over 38,000 deaths according to Piper (p. 160). However, although the last *Sterbebuch* for 1942 (no. 31) has been preserved only in a very fragmentary way, the last one for 1943 (no. 25) is complete, and the apparent anomaly is only due to the fact that the numbering of the registrations does not follow a strictly chronological order. Piper then goes back again to Klari Weiss and writes on page 160 that she said,

> *"that the deaths of Jewish detainees in 1943 were no longer entered, not even for 'natural' deaths (certainly in those cases death certificates were no longer established). As Klari Weiss relates, from the evidence available to her one may conclude that a total of 35,000 non-Jews died."*

But even for this assertion there is no documentary backing at all, whereas Piper's hypothesis that the registered Jewish detainees who died a natural (or unnatural) death could simply disappear from the camp strength without a death certificate (even a false one) is utter nonsense.[751] Piper proposes a different method of calculating the excess deaths allegedly not recorded in the *Sterbebücher*. Piper notes that up to the end of 1943 282,000 detainees had been registered, 85,298 of whom were present on December 31, and thus some 197,000 were missing. Of these some 96,500 belonged to the years 1940-1942. In 1943 19,859 were transferred to other camps and 139 escaped, thus the number of deaths was (197,000 – 96,500–19,859–139 =) about 80,500 (pp. 160-162) or roughly 43,500 more than were noted in the documentary sources. Actually, these missing detainees essentially belong to the category of transferees as well.

d) 1944(-1945)

Piper states that no documents concerning the mortality at Auschwitz have been preserved for the above year; however, the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* asserts "that in 1944 30,000 registered detainees were killed" (p. 162). Piper therefore proposes the following calculation to

[751] Acc. to Grotum/Parcer, the extant copies of the *Sterbebücher* of 1943 contain ca. 6,800 Jews (of a total of ca. 29,000).

establish the number of deaths: The total number of detainees registered at Auschwitz is about 400,200 persons, 197,000 of whom disappeared prior to the end of 1943. Out of the 203,000 remaining detainees, 163,000 were transferred or evacuated, 300 escaped, some 500 were released, and about 8,000 were liberated by the Soviets. The number of deaths would thus have been (203,000–163,000–300–800 – 8,000 =) ca. 30,000[752] detainees (p. 163). Piper affirms that these 30,000 deaths include "both Jews and non-Jews, as well as the deaths of 'natural' causes," while Klari Weiss maintains that the figure of 30,000 refers exclusively to non-Jews and exclusively to those who died of "natural" causes.

To resolve this contradiction, Piper takes recourse to the alleged practice of general falsification of the "documentation concerning deaths," which the SS is supposed to have practiced in 1944 "for reasons of obfuscation." This explanation is inconclusive, though, because if it is true that there were 30,000 deaths altogether in 1944 and that 30,000 detainees were gassed, then it follows necessarily that no detainee died a "natural" death in 1944, but such a conclusion is obviously wrong, and therefore the hypothesis of 30,000 gassed victims is wrong as well.

Piper has furthermore underestimated by an incredible margin the number of detainees transferred or evacuated from Auschwitz in 1944. This figure, leaving aside the detainees left in the camp, i.e. some 8,500 persons, amounts to about 250,800 and not to 188,000 (163,000 registered and 25,000 non-registered inmates).[753] A more precise count is as follows: On December 31, 1943, the strength of the camp stood at 85,298 detainees.[754] In 1944 some 114,500 detainees were registered and another 98,600 passed through the transit camp at Birkenau. Over the year at least 250,800 were transferred or evacuated, 300 escaped, about 500 were released, and about 8,500 stayed in the camp; 536 of these died, and their corpses underwent autopsy at the hands of the So-

[752] The resultat of 30,900 has been rounded off by F. Piper to 30,000.

[753] See Mattogno 2004f, p. 6; in the first version of his book (Piper 1992, p. 45) he states that the Auschwitz Museum has three countings of detainees transferred from Auschwitz in the years 1944-1945: one by A. Strzelecki (187,820 detainees), one by L. Krysta (182,000 detainees) and one by T. Iwaszko (225,000 detainees). The third one is the one closest to reality.

[754] AGK, NTN, 134, p. 282 and 287.

viets.[755] The *maximum* number of deaths was therefore ([85,298+ 114,500+98,600] – [250,800+300+500+8,500] =) about 38,300.

This order of magnitude agrees well with Klari Weiss' figure. Besides, the figures she states for 1942 and 1943 fit quite well with the figures stemming from the documents and are therefore reliable. What is not reliable, on the other hand, is her comment on the categories of the deceased. The reasons for her prevarications are easy to understand. The sentence passed in the Höss trial had already arbitrarily "established" that 300,000 registered detainees had been killed or had died at Auschwitz.[756] Therefore, at the succeeding trial at Cracow (November 25 to December 16, 1947), at which Klari Weiss testified, she could not state that "only" the detainees registered in the *Sterbebücher* had died – she had to assert that there had been *other* deaths besides those.

Piper notes that the figure of 340,000 deaths among the registered detainees, which appears frequently in the Auschwitz literature, "is based on an erroneous interpretation of the figure given by Jan Sehn, which comprises both the detainees of Auschwitz and those transferred to other concentration camps" (p. 164). It is quite true that judge Sehn wrote (1961, p. 40):

> *"More than 400,000 detainees, registered in various series, passed through the Auschwitz camp. Of these, about 340,000 died at Auschwitz or in other camps to which they had been transferred."*

But the erroneous interpretation, as we have seen, was made by Piper himself who wrote in 1978 that at Auschwitz "340,000 of the over 400,000 men, women, and children registered in the camp" were killed or died (see chapter 15.3.).

15.4.4. Conclusions

The following tentative conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion.

1. The number of deportees to Auschwitz amounts to [1,305,000– (180,600+ 15,000 =)] 1,109,400, of whom 914,600 were Jews and 194,800 were non-Jews.
2. The number of registered detainees is about 401,500, with roughly 205,000 Jews (Piper 1993, p. 119) and 196,500 non-Jews.

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[755] GARF, 7021-108-21.
[756] Sentence of the Höss trial (April 2, 1947). AGK, NTN, 146z, p. 3, 6 and 29.

3. There were at least 98,600 Jews who passed through the transit camp at Birkenau and were later moved to other camps.
4. The number of detainees transferred or evacuated in 1944 is at least 250,800.
5. The number of deaths is about 134,000, with the following distribution:

Table 25: Auschwitz: Deaths by Year

Year	Deaths
1940-1941	19,500
1942	48,500 (47,020 + 1,427 Soviet PoWs)
1943	37,000 (36,991)
1944	30,000
1945	500
Total	135,500

6. The total number of detainees released, escaped, transferred, evacuated and liberated during 1940-1945 is at least ([401,500+ 98,600]–135,500] =) 364,600.
7. The number of detainees unaccounted for (allegedly gassed) is at most (1,109,400–366,100–135,500=) approximately 607,800, or 55% of the total number of deportees.
8. The total number of detainees admitted to the camp is at least 500,100; 401,500 of them were registered and about 98,600 were not.

Piper's statistics are therefore historically and documentarily unfounded, as is the relative discussion by van Pelt which is based on them.

15.5. Significance and Value of Pressac's and F. Meyer's Revisions

The new official figure sanctioned by Piper has undergone two major revisions, one by Jean-Claude Pressac, the other by Fritjof Meyer. In his first book on Auschwitz, Pressac has drastically altered the number of deaths announced by Wellers – 1,613,455 (1989, p. 13). He asserts in fact that at Auschwitz some 900,000 corpses were cremated (p. 97) and gives a precise distribution for this activity. According to him the number of corpses cremated in Crematorium I "is probably not more than 10,000" (p. 132). On the subject of Crematoria II and III he writes (p. 183):

"Krematorium II functioned as a homicidal gas chamber and incineration installation from 15th March 1943, before its officially coming into service on 31st March, to 27th November 1944, annihilating a total of approximately 400,000 people, most of them Jewish women, children and old men.

Krematorium III was used in similar fashion from 25th June 1943 to 27th November 1944, killing about 350,000 victims."

In Crematorium IV "less than 10,000 victims were cremated (probably 6,000)" between March 22 and May 10 (p. 236), or 5,000 to 10,000 (p. 386, cf. p. 390). Finally "it would appear that Krematorium V really worked for only two months in 1943, annihilating about 15,000 victims" (pp. 236, cf. 390). Furthermore about 107,000 corpses were cremated in the "cremation trenches" in 1942 according to Pressac (pp. 162, 213) and about 50,000 in 1944 (p. 236). In 1943 the "cremation trenches" were not used. Hence for Pressac the distribution of cremations – and hence of the deceased – was as follows:

➢	Crematorium I:	10,000
➢	Crematorium II & III:	400,000 & 350,000 = 750,000
➢	Crematorium IV & V:	6,000 & 15,000 = 21,000
	Subtotal:	781,000
➢	"cremation trenches" 1942/1944:	107,000 & 50,000 = 157,000
	Total:	938,000

These figures are mere conjectures, and Pressac does not even attempt to back them up in any way. They are in fact historically, documentarily and technically unfounded. As I have demonstrated above (chs. 8.8.1f.), the cremations which Pressac attributes to the Birkenau crematoria are more than twice as high as the theoretical maximum possible; they would moreover have required (771,000 ÷ 92,000 =) eight complete renewals of the refractory brickwork in all ovens or (178,200×8 =) 1,425,600 kg = 1,425.5 tons of refractory material!

In his second book Pressac corrects both himself and Piper's figures for the number of deaths at Auschwitz. He assumes a total of 667,200 to 747,200 Jewish deportees, a total of 161,000 deaths (among them 126,000 detainees, 15,000 Soviet PoWs and 20,000 Gypsies) and a total of 470,000 to 550,000 non-registered Jews gassed.[757] He bases himself on Piper's study, but disagrees with the figures concerning the trans-

[757] Pressac 1994, p. 173. The French edition mentions a total of 775,000 persons: Pressac 1993, p. 148.

ports of Jews from Poland and Hungary as well as the number of deaths among the registered detainees.

Concerning Poland he believes that the numbers of deportees in the individual transports as given by Piper are far too high and reduces them by half (from 300,000 to 150,000). Pressac grounds himself primarily on the principle of the ratio of those able to work (30-35%) to those unable (65-70%), and the 50,000 able-bodied Polish Jews (= registered) would thus correspond to a total of 150,000 deportees. For the cases of the deportations from Bendsburg and Sosnowitz, however, he argues like a revisionist. He notes in fact that, according to the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*, over a period of six days in early August 1943 a total of 23,714 "unfit" Jews from those two locations were deported to Auschwitz and gassed, together with a transport from Belgium and one from France; this would correspond to an average of 4,000 gassed persons per day. He then remarks that the crematoria in operation at that time – I, III and V – had a maximum cremation capacity of 1,750 corpses per day, which dropped to 1,500 after the closure of Crematorium I in July 1943. He therefore believes that the cremation of such a large number of corpses was impossible and concludes (1993 p. 147):

> *"It would seem that the number of Jews in each transport (2,000 to 3,000), poorly estimated by the witnesses, has been doubled."*

In doing so, in spite of his belief in unsustainable data regarding the capacities of Crematoria III and V, Pressac adopts a technical argumentation typical of revisionists and, on that basis, judges the testimonies to be untrustworthy.

For the case of the transports from Hungary, Pressac has taken over an old argument of mine arising from a problem which had remained unanswered at that time, but which can now be considered solved (Mattogno 2001a, pp. 381f.). While he does accept that about 438,000 Jews were deported from Hungary between May and July 1944, he maintains that only 160,000 to 240,000 of them actually arrived at Auschwitz (Pressac 1994, pp. 171, 173). Unfortunately, Pressac does not tell us where the other 198,000 to 278,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to.

Concerning the question of the mortality among the registered detainees he accepts

- the data stemming from the *Sterbebücher* for the years 1942 and 1943;
- Klari Weiss' figures for 1944 and assumes 1,500 deaths for the period of January 1-18, 1945;

- and a total of 11,988 deaths for the time between May 1941 and the end of 1941.

He then adds 15,000 Soviet PoWs and 20,000 Gypsies and thus arrives at 161,000 deaths (*ibid*. p. 168, 173). As the Gypsies are already included in the *Sterbebücher*, a total of 141,000 deaths can be derived from Pressac's calculations. The weak point in Pressac's revisions is primarily the number of Hungarian Jews deported to Auschwitz, because it is certain that Piper's figures for the Polish Jews are vastly exaggerated. There is no doubt that various Jewish transports from Hungary were directed to Austria (Strasshof and Gänserndorf), to Bergen-Belsen, to Lithuania and Estonia, as well as to Płaszów (near Cracow) without even touching Auschwitz (Mattogno 2001a, p. 387), but Pressac's figures do not correspond to the documents available at present.

The revision of the number of victims for Auschwitz as undertaken by Meyer is far more radical than Pressac's, both because of the figures as such – 510,000 deaths – and first and foremost on account of his method. Meyer's method is in fact strictly revisionist. He did not take a statistical approach, but a *technical* one: his drastic reduction of Piper's figure is essentially based on the technical criterion of the cremation capacity of the Birkenau crematoria (see Mattogno 2004b).

15.6. The Four Million Propaganda Figure and the Reliability of Witnesses

Van Pelt quotes the conclusion by Samuel Crowell that because

> *"the Soviet report was wrong, in particular on its totally arbitrary calculation of four million victims* […]*, it follows that the testimonies and confessions which support the calculation were influenced by the report."*

He then argues (pp. 184f.):

> *"Crowell did not consider the fact that the Sonderkommandos had given the Soviet investigators the figure of 4 million, while a calculation of the incineration capacity of the crematoria had initially generated a figure of 5.1 million."*

Van Pelt does not know what he is talking about. First of all, "initially," as I have explained above, the Polish-Soviet "experts" came up with the figure of four million by themselves. The figure of 5,121,000 does not even appear in the initial report of February 14 to March 8, 1945, but only later in the final version published by *Pravda* on May 7,

1945. Secondly, contrary to what van Pelt believes, the *Sonderkommando* witnesses did not mention the figure of four million in their interviews with the Soviet investigators; this is true for Tauber as well as for Dragon. It was only several weeks later, when they made their depositions before judge Sehn, that these witnesses spoke of four million. I have already set out Tauber's testimony in chapter 10.6. above. He declared that the number of victims at Auschwitz was four million people, with two million of them during his time with the *Sonderkommando* and another two million before that.

And this is Dragon's declaration:[758]

> *"I calculate the number of gassed in the two bunkers and in the four crematoria to be more than 4 million. Other detainees working in the Sonderkommando were also of the same opinion."*

Jankowski confirmed fully the first part of Tauber's estimate and therefore indirectly also the four million figure:[759]

> *"On the basis of my observations and from discussions with other detainees of the Sonderkommando – it existed for two years – I have come to the conclusion that in the crematoria and in the bunkers of Birkenau together no fewer than 2 million people were cremated.*
>
> *This figure does not comprise those who were cremated by other Sonderkommandos which existed prior to Birkenau and were liquidated by the SS, therefore they could not say anything about the number of persons cremated during the time those Sonderkommandos existed."*

As van Pelt openly called the four million figure "one very monumental error" (2002, p. 183), the problem raised by Crowell is very serious indeed. The silly reply given by van Pelt has not affected it in any way. The matter concerns the reliability of the witnesses as much as the validity of the approach via the "convergence of proof." As far as the witnesses are concerned, the scenario they describe is applicable only *within* the framework of the Soviet propaganda story of the four million victims, which is, however, false. For that reason the witnesses who have underwritten it with their fantastic accounts of gassings and cre-

[758] Deposition by S. Dragon on May 10 and 11, 1945, before judge Jan Sehn. Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 111

[759] Deposition by S. Jankowski on April 13, 1945, before judge Jan Sehn, in: Bezwińska/Świebocka, pp. 53-54.

mations – the former historically false, the latter technically impossible – are liars.

As to the second aspect of the problem, if van Pelt himself admits that the four million figure, being "one very monumental error," is false, he would also have to admit that we have here a "convergence" of testimonies on a falsehood. This means not only that the mere fact of one testimony being confirmed by another does not necessarily establish any kind of veracity, it also means that the foundation of van Pelt's method with its tool of mutual confirmation of testimonies falls to pieces.

In brief: as I have stated elsewhere (2004a, pp. 16-18), the invalidation of the four million figure entails necessarily the invalidation of the testimonies made within its propagandistic framework and, in turn, the invalidation of van Pelt's method.

Part Five: The Origin of the "Convergence of Independent Accounts"

16. Propaganda by Auschwitz Secret Resistance Movement

The "convergence of independent accounts" is one of the fundamental principles of van Pelt's historiographic method. It assumes that there is a real "convergence" and that the testimonies are really "independent." These aspects will be discussed in chapter 19 below. The principle in question also assumes that the "accounts" are true, i.e. that what the witnesses said they knew actually had a factual historical foundation. In this chapter I intend to show that the respective statements are instead mere reiterations of the propaganda invented and spread by the secret resistance movement active in the Auschwitz camp (see chapter 19.1.).

16.1. Forgotten Propaganda Stories

On January 27, 1945, the vanguard of the Soviet 100th infantry division, belonging to the 60th army of the Ukrainian Front, reached the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex, which by then had been abandoned by the SS. The Soviet propaganda machinery was revved up immediately and overeagerly churned out the most extravagant stories which circulated among the detainees. On February 2 *Pravda* published an article by its correspondent Boris Polevoi entitled "The death complex of Auschwitz" in which one can read the following, among other things:[760]

> *"They* [the Germans] *flattened the hill of the so-called 'old' graves in the eastern part,*[761] *blew up and destroyed the traces of the electric conveyor belt where hundreds of detainees at a time had been killed by means of electric current; the bodies were placed on a*

[760] "Kombinat smjerti v Osvjetzimje." *Pravda*, Febraury 2, 1945, p. 4.
[761] The graves, both actual and presumed, were located in the western part of the camp.

conveyor belt which moved slowly and ran up to a shaft furnace[762] *where the corpses were completely burned."*

Up until that time the Soviet propaganda had not given any thought at all about Auschwitz. In the preceding months *Pravda* had dedicated to it only a brief article which, moreover, was based on information received from London and according to which the "death factory" at Auschwitz had three crematoria "equipped with gas chambers" with a capacity of 10,000 corpses per day![763] This propaganda story was picked up on September 27, 1945, by a former Auschwitz detainee, a certain Liebermann, who declared the following:[764]

"As already mentioned, I was one of a working party whose duty it was to unload potatoes at the station. We had at this time no contact with the prisoners of the big camp. We were separated in quarantine but housed together with another working party, which was serving the crematorium and the gas chambers. It is due to this fact that I know how things occurred.

The men and women entered the so-called bathroom and undressed separately to avoid panic. Once they were undressed they entered by separate doors in the central gas chamber. This chamber could take 3,000 people. The gas was released through sprays of the showers and from bombs which were thrown through apertures designed to allow for that procedure. Death occurred within five minutes. On certain days, when enormous transports arrived at the station of Birkenau, 42,000 people were gassed.

Once the gassing process had been completed, the floor of the chamber opened automatically and the corpses fell into the subterranean chamber, where prisoners in charge of extracting the teeth or cutting hair of a certain length, took over. […]

Once the gold teeth had been recovered, the corpses were loaded on to a moving belt and transported to cremation ovens, through subterranean gangways. There were four ovens, a big one and three small ones, which were capable of burning 400 corpses in five

[762] "sciachtnuju pječ," a word derived from the German "Schachtofen," shaft furnace, an enormous cylinder of refractory material used for the generation of gas by the gasification of coal. No such device ever existed at Auschwitz.

[763] "Gjermanskij 'lagjer smjerti' v Pol'scje," (German "Death Camp" in Poland). *Pravda*, March 24, 1944, p. 4.

[764] From a Memorandum by Mr. Lieberman, September 27, 1945, in: Eisenberg, pp. 139-141. The author gives the source as: "From Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. VI, Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946; Vol. XI, pp. 1100-1103 (Document D 251)."

minutes.[765] *Later on, when the number of corpses exceeded the capacity of the ovens, trenches were dug and the corpses thrown in saturated with petrol.*

I have personally seen these trenches and smelled the stench of the combustion. I have equally been able to visit the gas chambers and the crematorium, when I was detailed to clean up on a day when they were not in use.

I have never seen the trolleys for the transport of corpses personally, nor have I seen the ovens operating; but as I have already mentioned, several of the working party, which was serving the gas chambers and ovens, lived with us and have given me all the details. This special working party was called Sonderkommando. A certain Jacob Weinschein [766] *of Paris, who is a survivor of this commando, is personally known to me."*

In 1946 a publication of the French government, referring to a "Report from Russian services," gave another version of this story (Aronéanu, p. 182):

"At 800-900 meters from the location of the ovens the detainees board carts running on rails. There are different sizes at Auschwitz for 10 or 15 persons. Once loaded, the cart is set in motion on an inclined plane and enters a tunnel at high speed. At the end of the tunnel there is a wall, behind [the wall] *is the opening of the oven. When the cart strikes the wall, the latter opens up automatically, the cart tips over and drops its load of living human beings into the oven. Right away another* [cart] *follows, loaded with another group of detainees, and so forth."*

A variant of the story, told by the ex-detainee Leo Laptos, has the "gas chambers" laid out like baths, complete with water pipes from which "gas came […] instead of water," after which "the floors were tilted over, whereby the corpses fell on a conveyor belt which moved them to the crematorium" (de Jong, p. 9). Already during the war the propaganda section of the Auschwitz resistance movement had invented extermination methods that were just as fantastic, like the one of the "pneumatic hammer,"[767] the "electric chambers" and the "electric bath."

[765] This corresponds to a cremation capacity of 115,200 corpses in 24 hours!
[766] A person unknown to holocaust historiography.
[767] Państwowego Muzeum 1968, p. 32, 43, 54. The Delegatura was the local representation of the Polish government-in-exile at London.

On October 23, 1942, the secret newspaper *Informacja bieżąca* (current information), no. 39 (64), published the following item (*ibid*., p. 52):

> *"From what we hear from an SS member working near the electric chambers, the daily number of these victims amounts to 2,500 per night. They are killed in the electric bath and in gas chambers."*

And a report dated April 18, 1943, tells of these extermination methods at Auschwitz (Gilbert 1984, p. 130):

> *"b. Electric Chambers, these chambers had metal walls, the victims were brought in and then high tension electric current was introduced.*
>
> *c. The so-called Hammerluft system. This is a hammer of air. Those were special chambers where the hammer fell from the ceiling and by means of a special installation victims found death under air pressure."*

As late as May 1945 Mordechai Lichtenstein declared:[768]

> *"On little carts the corpses were taken to the crematoria, where they were burned by an electrical current of 6,000 volts."*

In Stockholm a civil servant of the Polish government in exile, a certain Waskiewicz, debriefed a Pole in June 1944 who had managed to escape from Poland after having spent seven weeks at Auschwitz. On June 18 Waskiewicz drew up a report in French on the results of the debriefing of the witness, whom he identified only by his initials – K.J. The man was a forced laborer who, having come back a few days late from a leave, had been arrested by the Gestapo and sentenced to 10 weeks in a concentration camp. He was interned for three weeks at the Rattwitz camp in Silesia and then moved to Auschwitz, where he spent the remaining seven weeks. In his account of the camp he relates the tale of the conveyor belt, but in a different context:[769]

> *"At each roll-call a special squad moved away those who had fallen and no longer reacted to kicks; they were taken – without checking whether they were still alive – on a conveyor belt directly to the crematorium oven, the capacity of which had been designed for 1,000 persons in 1943."*

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[768] Testimony by Mordechai Lichtenstein in: Jewish Survivors Report Documents on Nazi Guilt. No 1. Eighteen Months in the Oswiecim Extermination Camp. May 1945, p. 12. ROD, c[21]og.

[769] Central Dept. Poland No. 26. 18th June 1944. Political Memorandum. From: Press Reading Bureau, Stockholm. To: Political Intelligence Departement, London. Rapport de M. Waskiewicz sur l'interrogation de K.J. PRO, FO371/39451, pp. 137-140, here p. 138.

But the most fanciful part of the account is the following (*ibid*., p. 139):

> *"Section XVIII (Jews) was equipped with a gas chamber and a lubricant factory for machinery. K.J. states that this was where he had found that the Germans transformed the corpses of the Jews into grease which was then shipped in packages with the label 'Lubricant Factory – Auschwitz.'*
>
> *Having been ordered to move the corpses of those gassed, he had been able to follow this process for a group of 1,500 Polish Jews 'shipped' in May 1943. On arrival these Jews were not brutalized. They also looked reasonably well fed. Immediately on arrival they were taken to a bath and even given soap. Then, obviously without their clothes, they were grouped, the fat ones and the lean ones, men and women separately.*
>
> *Then each group was sent to the gas chambers separately, a large concrete hall accessible through a triple door. The condemned usually died within a few minutes after the closure of the doors. The hall was then quickly aired, and the detainees of the removal squad had to take them as quickly as possible, before they became stiff, on special carts which went into the lubricant factory via a mechanical transport device.*
>
> *There, by means of chemical processes which K.J. does not know about, a transformation into a slurry and the extraction of the grease took place. The remains in the form of a nondescript slurry and some bones were carefully burned in the crematorium oven."*

After this, Waskiewicz's presentation of the witnesses sounds laboriously funny (p. 137):

> *"From a peasant background, simple, even primitive, but a good and conscientious observer. His veracity appears unassailable."*

The myth about the showers spurting toxic gas instead of water was invented much earlier. It already appears in a "Letter written from the Auschwitz camp" dated August 29, 1942, in which we are told:[770]

> *"The most frightening ones are the mass executions by means of gas in chambers specially built for the purpose. There are two, and they can take in 1,200 persons. Baths with showers are installed there, but instead of water, gas comes out of them."*

[770] Państwowego Muzeum 1968, p. 43.

In a secret report on living conditions in the camp from December 1942 or January 1943, the gassing process is described as follows:[771]

> *"Inside, the chambers are set up to look like a bath, from which they differ only in the sense that toxic gas instead of water comes out of the showers.* […]
>
> *In the barrack they have to undress quickly, because they have to take a bath. They are even given a towel and soap. After the bath they are to receive linen and clothing. When the chamber is full, the doors are closed, and the gas comes out through openings in the shape of a shower."*

The invention of the gas showers was widely accepted, so much so that Dr. Gilbert, the prison psychologist at Nuremberg, even placed it in Höss's mouth! (See chapter 11.2.) The French underground newspaper *Fraternité* published the following eyewitness account on Auschwitz in its issue of May 1944 (Courtois/Rayski, p. 220):

> *"Right away after arrival all able-bodied men are immediately sent to the worksites. The others, women, children, old people, are sent to the showers. They are led to a modern and splendid establishment. Unfortunately, instead of some hot water, which would have eased their tired limbs, jets of asphyxiating gas are coming out: and a few moments later, piled up against the doors through which they had tried to escape, there are only corpses of mothers holding their children in their arms or old men pressing their wives against them in a final effort to shield them."*

It goes without saying that the shower story had a wide audience also among the former detainees of the camp. Here for example is Sofia Schafranov's version (Cavaliere, p. 40):

> *"There was a make-believe shower* [room], *and the victims were even handed towels and a bar of soap, so they would know what kind of a shower it was; after that they were made to undress and were herded into low concrete chambers, closed hermetically. Faucets were mounted on the ceiling, from which poison gas was sprayed instead of water."*

The most fanciful version of the fake showers was invented by Ada Bimko (see chapter 17.8.1.). But even that story had its variants. A particularly extravagant one was told by Bruno Piazza, who claims to have

[771] AGK, NTN, 155, pp. 299-300.

been sentenced to die in the gas chamber, from which he managed to rescue himself miraculously, though (Piazza, pp. 127-131):

> *"I heard one of them say: 'Krematorium.' We moved into the camp between two rows of barracks, just like those of the previous camp. When we had reached the end, they made us turn left and enter, all eight hundred of us, a darkened barrack. Night had already fallen. In the center was an unlit stove and three zinc pails. All of a sudden the lights went on, and we saw that we were in a kind of bathroom. Twenty showers hung down from the ceiling.* […] *The chamber was the lobby of the crematorium, it was the gas chamber.* […]
>
> *There was no longer any doubt. I had heard about the system: they spread a layer of potassium cyanide powder under the showers and then, suddenly, sprayed it with water from the showers. In this way the poisonous cyanide gas emerged from the powder. The clerk came in with a gas mask on his face, spread the powder, turned on the shower, closed the door, and ten minutes later we would all be dead from asphyxiation. In the rear was another door which had to lead to the crematorium by way of an inclined plane.* […]
>
> *Earlier the asphyxiation was done in a manner different from the present one with the showers. In the ceiling of the cell was a hole which could be opened by means of an automatic valve and from which three or four ready-made bomblets of hydrogen cyanide were dropped in. But the system was not very safe, because at times the bomblet shell did not break from the shock, and it was then necessary to repeat the process up to four or five times to make sure that the gas had spread."*

At the 1949 Degesch trial a witness spoke of the rumor that "at Birkenau, the gas was introduced into the rooms through fake showers," but both Dr. Walter Heerdt, the inventor of Zyklon B, and Dr. Ra.,[772] physicist, declared that this gassing technique would be impossible, and so the district court of Frankfurt on the Main recognized it as false in its sentence of March 28, 1949 (Rüter, vol. XIII, p. 134):

> *"The court has no doubt that the assumption of the gas being removed from the Zyklon can by means of a syringe and fed into the gas chambers is in error; hence, it is no longer necessary to carry out the experiment requested by one of the defendants."*

[772] The text gives only the first letters of the surname of the witness.

These rumors were taken over, incredibly enough, by Alfred Wetzler, the co-author, together with Rudolf Vrba, of the report known as the "War Refugee Board Report," the "Auschwitz Protocols," or simply the "Vrba-Wetzler Report," which I will deal with later (see chapter 16.3 and 17.1-3.). In a book written by him under the pseudonym of Jozef Lánik, in which he referred to himself ("Valer") and to Vrba ("Karol") and to others by pseudonyms, Wetzler wrote (Lánik, pp. 71f.):

> *"A little while back these people had been taking care of their luggage and had been wondering why the SS was so polite; now they stare at the ceiling where tiny crystals are coming out of the shower heads. These crystals quickly release their gas; now the people inhale it, strong poisonous Zyklon."*
>
> *"Every single one of them, even qualified experts, were herded under the showers, pressed, one body against the other, into a space of two hundred and twenty square meters to be showered with crystals of hydrocyanide."* (*ibid*., p. 95)
>
> *"*[The victims] *lined up five abreast and marched with their children into the baths, where not water but asphyxiating gas came out of the showers."* (*ibid*., p. 259)

In the sentence passed by the Osnabrück regional court on February 10, 1952, against *SS-Hauptscharführer* Bernhard Rackers one can read that the Birkenau gas chambers "were disguised as showers; [here] carbon oxide [sic!] or Zyklon B were fed in."[773]

The story of the "bomblets of hydrocyanic gas" was an adaptation of the more common "bombs" of hydrogen cyanide, which was invented between the end of 1943 and early 1944 by Jerzy Tabeau, detained at Auschwitz under the name of Jerzy Wesołowski from March 23, 1942, who escaped in the night of November 19 to 20, 1943. In his account, which began to make the rounds in the summer of 1944, he wrote (Silberschein, pp. 67f.):

> *"After having arrived in the area of the chamber, surrounded by barbed wire, the condemned had to strip naked – men, women and children together; each one was given a towel and soap. Then the lot was herded into the chamber with plenty of kicks and beatings. As many as the chamber could hold were herded in, and then the door was shut, and specially designated SS men, using valves set into the walls, dropped in bombs filled with prussic acid. After 10 minutes*

[773] Rüter, vol. X, p. 355. On the same page it is stated that 4½ million persons were exterminated in Auschwitz!

the doors were opened, and a special Kommando (always consisting of Jews) pushed the corpses aside and made room for the next convoy."

Beside the "bombs" or "bomblets" with hydrogen cyanide, other substances were named as means of extermination: "sneezing gasses" (Ludwig, p. 220) and "certain substances which put people to sleep within one minute" (see chapter 7.6.2.). The sentence in the trial of Gerhard Peters (March 29, 1948) mentions the testimony of a former detainee who had been at Auschwitz between April 6, 1944, and January 1945. He speaks of a "*Faulgaskommando*" (rotting-gas detail) employed in the recovery of "rotting-gas" in the swampy areas, which was allegedly taken to Birkenau and used for the extermination.[774] The former detainee Otto Wolken instead speaks of gassing trenches:[775]

"Trenches were dug and covered with canvas, to be used as temporary gas chambers."

During the Nuremberg trial, on June 21, 1946, U.S. prosecutor Jackson mentioned another system of extermination allegedly used "near Auschwitz": the atom bomb:[776]

"A village, a small village was provisionally erected, with temporary structures, and in it approximately 20,000 Jews were put. By means of this newly invented weapon of destruction, these 20,000 people were eradicated almost instantaneously, and in such a way that there was no trace left of them."

These propaganda fables were quickly forgotten and replaced by other, more elaborate tales which I will consider in chapter 16.3., but they created nonetheless a certain disarray among mainstream holocaust historians who in fact had to proclaim that these propaganda stories had not been transmogrified, through various literary treatments, into the holocaust "truth" presently *en vogue*, but that they were merely a faulty reflection of a "real truth," which had somehow been ignored or unknown at the time. We will later assess the value of their conjectures.

[774] Rüter, vol. XIII, p. 133. The court considered the witness to be untrustworthy.
[775] AGK, NTN, 88 (Höss trial), p. 45.
[776] IMT, vol. XVI, p. 529f.

16.2. The Story of the Industrial Exploitation of Human Corpses

In the chapter above I have discussed the account given by the "eyewitness" K.J. of the "Lubricant Factory – Auschwitz." The study of the origin of this lie is important, because it clearly shows in what way the Auschwitz propaganda staff worked out their fables: starting out from an actual fact but distorting it in such a way that it took on a criminal and terrible significance – the same manner they used to concoct the story of the gas chambers.

The tale of the human grease was too juicy not to be used as a propaganda tool, but in doing so, these artists showed such a lack of any sense of scale that their later elaborations ended up in the realm of the grotesque and the ridiculous. This is, for example, what was written by the former detainee Olga Lengyel in this respect (p. 130):

> *"The 'nordic superman' knew how to profit from everything: enormous barrels were used to catch the human fat which was collected at high temperature, and it was no surprise that the soap used in the camp had such a disgusting odor and that the inmates looked suspiciously at certain chunks of greasy sausage!"*

By now this fable has been forgotten, although not without a certain effort. In 1994 a researcher at the Auschwitz Museum Andrzej Strzelecki stated (1994, p. 262):

> *"There is no evidence that human fat was used to manufacture soap, or that human skin was treated to make lampshades, bookbindings, purses, or similar objects in Auschwitz."*

But there is another tale, no less disgusting, which somehow still lives on: the one about the utilization of human bones. This accusation had already been raised during the Nuremberg trial by the Soviet prosecutor Smirnov:[777]

> *"From 1943 the Germans, in order to utilize the bones which were not burned, started to grind them and sell them to the firm Strem for the manufacture of superphosphates. In the camp there were found bills of lading, addressed to the firm Strem, of 112 tons and 600 kilograms of bone meal from human corpses. The Germans also used for industrial purposes hair shorn from women who were doomed for extermination."*

[777] IMT, vol. VII, p. 586.

And in the most important work prepared by the Auschwitz Museum, which appeared in the late 1990s, the same Andrzej Strzelecki stresses (1995b, p. 305):

> *"according to the findings of the Soviet Commission for the investigation of the crimes perpetrated at Auschwitz, bones of the corpses cremated*[778] *in the crematoria have been ground and then sold as 'bone meal' to the Strehm chemical works in Strzemieszyce near Dąbrowa Górnica in Dąbrowa region; the bones were to be turned into fertilizer on an industrial scale. In 1943 and 1944, KL Auschwitz shipped to this firm at least 100 tons of ground human bones."*

This fable is actually based on a list drawn up on February 27, 1945, by a Polish detainee and handed over by him to the Soviet Commission. It is entitled "List of fresh bones and bony offal shipped to Strzemiszyce station for Stre[h]m Co." The paper lists the material shipped to this company and shows the date, freight car number, contents, and weight. The 'contents' column indicates, in German, the type of bones shipped: "*frische Knochen*" (fresh bones), "*tierische Abfälle*"[779] (animal offal), "*Rinderknochen*" (beef bones), "*Leimleder*" (glue leather).[780] Hence, the bones shipped to the Strehm Co. were not human bones, but animal bones.

Looking deeper into the sources, we also come to the origin of the fable of the use of human fat for industrial purposes. An inventory blueprint dated September 27, 1944,[781] tells us that the slaughterhouse at Auschwitz possessed a device for the extraction of grease from animal bones ("*Knochenentfettungs*[*anlage*]"), which had been set up as early as September 1942.[782] The equipment (*Knochenentfettungsapparat*) had come from the M. Trüsted Co. of Berlin-Hannover, as we can see from a letter addressed to the KL Auschwitz administration dated June 25, 1942.[783] The device served to extract animal bone marrow for the enrichment of the diet of the detainees, but the propaganda staff of the

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[778] But the cremation produced only ashes and no bones!
[779] The text has "apfäle," i.e. "Abfälle" (offal).
[780] GARF, 7021-108-17, p. 130 (original document) and 131 (Russian translation).
[781] Bestandplan des provisorischen Schlachthauses BV 33B, dated September 27, 1944. GARF, 7021-108-48, p. 14.
[782] Baubericht für Monat September 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 14: "…Knochenentfettungsanlage eingebaut..." (installed bone degreasing installation).
[783] GARF, 7021-108-44, p. 1. Pages 2-11 contain more documents on this device, including operating instructions and a technical drawing of the device.

camp transformed it into a device for the use of human bones for industrial purposes!

It is worth noting that the false British propaganda during the First World War on the subject of "corpse factories," rightly labeled by Arthur Ponsonby as "one of the most revolting lies invented during the war" (1980, p. 102-113, here 102), had a similar origin. *The Times* wrote on April 16, 1917, for example, that the German army had a "Corpse Exploitation Establishment" (*Kadaververwertungsanstalt*) in which the grease obtained from the bodies of fallen soldiers was transformed into lubricating oil; the rest was ground up into bone meal to be added to animal feed. As Walter Laqueur wrote (p. 8f.):

> *"There were indeed such installations in Germany (Kadaververwertungsanstalten) but they were processing animals' cadavers not human corpses.* […]
>
> *In the mid-twenties, Austen Chamberlain, the Foreign Secretary, admitted in Parliament that the story of the corpse factory had been without foundation."*

During the First World War, Laqueur observes (p. 9), many no less disgusting propagandistic lies made the rounds:

> *"The Daily Telegraph reported in March 1916 that the Austrians and the Bulgarians had killed 700,000 Serbs using asphyxiating gas.*
>
> *Some readers probably remembered these stories when in June of 1942 the Daily Telegraph was the first to report that 700,000 Jews had been gassed."*

But "presumably" some members of the Auschwitz resistance movement had remembered this as early as the end of 1941.

16.3. Birth of the Propaganda Story of Gas Chambers

The story of the gas chambers arose rather early, but with a special twist: experiments with poison gases for military purposes rather than indiscriminate mass extermination. It appears for the first time in a report by the secret resistance movement of the camp dated October 24, 1941:[784]

> *"At Oświęcim* [Auschwitz], *in early October, 850 Russian officers and non-coms (prisoners of war) who had been brought there*

[784] Państwowego Muzeum 1968, p. 11. For a thorough analysis of these reports see Aynat 2004.

were put to death by gas in order to test a new war gas which is to be used on the eastern front."

In later sources the motive of the experimentation with gases for military use remains predominant.[785] Then the propaganda of the resistance movement takes a new turn, that of the extermination of Jews in gas chambers, which the movement called "*Degasungskammer*." This term was the deformation of the word "*Begasungskammer*," gassing chamber, which designated a disinfestation chamber using hydrogen cyanide in the DEGESCH-*Kreislauf* (gas recirculation) system.

Gas chambers paired with showers, a recurrent motive in later propaganda, came together from two sources, both hygienic in nature, one planned, the other being realized: the former was the *Aufnahmegebäude* (reception building) which housed a total of 19 disinfestation "*Begasungskammern*" (gassing chambers) and a shower hall for the detainees, which gave the name to the alleged homicidal gas chambers; the latter consisted of two disinfestation stations, one the mirror image of the other, named *Bauwerk* 5a and 5b, which also contained a gas chamber for hydrogen cyanide and a washing and shower room, respectively called "*Gaskammer*" and "*Wasch- und Brauseraum*" in the corresponding drawings. This gave rise to a literary theme which took on a variety of unfounded and contradictory forms until it reached the expurgated and amended final version of the provisional gassing installations labeled (after the end of the war) "bunkers" or "little red house" and "little white house."

The creation of a detailed story of homicidal gassings in the Birkenau crematoria was more laborious, though. A first rough outline appeared rather late in the chapter "Death Factory" of the *Periodic Report* (Sprawozdanie okresowe) of May 5-25, 1944:[786]

"Since May of 1943, 'comfort.' The transports were taken to the 'Death Ramp' at Rajsko,[787] *from there, after the selection, men, women and children are led to the gas chambers in the crematoria just finished (we have blueprints of those chambers). After the gassing the naked bodies are moved to a freight elevator on the ground* [floor] *of this 'death factory,' where they undergo an attentive*

[785] Mattogno 2005a, pp. 31-36.

[786] APMO, Au D-Ro/91, Vol. VII, p. 445.

[787] Rajsko was a village south of Birkenau (in Polish: Brzezinka). Some reports from the resistance movement placed the Birkenau camp at Rajsko rather than at Brzezinka. One of the reports spoke of the "Hell at Rajsko" (Piekło Rajska). Państwowego Muzeum 1968, p. 50.

search for the enrichment of the IIIrd Reich. A squad of dentists removes gold and platinum teeth, together with the jaws – to save time. In the autopsy room suspicious corpses are dissected in a search for valuables. Four crematoria are active, handling up to 5,000 [corpses] *a day. The Auschwitz ovens have already 'handled' 1,500,000 Jews and more than 100,000 Poles, Russians etc."*

This is really a decidedly belated and insignificant description for an enormous gassing action covering at least one and a half million people! The Auschwitz resistance movement was well aware of this and decided to elaborate on a particular aspect of the alleged mass extermination. The propaganda machinery was started up and gave birth to a story which, in spite of its obvious falsehood, became the nucleus of what eventually developed into the present "historical" framework: the so-called "Auschwitz Protocols," a series of accounts written by detainees who had escaped from Auschwitz in 1943 and 1944.

The most important account was the one by Rudolf Vrba (interned at Auschwitz on June 30, 1942, under the name of Walter Rosenberg, ID number 44070) and Alfred Wetzler (interned on April 13, 1942, ID number 29162), two Slovak Jews who escaped from Birkenau on April 7, 1944. Back in Slovakia, at the end of April of that year, they wrote their famous report which began to circulate immediately. One of the first versions, in German, was entitled "*Tatsachenbericht über Auschwitz und Birkenau*" (Factual account of Auschwitz and Birkenau) and was dated "Geneva, 17. Mai 1944."[788] In November 1944 these reports were published by the *War Refugee Board* in Washington (1944), hence the name *War Refugee Board Report*. The aim of Vrba and Wetzler, as the former explained later, was "to tell the world what was happening in Auschwitz" in order to prevent the deportation of the Hungarian Jews to that camp (Vrba/Bestic, p. 198). Vrba also claimed to have contacted Filip Müller, a detainee from the so-called "*Sonderkommando*" "who became one of my most valuable sources of information" (*ibid*., p. 175), and to have received from him "further information" when he discussed with him the situation in the camp in early 1944 (*ibid*., p. 197).

During the first Zündel trial in 1985, where he testified as a witness for the prosecution, Vrba confirmed to have had frequent contacts with "*Sonderkommando*" members and said that he had prepared the schematic drawing of Crematoria II and III of Birkenau, incorporated into

[788] FDRL, WRB, Box n. 61. The report was distributed by the "Weltzentrale des Hechaluz" at Geneva.

the report, precisely on the basis of the information so received.[789] Müller, the former detainee called upon by Rudolf Vrba, even confirmed to have handed "a blueprint of the crematoria with the gas chambers" together with other documents to Alfred Wetzler in 1944 (Müller, p. 193). Wetzler, on the other hand, declared in a statement made on November 30, 1963:[790]

> *"A detainee himself, the Soviet PoW Wasyl, I don't remember his last name, drew the drawings of the crematoria for us."*

The Vrba-Wetzler report contains a detailed description of Crematoria II and III:[791]

> *"At present there are four crematoria in operation at Birkenau, two large ones, I and II, and two smaller ones, III and IV. Those of type I and II consist of 3 parts, i.e.: a) the furnace room; b) the large hall; and c) the gas chamber. A huge chimney rises from the furnace room around which are grouped nine furnaces, each having four openings. Each opening can take three normal corpses at once and after an hour and half the bodies are completely burnt. This corresponds to a daily capacity of about 2,000 corpses. Next to this is a large 'reception hall' which is arranged so as to give the impression of the antechamber of a bathing establishment. It holds 2,000 people and apparently there is a similar waiting room on the floor below. From there a door and a few steps lead down into the very long and narrow gas chamber. The walls of this chamber are also camouflaged with simulated entries to shower rooms in order to mislead the victims. The roof is fitted with 3 traps which can be hermetically closed from the outside. A track leads from the gas chamber toward the furnace room."*

This is followed by the description of the alleged gassing procedure which involved pouring, through the three "traps," a "preparation in powder form out of tin cans labeled 'Cyklon – For use against vermin' which are manufactured by a Hamburg concern" (*ibid.*).

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[789] In the District of Ontario. Between: Her Majesty the Queen and Ernst Zündel. Before: The Honourable Judge H.R. Locke and a Jury, vol. VI, p. 1479. Rudolf Vrba declared himself under oath to be the author of the drawing in question (*ibid.*, pp. 1260, 1266, 1316).

[790] Account of A. Wetzler, November 30, 1963. APMO, Oświadczenia (Dichiarazioni), t. 40, p. 36.

[791] The Extermination Camps of Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birkenau in Upper Silesia. FDRL, WRB, Box no. 6, pp. 12-13.

We know now that the description of Crematoria II and III supplied by Vrba and Wetzler as well as the drawing illustrating it are outright inventions, as can be seen by a simple comparison with the original blueprint. Briefly:

1. the ovens in the furnace hall numbered 5 and not 9;
2. each oven had 3 muffles and not 4;
3. the ovens were arranged in a single straight line along the axis of the furnace hall and not grouped around the chimney in a semi-circle;
4. each opening (muffle) could not take three normal corpses at once;
5. three simultaneously introduced corpses would not burn completely within 90 minutes;
6. the room which is said to have served as the victims' undressing room (*Leichenkeller* 2) was in the half-basement and not at ground level;
7. there has been no similar waiting room on a floor below, as there was no floor below the morgues;
8. the room which is said to have served as a homicidal gas chamber (*Leichenkeller* 1) was not at ground level and a little lower than the undressing room, but in the half-basement on the same level as the latter; there were no steps connecting them either;
9. The walls of this morgue were not camouflaged with simulated entries to shower rooms;
10. There were no hermetically closed "traps" in the roof of any room;
11. the room which is said to have served as a homicidal gas chamber was linked to the furnace hall not by rails but by a freight elevator;

As both the blueprint and the description of Crematoria II and III in the Vrba-Wetzler report are products of the imagination, it follows that the story of the extermination of Jews in homicidal gas chambers related by them *did not* come from detainees of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*" but was elaborated *unbeknownst* to them.

This, however, is proof that this story was created by the resistance movement in the camp as just another piece of lowly propaganda – and without their even thinking of involving the "*Sonderkommando*" detainees in any way! For the purposes of their propaganda such an involvement was obviously considered absolutely irrelevant. Throughout 1944 and later on as well the Vrba-Wetzler report was the mainstay for the "proof" of the alleged extermination of Jews at Auschwitz in gas chambers, and above all it weighed heavily on the later propaganda. As Walter Laqueur tells us (p. 145f.):

"Thus it was only in 1944, when Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler arrived with most detailed news about the greatest of all death camps, that the 'rumors' became a certainty."

And it precisely for that reason, namely to confer at least some measure of credibility to those propagandistic "rumors" which had until then been absolutely pitiful,[792] that the story told by Vrba and Wetzler was invented. Previously John S. Conway had argued that the "clear and precise descriptions" by Vrba and Wetzler "turned these terrible rumors into facts," which is to be understood literally: propaganda "rumors" were substantiated, which is a kind of historical hypostasis (Conway, p. 270).

The Vrba-Wetzler report had its effect also on later witnesses concerning Auschwitz, right up to outright plagiarism. The "Yellow Book" published in 1945, which contains "data on the martyrdom of the Hungarian Jewry during the war 1941-1945," brings to the witness stand a certain Henrik Farkas, deported to Auschwitz on June 15, 1944. In the chapter on "The gas chambers" he reproduces the Vrba and Wetzler tale in all details, but pretends that this is "a technical description of the gas chambers on the basis of notes taken by a Jewish engineer employed in a technical capacity."[793]

Szaja Gertner, a self-styled member of the "*Sonderkommando*," reshaped the previous propagandistic themes into a more fanciful form:[794]

"After the gassing the door was opened from the other side – the side from which no one could enter – as well as the windows, and [the room] *was ventilated for five minutes. Then the Kapos came into the middle* [of the room] *and pulled out the corpses through the doors and windows, so as to speed things up. We all wore heavy rubber gloves and cotton wads in our mouths. As soon as they were being moved, the corpses released gas, so much so that we could not breathe. The rails led from the door of the gassing (gazowni) room to the oven.*

On one cart one loaded 40 corpses at a time, and it went right to the grid. These carts turned over into a pit where there was a grid,

[792] The members of the Auschwitz resistance movement needed over two and a half years in order to select Zyklon B as the propagandistic tool of the extermination; earlier, they had spoken only of "gas."

[793] Béla 1945, pp. 64f. French translation of the passage in: *Révision. Le doux parfum de l'interdit*, no. 55-56, August-September 1994, pp. 24f.

[794] Borwicz et al., pp. 78f. There is an almost identical version, but translated into English from the Yiddish text: Gertner, pp. 141-147.

> [and] *the bodies immediately became red because of the current, and within 10 minutes they turned to ash. When the current was too low, very large bones were left over, but normally there were only small remains.*
>
> *In the center was a device they called 'Exhauster'; after each cremation it blew the ashes into a pit nearby. There, a worker shoveled the ash into a barrel, and a winch hoisted it up. Then this ash was carried away and dumped into the water."*

16.4. Propaganda Takes Shape: Soviet, British, Polish Contributions

The Soviets had already tried out the tremendous propagandistic power of pictures after they had liberated the Lublin-Majdanek camp. When the Red Army entered that camp on July 23, 1944, they found the gigantic Kori oven intact with its five muffles as well as stores holding some 800,000 pairs of shoes. On the basis of a technically foolish "assessment" of the cremation capacity of the oven and assuming that the shoes had belonged to assassinated victims, the Soviets changed Lublin-Majdanek into an extermination camp which had swallowed 1.5 million victims. Soon the world's newspapers were filled with pictures of the oven and the pile of shoes, which were presented as the visible and irrefutable "proof" of the immense extermination that had allegedly taken place there.

The Germans, too, had experienced the suggestive power of these images, although at their expense, and so they blew up the Birkenau crematoria before abandoning the Auschwitz complex and set fire to the storage barracks of the *Effektenlager*, which held the goods taken from the detainees and which all burned down except for six of them.

On the other hand, though, the Germans abandoned to the Soviets the nearly complete archive of ZBL with all its "criminal traces" of the alleged homicidal gas chambers – plus 8,000 detainees as potential witnesses of those alleged gassings (Strzelecki 1995c, vol. V, p. 51). If we follow the holocaust *vulgata*, the SS would have easily been able to gas and cremate all of them during the first week of January 1945 in Crematorium V, the only one still standing – and even use the archives as fuel!

Not being able to profit from any propaganda images of the crematorium ovens with their allegedly attached gas chambers, the Soviets fell back on the disinfestation gas chamber of the so-called "Kanada I"

(*Bauwerk* 28), which they presented as a homicidal gas chamber complete with gas-tight door and peephole "through which the SS observed the process of killing," as we can still see on the caption of a photograph in a Polish book published as late as 1980 in several languages (Smoleń, p. 156). The cans of Zyklon B and the gas masks, stored in this *Bauwerk*, were put to good use as well.

The Soviets were eager to hide their own crimes against peace (e.g. the partition of Poland and the aggression against Finland) and against humanity (e.g. the massacres at Katyn and Vinnitsa, about which the Germans had published two amply documented White Books). They now had to stupefy and terrify the world by blaming on the Germans a massacre even more horrendous than what they had thought up for Lublin-Majdanek: the unbelievable massacre of four million people. For this they set up a national commission of investigation which subcontracted to numerous "experts" and "professionals" the task of dressing up the official Soviet propaganda in a "historical" cloak. The essential contribution of the Soviet Commission to the success of the propaganda tale of the gas chambers was to take over Vrba and Wetzler's description of the alleged gassing procedure (Zyklon B being poured into the "gas chambers" through "traps") and to place it into the actual architectural framework of the crematoria. Since the ZBL archives contained any number of blueprints of the crematoria which were shown to the witnesses who had remained at Auschwitz, such as Tauber for example, the witnesses could bolster the story already told by Vrba and Wetzler, but without the gross architectural blunders of the latter.[795] Those witnesses who had previously been moved away from Auschwitz, however, were not in a position to make use of such an opportunity and continued to spread these gross mistakes (see chapter 17.7.).

Once the extermination procedure had been invented, it became necessary to invent the number of victims as well. As I have already illustrated in chapter 15.1., one of the many subcommissions of "experts" went to work and laid the foundation for the tale of the four million victims between February 14 and March 8, 1945, and on the basis of absurd and most fantastic data. The Soviets elaborated their propagandistic framework for Auschwitz in a "Communiqué of the extraordinary national commission for the verification and investigation of the crimes

[795] Plus those witnesses discussed these matters amongst each other, hence were "cross-pollinating" each other (cf. p. 24 of this book); see Dragan's and Tauber's statements as quoted on p. 539 of this book.

of the German-Fascist invaders and their accomplices," which was published in *Pravda* on May 7, 1945, and was quickly translated into various languages. The English version appeared on May 29, 1945 (Embassy 1945a); a French version followed during the same year (Embassy 1945b). The report was later accepted by the Nuremberg Tribunal as document URSS-008.

The British, for their part, organized the trial of Josef Kramer and 44 other members of the SS between September 17 and November 17, 1945. Former *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Kramer had been camp commander at the camp of Auschwitz II – Birkenau and later of the Bergen-Belsen camp; thus, the case of Auschwitz was debated at this trial as well. With respect to the alleged gas chambers at Auschwitz the prosecution based itself on a strange mix of the Vrba-Wetzler report and of the story of the gas showers. This is how Colonel Backhouse described the matter (Phillips, p. 26):

> *"Then naked, they were taken to the next room where there were five rows of, apparently, 20 sprays. The door was then locked. It* [the room] *would hold about 1,000 people at a time. The place was gas proof, and gas was turned on and these persons were gassed deliberately and killed. There were a door at the other end, a trolley and rails, and the bodies were loaded on the trolley and taken straight to the crematorium."*

Although the British investigators knew the "historical" framework set out by the Soviet propaganda,[796] many Jewish witnesses invented stories so outrageous that the defense attorneys – British officers! – came to accuse them openly as being liars.[797] For example, major Cranfield declared:

> *"The Nazis have aroused racial passion all over the earth, and I do not think it is unnatural or surprising that those young Jewesses should be vindictive toward their former warders, or to seek to avenge themselves upon them."*

He considered the testimonies to be "wholly unreliable" (Phillips, p. 244). The fanatical blindness of the witnesses was so extreme that some detainees were accused by others of being SS criminals.[798]

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[796] E.g., the Soviet film about Auschwitz was accepted by the Tribunal as exhibit no. 125. Phillips, p. 231.

[797] *Ibid.*, p. 76, 82, 89, 141, 244, 518, 519, 524, 535.

[798] This was the case for the former detainees Oskar Schmitz and Heinrich Schreirer, *ibid.*, pp. 289f., 334.

As far as Auschwitz was concerned, the most important witnesses were Sigismund Bendel and Ada Bimko, who gave absolutely unreliable evidence (see chapters 17.7.1. & 17.8.1.). Other witnesses showed that their imagination was no less fertile. A particular mention should be made of Regina Bialek and Sophia Litwinska. The former told the court that there were seven gas chambers at Auschwitz, one of which was below ground. The trucks could enter this chamber directly over a special ramp; it had a size of "12 yards square." The witness was unloaded with a group of female detainees destined to be gassed, but just before she died, her number was called up by Dr. Mengele in person, and she was carried out of the gas chamber! (*Ibid*., p. 657) Sophia Litwinska had a similar miracle happen to her. She, too, was taken to the gas chamber, which resembled a shower hall with shower heads, towels, even mirrors. Suddenly she saw "fumes" coming from a window placed high up and was ready to die, when she heard her name called. It was no one less than *SS-Obersturmführer* Franz Hössler, the *Schutzhaftlagerführer* of women's concentration camp at Birkenau, who led her out and drove her away on his motorcycle! (*Ibid*., pp. 79f.) All this is nothing compared to Jolan Holdost; he saw 300-400 persons, who had not been able to get into the gas chamber at Auschwitz I because there was no room, being doused with petroleum and burned alive! (*Ibid*., p. 666)

The Belsen trial did not add much to the propaganda picture mapped out by the Soviets, but confirmed and spread its essential principles. As van Pelt writes (p. 244):

> *"With the Belsen Trial, the gas chambers at Auschwitz formally entered the historical record."*

A few months later the Tesch trial was grafted on the Belsen findings; it took place in Hamburg between March 1 and April 26, 1946, and involved Bruno Tesch, Karl Weinbacher and Joachim Drosihn. They were accused of having supplied the SS with Zyklon B for homicidal ends. Here, the false testimonies by Broad (see chs. 14.3. & 18.2.) and by Bendel strengthened the Auschwitz propaganda picture (see Lindsey).

In May 1945 the Soviet Commission of inquiry was replaced by a Polish Commission of inquiry, which had the task of carrying out the preliminary investigations for the upcoming trials of the SS. The inquiry was headed by judge Jan Sehn who eagerly devoted himself to the matter. He was the author of the first "history" of Auschwitz, published in

1946 (Sehn 1946, pp. 63-130) and translated into English the same year (Central Commission, pp. 25-92). As van Pelt rightly says (p. 224):

> *"By the end of 1945, the major elements of the wartime history of Auschwitz had been established on the basis of on-site inspections, the testimony of witnesses, and study of the crematoria files in the archive of the Zentralbauleitung."*

And all of these elements of the history of the gas chambers were in the public domain as early as 1946.

17. Genesis of "Knowledge" of the Auschwitz Gas Chambers

17.1. "War Refugee Board Report"

In the third chapter of his book van Pelt presents "a reconstruction of how knowledge of Auschwitz had emerged" (p. 291), that is to say how the propaganda of the camp resistance movement about the gas chambers came to spread. After a brief reference to an article which appeared on July 1, 1942, in the *Polish Fortnightly Review* on the alleged first gassing – I shall deal with it in the following chapter – he goes directly to the "War Refugee Board Report" which, in van Pelt's words, "was the first substantial report on the use of Auschwitz as a factory of death" (p. 147).

As already explained, the Vrba-Wetzler report contains a description of Crematoria II and III which is a total invention. But instead of honestly recognizing this, van Pelt's tries to justify it in every possible way. This is his incredible conclusion (p. 151):

> *"The description of the crematoria in the War Refugee Board report contains errors, but given the conditions under which information was obtained, the lack of architectural training of Vrba and Wetzler,*[799] *and the situation in which the report was compiled, one would become suspicious if it did not contain errors."*

In this manner the proof that something is false becomes a proof of its veracity! The reason for this attempt at rehabilitating a historically unfounded document can be easily understood: as we have seen, the Vrba-Wetzler report constitutes the literary cornerstone for the later elaboration of the official history about homicidal gassings at Auschwitz. Exactly for this reason, van Pelt cannot admit that it was fathered by the secret resistance movement at Auschwitz. Because nearly all of the later witnesses drew directly or indirectly from this report, those "confirmations" of "independent" witnesses adopted by van Pelt show themselves to be what they really are: literary elaborations on a common propaganda theme.

[799] Erroneously van Pelt always spells Wetzler "Wetzlar," which is a German city.

17.2. Justifications for Historical Falsifications

17.2.1. Van Pelt's Justifications

With reference to the questioning of Vrba by the defense counsel Douglas Christie during the 1985 Zündel trial, van Pelt tries to justify the "errors" of the report by saying (p. 38):

> *"It was not a great performance, giving the fact that, two days earlier, Vrba had explained why the plan of the crematorium was 'not exact.' It had been a conflation of the plans of two different types of crematoria, drawn up in haste with the objective of warning the Hungarian Jews of their fate in Auschwitz."*

In a note van Pelt refers to pp. 1478f. of the trial minutes of the first Zündel trial (note 115, p. 512). On pages 149f. he quotes the passage in question, which I am quoting here from the minutes:[800]

> *"Q. MR. CHRISTIE: How do you explain the fact that you've drawn on the diagram that I showed you every crematorium the same shape in 1944, when you drew the diagram upon your escape?*
>
> *A. Because I had only two days to write the whole report, and to try to depict the crematoria. There was a great urgency with that plan, because the objective of the plan was to get it to Hungary and to use this whole report toward the Hungarian Jews of imminent deportation. Under that condition I didn't lose much time with details like what is the difference between Krematorium I and II and Krematorium II and III, but I limited myself to depict the position of the gas chambers and crematoria on one side, and the geographic position of the whole murderous complex on the other side.*
>
> *Q. Sure. I now produce and show to you* [a] *diagram which came from, I suggest, your War Refugee Report of 1944 in which you depicted a crematoria* [sic]. *Correct?*
>
> *A. That's right.*
>
> *Q. Is it accurate?*
>
> *A. This I cannot say. I was said* [sic] *that as we were not in the large crematoria, we reconstructed it from messages which we got from members of the Sonderkommando working in that crematorium, and therefore, that* [is] *approximately how it transpired in our mind, and in our ability to depict what we have heard."*

[800] District Court, Vol. VII, January 23, 1985, pp. 1478f.

Hence van Pelt's assertion is wrong. Vrba does not, in fact, speak of "a conflation of the plans of two different types of crematoria." Then van Pelt goes on to speculate on *his own* conjecture, describing a fanciful "genealogy" of the "errors" of the blueprint based on the assumption that Vrba and Wetzler limited themselves to reconstructing the inside of the crematoria by simply looking at them from the outside. This conjecture is categorically rejected by Vrba who – as I have stated – claimed to have drawn his blueprint of Crematoria II and III on the basis of information received from members of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*." Vrba writes about his book in this respect (Vrba/Bestic, p. 175):

> *"In Birkenau, too, I had far greater opportunities of checking, counter-checking and amplifying my figures. Fred* [Wetzler] *in the mortuary was a help. I met other Registrars, as well, and renewed contact with Philip Müller who became one of my most valuable sources of information. Philip stoked the furnaces in the crematorium."*

In 1979 Müller wrote that he had had contacts with Wetzler and said (p. 193), "I had given Alfred a blueprint of the crematoria with the gas chambers and a list of the names of the SS people," and then added that he had described to him "the procedure of extermination in all its details" so that Wetzler would be able to tell it all "exactly." Van Pelt quotes this second passage fully, but not the preceding one (which appears a few lines back in Müller's book), because if Wetzler had in fact been handed a blueprint of Crematoria II and III by a "*Sonderkommando*" man, it would destroy van Pelt's whole conjecture. To prevent such a conclusion, van Pelt is obliged to even discredit Müller by saying (p. 149):

> *"It is clear that the account of the layout of the interior is based on second-hand information, derived from members of the Sonderkommando."*

Hence, a blueprint of Crematoria II and III, exact by definition as it had been drawn by a "*Sonderkommando*" member who worked inside it, becomes "second-hand" information for van Pelt! It is instead obvious that Vrba and Wetzler would not have been able to deform Müller's precise information, including an exact drawing of Crematoria II and III, in such a grotesque way. Hence, if the declarations of the two witnesses were true, one would have to conclude either that Müller had furnished Wetzler with an intentionally falsified blueprint of Crematoria II and III or that Vrba and Wetzler falsified intentionally an originally

exact description of these crematoria. Both horns of the dilemma are obviously absurd, and thus the only valid logical conclusion is that both witnesses have lied. This means that the description of Crematoria II and III not only did not come from Müller or others in the "*Sonderkommando*," but that it was fabricated elsewhere and unbeknownst to the members of the "*Sonderkommando*," namely by the resistance movement of the camp.

This is confirmed by the fact that, as I have shown in chapter 16.1., Wetzler's knowledge of the "*Vernichtungsprozedur*" was so precise that he wrote of "crystals" of Zyklon B coming out of showers!

17.2.2. Pressac's Justifications[801]

Taking a different approach from the one chosen by van Pelt, who simply dismissed the "errors" of the Vrba-Wetzler report, Pressac has tried to explain and justify them in detail, dedicating an entire chapter to this topic (1989, pp. 459-468). But here again, as he did in the case of the Franke-Gricksch "report," he has resorted to false and convoluted elaborations. All of his arguments are based on two unfounded assumptions:

1) that the direct observations of the outside of the crematoria by Vrba and Wetzler did not take place later than March 1943;
2) that the indirect information they set down in their report was gathered primarily, possibly even exclusively, from detainees of the *Sonderkommando* assigned to the Birkenau "bunkers" and that it stopped at the end of 1942, because these detainees are said to have all been killed on December 17, 1942.

During the first Zündel trial in 1985 Vrba refuted the first assumption and declared under oath that he had observed Crematorium II from the morgue barrack (*mortuary*) next to block 27 of camp section BIIb, then still part of the men's camp, a distance of 50-60 *yards*, or some 45-55 meters.[802] He went "frequently" to this barrack where Wetzler was clerk[803] (*Schreiber*), a job the latter held until June 8, 1943.[804] The two witnesses were therefore able to scrutinize Crematorium II from a site near it until that date. Vrba claimed moreover to have observed the

[801] This is a summary of Mattogno 1990c, pp. 461-485.
[802] District Court, Vol. VI, January 7, 1985, p. 1322.
[803] *Ibid.*, p. 1321.
[804] *Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 1428.

crematoria and the area near them "from January 1943 until April 7, 1944."[805]

Pressac's second assumption was likewise invalidated by Vrba and Wetzler: they asserted to have received information and even a drawing form Filip Müller in 1944 (see chapter 17.2.1.). Although this alone should suffice to thwart Pressac's attempt at demonstrating the veracity of the essential elements of the Vrba-Wetzler report, it is nevertheless useful to present a more detailed refutation of his two assumptions in order to demonstrate not only the convoluted and inconsistent aspect of Pressac's argumentation as far as documents and historical events are concerned, but also to eliminate any doubt as to the propagandistic and disingenuous character of the report.

1. Number of ovens, number of muffles, general lay-out of the ovens

Pressac writes (1989, p. 459):

> *"The number of furnaces cited per Krematorium is wrong. Those of type II/III had only 15 cremation muffles, not the 36 announced. This error is understandable if we assume that the witnesses had themselves never entered a Krematorium and all their observations were from the exterior or based on the accounts of other prisoners, in particular, though we cannot prove it, Sonderkommando members working in December 1942 at Bunkers 1 and 2 who would have been able to watch the building of what they believed would be their future place of work. Document 9 enables us to understand the assumed disposition of the furnaces around the chimney, and with this arrangement the number of furnaces would be a multiple of three."*

In other words, the *Sonderkommando* detainees who worked at the "bunkers," when they saw the chimney rising up from a large squarish wing of Crematorium II measuring 10 by 12 m (Pressac's document 9 is a photograph of Crematorium II showing this wing, p. 465), would have imagined the ovens to be placed around the chimney and informed Vrba and Wetzler accordingly. This explanation does not explain, though, how these detainees would have been able to arrive at the number of ovens (9), at the number of muffles for each oven (4), or at the way the ovens *and muffles* were arranged around the chimney. As Pressac's photograph of Crematorium II shows us, nothing at all could be learned from the outside. One could only imagine things, which is an entirely different matter. Considering that an observation of the crematorium

[805] *Ibid.*, p. 1329.

from the outside could not have furnished even the slightest hint in this respect, Pressac does not explain why those detainees would have imagined exactly nine ovens with four muffles each, located around the chimney – a hypothesis which was, after all, as good or as bad as any other. Likewise, to state that in the case of a semicircular arrangement around the chimney the number of ovens would have to be a multiple of three is utterly incomprehensible. There is no reason why the number of ovens should not have been five, say, or seven. Besides, Pressac's explanation is radically refuted by the fact that Vrba and Wetzler's (alleged) source dates from 1944 and consists of Müller's blueprint and description of Crematorium II. These contradictions thus remain unresolved and unexplainable.

2. Cremation capacity

The cremation capacity of each of the Crematoria II and III as given in the Vrba-Wetzler report – 2,000 corpses in 24 hours – is almost double the arbitrary figure given by Pressac: 1,000 – 1,100 corpses in 24 hours. Pressac attempts to explain the contradiction as follows (p. 459):

> *"In the report, the throughput of the four Krematorien per 24 hours is fairly reasonably estimated at 6,000, though this is one third higher than the 4,416 units a day reported in a letter of 28th June 1943 from the Bauleitung to the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office in Berlin. Even this I consider to be a purely administrative document, calculated on the basis of the original estimated throughput of the furnaces, the true daily rate for the four cremation installations being no more than 3,000. If we take the rate of incineration given by the witnesses — three corpses per muffle in one and a half hours — and apply this to the true number of furnaces, the daily figure for the four Krematorien is about 2,200."*

But the fact still remains that the report is wrong on the nine ovens with four muffles each, i.e. 36 muffles for Crematoria II/III, and instead of explaining this, Pressac arbitrarily throws out the matter. Furthermore, the capacity for Crematoria II/III which one obtains via Pressac's method (three corpses in each of 15 muffles in 90 minutes, i.e. 16 such loads per day) would be 720 corpses in 24 hours. Therefore, if Pressac accepted as true Vrba and Wetzler's statement of three corpses in one muffle cremated within 90 minutes, one does not see how he could assert at the same time that Crematoria II/III had a capacity of 1,000-1,100 corpses in 24 hours. But that is not all. Later Vrba changed his

version completely and wrote that Crematoria II and III each had five ovens with three muffles each and that three corpses at a time could be cremated in one muffle within 20 minutes (Vrba/Bestic, p. 16). This would bring the capacity of one crematorium to 3,240 corpses in 24 hours. Müller, this precious source of information for Vrba and Wetzler, confirmed exactly these technically impossible data – three corpses per muffle in 20 minutes for 15 muffles (p. 29, 94). Hence, if Müller supplied the witnesses with such absurd data in 1944 (three corpses in 20 minutes in each of the 15 muffles), why did they speak of entirely different values (three corpses in 90 minutes in each of 36 muffles)? On the other hand, if Müller did supply the latter data to them, he would turn out to be guilty of historical falsifications and technical absurdities just the same. Hence it is in any case clear that both Vrba-Wetzler and Müller lied unashamedly. The contradiction concerning the cremation capacity of Crematoria II/III thus remains fully valid, even more so than before.

3. Position of the "undressing room" on the ground floor of the crematorium

Pressac believes that this is exact, because there was a barrack in the north yard of the crematorium in March 1943, which was allegedly temporarily used as an undressing room for the victims of the alleged gas chamber. As this shed obviously stood on the ground, the two witnesses told the truth when they stated that the "undressing room" was on the ground floor (p. 459, 462). Even if we disregard the fact that the sources of Vrba and Wetzler date from 1944 and not from March 1943, Pressac's explanation is still belied by their report which does not, in fact, speak of an "undressing room" in an *outside barrack* or shed at Crematorium II but of a *room* located *inside* the crematorium. Hence, even if we accept that the two witnesses or their sources had actually seen the barrack in question, it would still have to be explained why, in their report, this *outside barrack* changed into an *inside room*. In this case, too, Pressac's explanation does not explain anything, and the contradiction concerning the location of the "undressing room" remains valid.

4. "Gas chamber" on the ground floor, a little lower than the "undressing room"

Pressac does not comment on this contradiction, either because of an erroneous reading of the text of the report, or – this is more likely – be-

cause of a lack of sources. Because he identifies the alleged gas chamber as *Leichenkeller* 1, he believes that the Vrba-Wetzler report is correct on this point, as it locates – albeit erroneously – the alleged gas chamber precisely "at basement level" (p. 459). But this interpretation is wrong. In this respect the report says: "From there a door and a few steps lead down into the very long and narrow gas chamber" (*ibid*., p. 461). This room, if we follow the report, was no doubt located a little below the furnace hall *and* the "undressing room," but one cannot say that it was in the semi-basement, as was *Leichenkeller* 1, both because "below" there had to be another "undressing room," lower down from the "gas chamber," and because the latter was supposed to be linked to the furnace hall by means of rails and could therefore not be in the semi-basement. Besides, this is confirmed by the report itself where it says that, in order to carry out the gassing, "SS men with gas masks *climb on the roof*" of the *gas chamber* (*ibid*.), which thus clearly rose out of the ground. This was explicitly confirmed by Vrba during the Zündel trial. As I have already stated, he declared he had observed Crematorium II from the window of the morgue barrack at block 27 of camp section BIb, some 50 yards away, and said:[806]

> *"This Krematorium No. II had, apart from buildings, long bunkers which were approximately the height of two such tables. Say the bunker was about this heigh, above a head of the human being* [sic].
>
> *Lawyer Christie: All right. You are indicating about six and a half, seven feet?*
>
> *Vrba: I would think so. In other words, a man who would climb on it would have to lift his hands and sort of make an exercise in order to swing himself on top of the bunker."*

Vrba declared furthermore to have seen personally, from the window mentioned, an SS corporal from the SS medical department as he climbed on the roof of the "bunker" in the manner described in order to carry out a gassing:[806]

> *"And then he climbed on the bunker by holding on his hands and in a sporty way swinging himself over, which attracted my attention because it was not usually the demeanour of S.S. men to make sport."*

When he was cross-examined by lawyer Christie, Vrba confirmed his above statements, asserting that he had not measured the height of

[806] District Court, Vol. VI, January 7, 1985, p. 1328.

the "bunker" with a yardstick, but stressing that he was sure that it had approximately the height of an adult man, possibly more, and that in order to climb it one had to climb it in the manner he had described.[807] However, as lawyer Christie noted, the original blueprints of the "bunkers," i.e. *Leichenkeller* 1 and 2 (the Huta drawings 109/13° and 109/14° published by Pressac 1989, p. 322, 324), show two semi-interred rooms rising only 54 cm(!) out of the ground, including the earth covering which created two lateral inclined planes that could be walked up with ease, so that only a few steps were needed to get onto the roof. However, since Vrba declared that the roof was some two meters above ground level, it is clear that he did not tell the truth. The contradiction concerning the location of the alleged gas chamber remains completely valid and is even made more striking by Vrba's prevarications.

5. The number of "traps" for the introduction of Zyklon B

On this subject, Pressac says (p. 464):

> *"The gas chamber of Krematorium II was fitted with four openings for pouring Zyklon B. The witnesses state that there were only three, and a photograph of January 1943 does indeed show this gas chamber as having only three devices for introducing the toxic product at that time."*

This refers to the "train photograph" we have already dealt with in chapter 13.3.4. above. As we have seen, it shows only two objects on the roof of *Leichenkeller* 1 which cannot have been introduction shafts for Zyklon B, if for no other reason than that the corresponding holes in the roof are missing. According to Pressac, the alleged four shafts (and their ancillary devices) certainly must have existed on March 31, 1943, but as we have seen above, Vrba asserts to have seen the crematorium from a distance of 50 yards as late as April 7, 1944. Furthermore, from his observation point (the morgue barrack at block 27 in camp section BIb), *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II would be seen in a transverse manner, i.e. Vrba had the four chimneys in front of him and could thus count them easily. Hence, also this explanation by Pressac explains nothing, and the contradiction we have pointed out remains valid.

[807] *Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 1444.

6. Rails from the "gas chamber" to the furnace hall through the "undressing room"

On this subject Pressac furnishes us with a long explanation (*ibid*.), which we can summarize as follows: Between the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943 Vrba and Wetzler or their sources saw rails installed for the construction of the crematorium, which linked *Leichenkeller* 2 and the furnace hall, and they thought that they were permanently installed. At the time no one knew what would be the future function of the two morgues, and so they also imagined that *Leichenkeller* 2 would be the alleged gas chamber and that this room was also linked to the furnace hall by means of rails. Pressac brings in two photographs in support of this interpretation. The first one shows the excavations for *Leichenkeller* 2 with some railway tracks (document 11, p. 466) used to transport construction material to the site. The second one depicts the inside of the oven room of Crematorium II with two sets of tracks on the rough floor (*ibid*., document 12). However, nothing tells us that these tracks led from *Leichenkeller* 2 to the furnace hall or the other way around. About the second photograph Pressac claims without any proof that the tracks on the right go down "on a slight slope to *Leichenkeller* 2" (*ibid*.), as is suggested by his drawing no. 10 (p. 465). However, the difference in level between the floor of the furnace hall and that of *Leichenkeller* 2, being 2.6 meters, even if we assume that the rails did lead into *Leichenkeller* 2 over a distance of 15 meters (according to the drawing mentioned), the slope would still have been an impossible 17 percent!

Pressac's other mistake is that he looks at concomitant images which belong to different periods. He assigns the first photograph to October/November 1942, but it was taken several months earlier, because the ZBL progress report on the construction works for September 1942 already mentions the beginning of "work on the insulation of the *Leichenkeller*[s],"[808] whereas the photograph shows only a rough excavation. The second photograph, on the other hand, dates from December 1942 or January 1943. The rails in *Leichenkeller* 2 and those of the furnace hall did not exist simultaneously, but were used successively: they left these rooms on the south side and were probably linked to a feeder line which we can see on the "train photograph" (p. 340), where we

[808] Baubericht für Monat September 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p.141.

have a small locomotive and a few little wagons full of building material.

Pressac's explanation is furthermore categorically refuted by two fundamental elements. The first one is that Vrba asserted under oath to have witnessed a gassing in *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II – so he knew exactly which of the two *Leichenkeller* was the alleged gas chamber. The confusion around *Leichenkeller* 2 and *Leichenkeller* 1 which Pressac defends thus turns out to be impossible. The second element is that Vrba declared, again under oath, to have drawn the sketch of Crematoria II/III on the basis of information received from detainees who worked there in 1944, men who necessarily knew the arrangement and the equipment of those rooms.

Hence, this contradiction as well remains fully valid. We may say in conclusion that both Pressac and van Pelt have tried to prop up the lies in the Vrba-Wetzler report with unfounded and fallacious fabrications.

17.3. Origin of the Report and of the Drawing of Crematoria II and III

The question of the origin of the Vrba-Wetzler report is much more complex than van Pelt would like us to believe. Without going too deeply into the subject (see Aynat 1990), I merely wish to quote what Vrba stated during the Zündel trial about how the report was written by others after he had fled from Auschwitz:[809]

> *"While we were speaking to the people they had brought a stenographer with them and what I was saying was taken on a stenogram in absence of Mr. Wetzler. What Mr. Wetzler was speaking was taken on a stenogram in my absence."*

This took place in the presence of Dr. Oscar Neumann and the engineer Oskar Krasniansky,[809] two members of the Jewish Council of Slovakia. Wetzler instead says that he and Vrba typed the report themselves over three days (Lánik, pp. 268f., 273):

> *"It took us three days to write the report."*

Wetzler also writes that he had drawn the blueprint of crema II & III (*ibid*., p. 276):

> *"This brief and sober account of horrible facts has done away with nearly all doubt. From the primitively drawn blueprint which Valer* [Wetzler] *will now submit to you, you will see with what cun-*

[809] District Court, Vol. VI, January 7, 1985, p. 1372.

ningly devised expediency this extermination camp of the SS has been laid out."

Another important element mentioned by Wetzler is that he had originally taken with him a "*Metallröhrchen*" (little metal tube), but lost it during the escape, in which he had hidden "the plan view of the crematorium, a map of the concentration camp and of the SS-barracks" (*ibid*., p. 216). He confirmed these statements in a declaration made to the Auschwitz Museum on November 30, 1963:[810]

"We were given a typewriter and paper after the meeting. We compiled the report over three days; it consisted of 50 typewritten pages. […]. *In the tube* [which was] *lost there was also a provisional blueprint of the crematoria."*

As we have seen above, during the Zündel trial Vrba declared to have drawn the blueprint of the crematoria himself. But one of the witnesses called on by himself, the engineer Oskar Krasniansky, asserted in an interview by Erich Kulka on June 8, 1964:[811]

"I have authored the protocols. […]. *I alone have authored the protocols, and later dictated them. Mrs. Gisela Steine, today residing in Jerusalem, retyped a few copies of the protocols."*

Later Kulka asked Krasniansky the following question (*ibid*., next page):

"Was a sketch, prepared by the fugitives and showing the Auschwitz extermination installations [and] *the access roads, included with the protocols? If not, who drew it?"*

To which Krasniansky replied:

"The fugitives did not draw any sketches. I did those – on the basis of the indications of the fugitives. Such a sketch was attached to the protocol – and not in the protocol, but in my letter of transmittal there was a request to all powers involved in the war to bomb the camp."

The three main witnesses[812] thus gave contradictory accounts on the origin of the report and of the drawing of Crematorium II and III. Hence we have here a fine example of a "divergence of proof," which confirms the conclusion set out above, *viz.* that the story told by Vrba and Wetzler has no historical or documentary basis but was concocted by the

[810] APMO, Oświadczenia (Declarations), vol. 40, pp. 41f.

[811] ICJ, Oral History Division, catalogue no. 3, 1970, p. 120, no. 410 S.E., p. 4. At the time Kraskiansky called himself Karmil.

[812] The fourth witness, Oskar Neumann, writes only that Krasniansky had been sent to the two escapees "in order to take down the account of these fellows." Neumann, p. 179.

camp resistance as simple atrocity propaganda. To confirm this, I wish to bring in another important argument which van Pelt has skipped completely: the question of the number of victims. The reticence is easily understood, because, as we have seen in chapter 15, van Pelt assumes for Auschwitz a total number of 1,082,000 victims on the basis of Piper's statistical data. The Vrba-Wetzler report instead speaks of 1,765,000 "Jews gassed since April 1942 until April 1944."[813] This is not a simple exaggeration, because in the Zündel trial Vrba declared under oath to have seen all or nearly all alleged victims:[814]

"Q. Mr. CHRISTIE: You say 1,765,000, is that right?

A. 1,765,000.

Q. Right. Did you see one person being gassed yourself?

A. I saw 1,765,000 people walk into the space between Krematorium I and Krematorium II, Krematorium III and Krematorium IV, were in front of my eyes knowing that the space is absolutely closed, because there is no road out from there except coming back the way they went in,[815] *and nobody came out from there except smoke."*

Later on Vrba strengthened his statement:[816]

"This means when I have counted 1,765,000 people, I saw them, but inside of the Crematoria I didn't see."

Eventually, when pressed by counsel Christie who asked him if he had counted every single one of the 1,765,000 victims, Vrba asserted:[817]

"I counted reliably at least eighty per cent of it, and at least the remaining twenty per cent of it was seen by Wetzler and most of it was seen by both of us."

Even if we accept this partial correction, 80% of 1,765,000 is still 1,412,000. Therefore Vrba would have seen with his own eyes and would have counted at least 1,412,000 gassed victims! We are thus not dealing with an ordinary exaggeration but with a shameless lie. Another fact confirms this fully. The transport statistics for the arrivals at

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813 APMO, RO, vol. XXa, Vrba-Wetzler report, p. 45.

814 District Court, Vol. VII, January 23, 1985, p. 1450.

815 Actually, the road passing between Crematoria II and III, designated "Hauptstraße" (main road) or "Lagerstraße" (camp road) veered north, then west and again north – between the four sedimentation basins (in the west) and the water purification installation (to the east); the final stretch which passed between the disinfection and disinfestation installation (Zentralsauna) and the storage area (Effektenlager) ran as far as Crematoria IV and V and was then called "Ringstraße" (ring road), because it made a 180° turn in the western part of the camp and continued as "Straße B" (road B) which ran between sections BII and BIII.

816 District Court, Vol. VII, January 23, 1985, p. 1552.

817 *Ibid.*, p. 1561.

Auschwitz, prepared by Vrba and Wetzler, split up according to the various countries of origin, of which the figure of 1,765,000 ought to be the sum total, actually yield a completely different sum. In those transport statistics the persons allegedly gassed are entered in two different ways. For some transports the actual number of persons gassed is shown, whereas for others only the percentage of persons gassed is indicated. If we analyze these two categories individually, we see that:

- The total of allegedly gassed victims whose numbers are explicitly indicated in the report is around 498,700, but for the days concerned even the Auschwitz *Kalendarium* (Czech 1989) tells us that out of these some 374,000 have been totally invented.
- The number of allegedly gassed victims that can be calculated on the basis of the percentages indicated in the report for certain transports is around 494,000, out of whom 452,000 are likewise shown by the *Kalendarium* to be totally invented.

Altogether then, on the basis of the report, the number of allegedly gassed victims amounts to some 992,700, out of whom some 826,000 have been invented, if we follow the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*. We see that Vrba "saw" with his own eyes (1,412,000 – 992,700 =) 419,300 allegedly gassed victims more than those which he fancifully counted in his invented statistics!

In 1961 Vrba stated (Vrba 1961):

> *"In that time I saw 1,750,000 men, women and children gassed, shot, tortured, or burned alive.* […] *I calculated, in fact, that 2,500,000 people were murdered there in three years."*

Yet during the first Zündel trial Vrba replied to the question by Zündel's lawyer Christie whether he had written down the figures (District Court, Vol. VII, p. 1563):

> *"No. I relied on my memory."*

After having spoken of some of the echoes which the "War Refugee Board Report" had in the Anglo-Saxon press, van Pelt concludes (p. 154):

> *"By the middle of July 1944, many had become convinced that the Germans were engaged in the systematic annihilation of Jews in extermination camps and that Birkenau was one of the most important of these camps."*

and this conviction, as far as Birkenau is concerned, was based precisely on this WRB report. However, van Pelt continues, "the world of the camps remained intangible," with the veil being lifted only on July

23, 1944, when the Soviets liberated the camp at Lublin-Majdanek (*ibid*.). However, in this camp the Soviets simply staged the dress rehearsal of their future Auschwitz propaganda. In the next chapter we will see how this was done and what van Pelt has to say on this point.

17.4. The Soviets and Majdanek: General Proof of Propaganda

17.4.1 The "Gas Chambers"

This is how van Pelt summarizes the article "Lublin annihilation Camp" written by the Soviet journalist Konstantin Simonov soon after the liberation of this camp (*ibid*.):

> *"Simonov admitted that it would take a painstaking inquiry to establish all the facts about the camp. Yet, having seen the place and talked to around 100 witnesses, he could not wait. 'A man who has seen what I have cannot hold his peace and cannot wait to speak.' He described the gas chambers as a* [sic] *room of some 400 square feet. 'A single steel door hermetically closes the entrance to the chamber.' Unlike the delousing chambers, it was equipped with 'a little spy hole, a small square window barred on the inside by a stout steel grid fitted into the concrete. A thick panel of glass covers the outer side of the aperture so that it cannot be reached through the grid.' When the victims were packed into this room, 'specially trained operators wearing gas masks poured the 'cyclone' out of the cylindrical tins into the chamber.' The executioner could easily follow what happened."*

In this summary van Pelt falsifies Simonov's account by carefully omitting an item which renders it totally nonsensical. I have already dealt with the question in detail in a book written together with Jürgen Graf which appeared in English in 2003(b). Here is the whole text of the passage summarized by van Pelt, in which Simonov describes the disinfestation chamber of "Barrack 41." In order to understand the aim of van Pelt's omissions, we must know that Simonov referred to the two alleged gas chambers functioning with carbon monoxide that were equipped with metal tubes and to the small chamber in front of them (Graf/Mattogno 2003b, p. 180):

> *"Where does the window lead to? To answer this question, we open the door and leave the room. Next to it there is another small chamber of concrete; that's where the window leads to. Here there is*

electric light as well as a power outlet. From here, looking through the window, one can observe anything that happens in the first room. On the floor there are a few round, air-tight, sealed cans labeled 'Zyklon'; 'for special use in the Eastern regions' is added in smaller letters. The contents of the cans were introduced through the pipes into the adjoining room when it was full of people.

The naked, tightly crowded people did not take up much room. More than 250 people were packed into the 40 m² room. They were forced in and then the steel door was closed; the cracks were sealed with clay to make it even more air-tight, and special units wearing gas masks introduced the 'Zyklon' from the cans through the pipes from the adjoining room. The 'Zyklon' consisted of small blue crystals that looked perfectly innocent but, once exposed to oxygen, gave off poisonous gases that simultaneously affect all the body's vital functions. The 'Zyklon' was introduced through the pipes; the SS-man leading the operation supervised the asphyxiation process which, according to different eyewitness accounts, took between two and ten minutes. He could safely observe everything through the window; the horrible faces of the dying people and the gradual effect of the gas; the peephole was just at the eye level. When the people died, the observer did not need to look down; they did not fall down as they died – the gas chamber was so crowded that the dead remained standing.

It must be pointed out that the 'Zyklon' really was a disinfectant and really was used in the neighboring rooms to disinfest clothing. Quite properly and as per regulations! The difference was merely to know which dosage of the 'Zyklon' to introduce into the chambers." (Emph. added).

Simonov states three times that the Zyklon B "was introduced through the pipes," and three times van Pelt keeps quiet about it. In fact, as Pressac had noticed at the time, the cans of Zyklon B which Simonov saw had been stacked up in the little room in front of the alleged homicidal gas chambers to create the impression that their contents could be fed into the tubes: this arrangement which could only be the work of former detainees demonstrates that the latter had no direct knowledge of any homicidal gassings, neither with Zyklon B nor with carbon monoxide (CO). On the one hand a technique involving Zyklon B poured into tubes makes no sense, as gypsum pellets soaked in hydrogen cyanide (=Zyklon B) can neither be poured into narrow pipes nor would the

slowly evaporating, pressureless gas fill the pipe and exit it at its intended other end. On the other hand, no witness ever spoke of the use of CO in pressurized cylinders. This is why van Pelt has omitted this essential point.

17.4.2. The Pile of Shoes

Van Pelt shows a photograph with the following caption: "The victims' shoes piled in front of a warehouse, Maidanek [*sic*], 1944" (p. 155). He comes back to this question several times, telling us that such a view had "shocked Simonov" (p. 156); he mentions the "emotional shock" of the journalist Richard Lauterbach (p. 157); he attributes to "the huge piles of shoes" the value of "*prima facie* evidence of exterminations" at Majdanek (p. 158) and finally speaks of the "embarrassment" caused to the SS "by the 820,000 shoes in Maidanek" (p. 159). Yet Czesław Rajca, a historian of the Majdanek Museum, revealed in an article of 1992 (Rajca, p. 127; cf. Graf/Mattogno 2003b, p. 87):

> *"In the evaluation of the human losses, the shoes that had remained behind at Majdanek, over 800,000, were also taken into account. It was assumed that they had belonged to detainees assassinated in the camp. From documents that came to light later on, we know that at Majdanek, there was a storehouse to which shoes from the other camps were sent."*

The storehouse in question belonged to the *Pelz- und Bekleidungswerkstätte Lublin* (Lublin fur and garment workshop). The mountain of shoes was the definitive "proof" which allowed the Polish-Soviet Commission of inquiry to set the number of victims at 1,500,000 for Majdanek! In this respect van Pelt asserts (p. 157):

> *"On the basis of the capacity of the old incinerators and the new crematorium and the assumed capacity of the pyres both inside and outside the camp, the commission estimated that some 1.5 million people had been killed in the camp. This latter figure was found suspect from the beginning and led in 1948 to a new, official estimate of 360,000 victims, based on analysis of transports, lists of the dead, and the occupancy of the barracks."*

The sentence passed in the trial against *SS-Rottenführer* Heinrich Vogel and others at Lublin on December 2, 1944, raised the figure set by the Polish-Soviet Commission of inquiry even further, to 1,700,111! (See Graf/Mattogno 2003b, p. 80.) As to the "official estimate of

360,000 victims" elaborated by Zdzisław Łukaszkiewicz in 1948 and "confirmed" by Józef Marszałek in 1981, it had no value either, because it was based on highly fanciful data (*ibid*., pp. 80-86), so much so that Czesław Rajca reset it to 235,000 in 1992 (*ibid*., pp. 86-88). As we can see, van Pelt does not even know his holocaust sources. But this figure, too, was totally deprived of historical value: In 2005 Tomasz Kranz, director of the scientific department of the Majdanek Museum, published in no. 23 of the *Zeszyty Majdanka* another drastic revision of the number of victims for the Majdanek camp, lowering it in the end to 78,000 (Kranz, p. 45). But this figure, too, is still twice as high as the real one which can be derived from the documents and which stands at 42,000 (including Jews and gentiles, natural and violent deaths; Graf/Mattogno 2003b, pp. 71-79).

From all this we get a good idea of the reliability of the conclusions reached by the Polish-Soviet Commission of inquiry.

17.4.3. The Crematorium Ovens

Van Pelt summarizes in the following words the "assessment" of the Polish-Soviet Commission of inquiry of the coke-fired Kori ovens of the new crematorium at Majdanek (p. 157):

> *"Four bodies with hacked off extremities could be placed in one furnace at a time. It took 15 minutes to burn four bodies, and so with all furnaces working round the clock it was possible to burn 1,920 bodies in 24 hours."*

In chapter V of the work mentioned above (pp. 95-117) I have described the genesis, the structure, the foundations, and the cremation capacity of the crematorium ovens at Majdanek, showing that, among other things, the above assessment is technical nonsense (*ibid*., pp. 110-115): The theoretical capacity of the five Kori ovens of the new crematorium came to 144 corpses in 24 hours (see chapter 8.7.3.), i.e. it was lower by a factor of 13 than the figure quoted by van Pelt. The overall figures for the victims show a drop of the same order of magnitude: They went down by a factor of 19 from the data of the Polish-Soviet Commission of inquiry in 1945 to those announced by Tomasz Kranz in 2005.

17.5. Boris Polevoi's Article of February 2, 1945

Having provided us with this sample of his technical and historical ignorance and uncritical gullibility, van Pelt goes on to look at Auschwitz. Here he runs into the obstacle of Boris Polevoi's article, the fantastic assertions of which clash with the core of the story of the gas chambers created by the "War Refugee Board Report." Van Pelt finds himself obliged to justify Polevoi in some way (pp. 159ff.):

> *"Trying to imagine what that installation would have been, Polevoi allowed his imagination free range: the Germans would have rebuilt the gas chambers and have torn up and destroyed 'the traces of the electric conveyor belt, on which hundreds of people were simultaneously electrocuted, their bodies falling onto the slow moving conveyor belt which carried them to the top of the blast furnace where they fell in, were completely burned, their bones converted to meal in the ball mills, and then sent to the surrounding fields.'*
>
> *In the weeks that followed, forensic investigation was to confirm the existence and use of the gas chambers and the ovens and relegate the electric conveyer belt and the blast furnace to the realm of myth.*
>
> *One can only speculate about the source of Polevoi's claim that the extermination installation contained an electric conveyor belt between the gas chamber and the so-called blast furnace. In Crematoria 2 and 3, an electric elevator connected the underground gas chamber and the incineration room. In the confusion of tongues that existed in Auschwitz at liberation, Polevoi could have misunderstood references to the electric elevator."*

In this way, something which belongs to the "realm of fantasy" becomes a mere misunderstanding of reality and hence in a way the "confirmation" of "reality." But within this "confusion of tongues" there were also excellent interpreters who were in fact employed by the Soviet Commission of inquiry. The alleged misunderstanding (concerning a freight elevator vs. a conveyor belt) is nothing but an insult to the intelligence of the Soviet journalist. To give at least some credence to this inconclusive explanation, van Pelt makes use of a little lie, writing that the "electric conveyor belt" was located "*between* the gas chamber and the so-called blast furnace," something which Polevoi actually does not say, because his "electric conveyor belt" was in itself an extermination

tool on which "hundreds of people were simultaneously electrocuted." In any case, the "gas chambers" are mentioned in the article in question two lines after the end of the passage quoted by van Pelt and in a completely different context (Polevoi, p. 4):

> *"The special mobile equipment for killing children was moved into the background. The stationary gas chambers of the eastern part of the camp*[818] *were modified."*

As we have seen in chapter 16.1., all elements of Polevoi's report had been created by the propaganda centers of the various secret resistance movements operating in the camp (see chapter 19.1.). Van Pelt moves along in his defense (p. 161):

> *"As to the blast furnace, the most likely source is patent application T 58240, which was submitted by incinerator manufacturer J.A. Topf & Söhne in Erfurt for a 'Continuous Operation Corpse Incineration Furnace for Intensive Use,' filed by Topf on November 5, 1942. In its design it reflects in general terms Polevoi's description. The Auschwitz Central Construction Office possessed a copy of this patent application, and it was found by the Russians when they liberated the camp. It may be possible that Polevoi was shown this document and drew his own conclusions."*

Actually, this patent application (*Patentanmeldung*) for a "*Kontinuierlich arbeitender Leichen-Verbrennungsofen für Massenbetrieb*" (continuously operating corpse cremation oven for mass use) did not exist in the ZBL archive, and so could even less have been shown to Polevoi. The copy of this document in the Auschwitz Museum, to which van Pelt refers explicitly (his note 87, p. 521), comes in fact from the German Patent Office in Berlin (*Deutsches Patentamt*) and arrived at the Museum rather late. As we can read in an "internal memo" (*Notatka służbowa*) dated January 17, 1985, the document registered on that day by Franciszek Piper had been transmitted "to the director [*of the Auschwitz Museum*] K. Smoleń by Harold Kirchner, ministerial director at the Ministry of Justice in Bonn, on July 9, 1984."[819]

[818] The alleged gas chambers were located in the western part of the camp.
[819] APMO, D-Z/ Bau, BW 30/44, p. 14.

17.6. The Polish Assessments and Investigations

17.6.1. Roman Dawidowski

Van Pelt does away in a few lines with the investigations of the Soviet Commission of inquiry regarding Auschwitz (p. 161), of which he only knows the final report published in *Pravda* on May 7, 1945, and he devotes only a few lines more to the figure of four million dead, which I have discussed in chapter 15. He gives a brief summary of the pages from Dawidowski's evaluation, which contain the "criminal traces" later picked up by Pressac (see chapter 1.1.). About this point van Pelt writes (p. 209):

> *"Whenever they were designated as extermination installations, the crematoria were referred to as Spezialeinrichtungen (special installations) for the Sonderbehandlung (special treatment)*[820] *of inmates. The latter term referred to killing."*

Whatever van Pelt knows about *Sonderbehandlung* at Auschwitz is contained in these few words. He refers the reader to a well-known work which gathers, on fewer than four pages, quotations from German documents in which this term actually does mean killing, but none of them refers to Auschwitz (Kogon et al., pp. 16-19). When it comes to this camp, as I have explained earlier in this book, none of the documents which speak of *Sonderbehandlung* can be linked to killings; they all have a hygienic and/or sanitary connotation. Suffice it to say that, in the list of construction projects concerning "PoW camp Auschwitz" drawn up by ZBL on October 28, 1942, and officially labeled "implementation of special treatment," the only construction project directly linked with any special treatment is the *Zentralsauna*, explicitly designated as "*Entwesungsanlage für Sonderbehandlung*" (disinfestation installation for special treatment; see chapter 7.2.4.).

Van Pelt then states that, according to Dawidowski, "the operation procedures of the crematoria in Birkenau violated the German Law on Cremation promulgated on May 15, 1934" (pp. 211f.), and then explains (p. 212):

> *"The design of the Auschwitz incinerators violated the very important principle that only one corpse ought to be incinerated at a time, and that ashes of the deceased ought to be identifiable and collected in an urn. The ovens designed by Topf did not heed the law:*

[820] Actually, no document speaks of "special installations *for* the special treatment," which in German would be "Spezialeinrichtungen für die Sonderbehandlung."

they had three (Crematoria 2 and 3) or eight muffles (Crematoria 4 and 5), and because up to five corpses could be incinerated in every muffle at the same time, it was unavoidable that the ashes were mixed."

Van Pelt confuses the design of the ovens with their alleged operation, which he judges on the basis of the absurd declarations of the witnesses. Actually, in the cost estimate for the double and triple-muffle ovens, carts or devices for the introduction of coffins into the muffle are mentioned (*Sargeinführungswagen* or *Sargeinführungsvorrichtung*), which means that cremation was planned with a coffin. The operating instructions from Topf also tell us that the ovens with two and three muffles were designed for the cremation of a single corpse at a time and that, if run properly, the ovens ensured the individuation of the ashes of those cremated. As I have mentioned in chapter 9.8., the ash urns were shipped from Auschwitz at least up to November 27, 1941, in "cases" or "boxes" for urns (*Urnenkisten, Urnenkästen*). Besides, "*Schamottemarken*" (refractory markers) were used at Birkenau; they accompanied the corpse during the cremation and identified the ashes (see chapter 8.7.2.).

Van Pelt's reasoning is even more nonsensical if we consider that, whereas the muffles of a Topf triple-muffle oven measured 800×700×2,000 mm, the minimum dimensions acceptable for muffles in civilian ovens under the regulations of the *Greater German federation of incineration associations* in its "Standards for the construction and operation of ovens for the cremation of human corpses" were even larger: 900×900×2,250 mm (Richtlinien 1937). Therefore, if applying van Pelt's reasoning, even more than five corpses could have been cremated in these civilian standard muffles, yet those did not violate "the German Law on Cremation promulgated on May 15, 1934." Speaking of the first two double-muffle ovens of Crematorium I, van Pelt asserts (p. 212):

"Dawidowski noted that the oven was initially heated by gasses created through the burning of coke. Once they had reached the ideal incineration temperature, the corpses were inserted. From that moment onward, the remains provided the most important fuel."

This is a mere product of his own imagination, because Dawidowski writes (Höss trial, vol. 11, pp. 23f.):

"The crematorium consisted of two ovens with 2 muffles [each], *designed by the well-known German producer of hearths and crematoria, J.A. Topf & Söhne of Erfurt. In the opinion of the expert, the*

design of the ovens from this company was not much different from the [ovens for] *crematoria of other German companies, such as Beck at Offenbach, Didier at Stettin-Berlin, Kor*[i] *at Berlin or Ruppmann at Stuttgart.*[821]

The furnace consisted of a so-called open retort [muffle] *through which passed, during the heating phase, the combustion products of the gases generated in a coke gasifier set into the furnace.*

These combustion products, after passing through the retort, heat the air in the recuperator during the heating phase of the oven; later, during the phase of the cremation of the corpse, the combustion products of the burning corpse continuously heat, in the same recuperator and to the proper temperature, the air which enters the retort through openings in the retort and provides the indispensable oxygen for the development of the cremation process of the corpses."

Thus Dawidowski refers to the heating of incoming combustion air in the recuperator by combustion products of the cremating corpse. Nowhere does Dawidowski claim that a corpse starts to produce combustion products right upon its insertion into a muffle, as van Pelt suggests. In fact, any corpse has to be desiccated first before it can burn, which takes at least some 30 minutes. And besides: the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens did not even have any recuperators, hence this passage of Dawidowski's statement doesn't even apply to them! Actually, his description concerns the Topf ovens for civilian use. Van Pelt also notes (p. 212, 214):

"He calculated that the original daily capacity of the crematorium was 200 corpses. After the addition of a third double-muffle oven in 1941 and the modification of the flues, the capacity rose to 350. […]

This was followed by Dawidowski's calculations of the incineration capacity of the ovens. He assumed that each muffle could incinerate up to five corpses simultaneously and that the average cremation duration was between twenty-five and thirty minutes.

On the basis of these figures, he came to an hourly incineration rate of 175 corpses for Crematoria 2 and 3 and a daily capacity of 2,500 persons for each crematorium – a reduction of 16 percent from the figure estimated by the Soviet-Polish commission shortly

[821] The companies Gebrüder Beck of Offenbach; Didier-Werke, later Schamottefabrik A.G. of Stettin; Hans Kori of Berlin; Wilhelm Ruppmann of Stuttgart.

after the liberation of the camp, but a figure that was a little over 60 percent higher than the official capacity calculated by Topf of 1,440 corpses per day. According to Dawidowski, Crematoria 4 and 5 had an incineration capacity of 1,500 corpses per day, a figure that was equal to the assumed capacity of the gas chambers, equal to the earlier Soviet estimate, and around double the official German figure of 768 corpses per day."

Here again van Pelt provides us with an example of his crass ignorance. He does not even know that Dawidowski, too, was part of the Soviet-Polish commission which had investigated the crematoria and the number of victims at Auschwitz. This commission, as I have already explained, consisted of the Polish engineers Dawidowski and Doliński and the Soviet engineers Lavruschin and Schuer. In their "assessment" of the crematorium ovens and the alleged gas chambers, drawn up between February 14 and March 8, 1945, they claimed the following:[822]

- Crematoria II/III: three to five corpses were loaded into each muffle; their cremation took 20 to 30 minutes. Hence it was possible to cremate 6,000 corpses per day in the 30 muffles of these two crematoria at full load.
- Crematoria IV/V: three to five corpses were loaded into each muffle; their cremation took 30 to 40 minutes. Hence it was possible to cremate 3,000 corpses per day in the 16 muffles of these two crematoria at full load.

Hence Dawidowski did not "calculate" anything at all himself, but only repeated what he had already subscribed to as a member of the commission mentioned, which had "ascertained" the following:

- Crematoria II and III (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 47):

  "On average, five corpses at a time were loaded into each muffle. The cremation of such a load took 25-30 minutes. The 30 muffles of the two Crematoria II and III could cremate 350 corpses in one hour. According to the opinion of the experts, with an operation in two shifts of 12 hours per day and setting aside a stop of 3 hours per day for removing the slag from the gasifiers and for various minor tasks, with the unavoidable stoppages of continuous operation, the average quantity of corpses actually cremated in 24 hours was 5,000 in the two crematoria. This figure is in agreement with the depositions of the eyewitnesses Tauber and Jankowski."

[822] "Akt February 14 – March 8, 1945. City of Oswiecim." GARF, 7021-108-14, pp. 2-7.

- Crematoria IV and V (*ibid*., p. 48):

  "In these crematoria, too, 3-5 corpses were loaded into each muffle. The cremation of such a load took about 30 minutes. In the opinion of the experts, the two Crematoria IV and V, running at full load, with two shifts of 12 hours, setting aside a stoppage for the removal of the slag from the gasifiers, for minor incidents, bottlenecks etc., could cremate 3,000 corpses on average per day. This figure is in agreement with the depositions of the eyewitnesses."

The pseudo-scientific character of these alleged "calculations" becomes apparent, if we consider that Tauber and Jankowski had attributed to Crematoria II/III a capacity of 2,500 cremations per day each in their depositions before judge Sehn.

The Polish-Soviet evaluation was based on initial hypotheses (three to five corpses per muffle cremated in 20-30 minutes) which yielded an average capacity (via four corpses in one muffle cremated in 25 minutes) of 3,456 corpses in 24 hours; the capacity stated by the experts (3,000 corpses per day) relied on the tacit assumption of a stoppage of three hours per day for the cleaning of the gasifiers, explicitly asserted by Tauber during his questioning by the Soviet interrogators (see chapter 10.2.5.). Taking this limitation into account, the cremation capacity in fact dropped to 3,024 corpses per day.

Dawidowski, as an expert for the court, could not speak against Tauber's and Jankowski's testimonies, but could not deny either what he had underwritten as a member of the Polish-Soviet commission. This dilemma of having to reconcile two disagreeing sets of figures forced Dawidowski to elaborate a hodge-podge of contradictory data.

If 15 muffles really could cremate 175 corpses in one hour, the cremation capacity in 21 hours of effective operation would have been (175×21 =) 3,675 corpses. If, on the other hand, the daily capacity of 15 muffles was 2,500 corpses, then they operated for (2,500÷175 =) about 14 hours per day. Both hypotheses are therefore at variance with the testimonies of Tauber and Jankowski.

For Crematoria IV and V Dawidowski chose to repeat the cremation capacity adopted by the Polish-Soviet commission, but brought the duration of the cremation process from 30-40 minutes down to 30 minutes. However, with the averages he adopted (four corpses per muffle in 30 minutes with 21 hours of daily operation), he came to a cremation capacity of 1,344 corpses per day, which he then rounded off gen-

erously as 1,500 to make it fit the capacity given by the Polish-Soviet "experts."

Van Pelt adds (pp. 214f.):

> *"During the Hungarian Action, however, actual incineration capacity exceeded the total capacity of the crematoria of 8,000 corpses per day. Two incineration pits created in the spring of 1944 had a capacity of 5,000 corpses each, which brought the total incineration capacity at Birkenau to 18,000 – a figure far below the (theoretically) maximum killing rate of 60,000 people in all the gas chambers."*

This is another demonstration of van Pelt's incompetence and his serious methodical mistakes. Dawidowski embraced the Soviet propaganda wholeheartedly; not satisfied with simply bolstering the story of the four million victims (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 52), he added his own absurdity on the page before, obviously backed up by a brilliant "(pseudo)scientific demonstration": (*ibid*., p. 51)

> *"In the light of the corresponding declarations of the witnesses, the expert estimates the output of the gas chambers in the four cremation complexes at Birkenau to be 60,000 persons in 24 hours. This figure is based on the following calculation: according to the statements by the witnesses, 3,000 persons could be herded into the gas chambers of each of the crematoria. The undressing phase, in an atmosphere of violent excitement, took 30 minutes, the gassing phase lasted 25-30 minutes on average, and the removal* [of the corpses] *from the chambers required 4 hours for each gassing.*
>
> *Altogether then, to carry out the gassing of one load in the chambers, 5 hours were needed, i.e. the output of the gas chambers of each cremation complex was 15,000 persons in 24 hours. For the 4 cremation complexes we obtain the figure of 60,000 persons in 24 hours."*

In practice this means that if a complete gassing cycle took five hours, about (24÷5 ≈) five gassings of 3,000 persons could be carried out every day in each crematorium, or (3,000×5×4 =) 60,000 could be gassed daily in the four Birkenau crematoria. The absurdity of such a computation is obvious by itself. Let me note here only that, just as the removal of 3,000 persons would have taken four hours, the freight elevator taking the corpses to the furnace hall would have had to perform (3,000÷5 =) 600 round trips during that time, each of which could have taken no more than ([4×3,600]÷600 =) 24 seconds! The expert adds that the cremation capacity of Birkenau stood at 18,000 corpses per day in

1944 – 8,000 in the crematoria and 10,000 in the "cremation pits" – but could be raised to 24,000, "if all the installations were run at maximum capacity" (*ibid*.). The absurd story invented by Dawidowski was taken up in the sentence of the Höss trial as well as in the indictment of the trial against the camp garrison: in both cases it was asserted that the extermination capacity of the gas chambers had been 60,000 persons per day,[823] whereas the fable of the 10,000 corpses cremated daily in the "cremation pits" is still valid today as an official holocaust dogma (Piper 1994, pp. 173f.). As far as the pits are concerned, Dawidowski does not actually say that there were two, each with a capacity of 5,000 corpses per day, but writes (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 51):

> *"pits*[824] *near Crematorium V* [cremation capacity] *5,000* [corpses per day] *and pits near the second bunker 5,000."*

This now brings us to the incredible conclusion reached by van Pelt: Dawidowski's assessment "put the history of the extermination installations at Auschwitz on a solid historical basis" (p. 216). In reality, Dawidowski was a fervent supporter of the Soviet propaganda which he first helped to create as a member of the Polish-Soviet Commission of inquiry and then assisted to spread as an "expert" of the court. His conjectures regarding the German "code terms" (*Sonderbehandlung*, *Sondermaßnahmen* etc.), as I have already explained, derived from his assumption of the assured existence of homicidal gas chambers at Birkenau which allowed him to deduce the alleged criminal significance of the "code terms."

In contrast to this, van Pelt starts out from the criminal significance of those "code terms" and then deduces from them the existence of homicidal gas chambers. Both methods, however, merely constitute parts of a circular argument and do not in the least yield "a solid historical basis." This is even more true for Dawidowski's conjectures concerning the Birkenau cremation ovens, which are nothing but a sterile repetition of the Soviet propaganda garnished with more absurdities. The only basis which Dawidowski gave to the later historiography was not historical but propagandistic.

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[823] AGK, NTN, 146z (verdict of Höss trial), p. 31; GARF, 7021-108-39, p. 75 (indictment at the trial of the camp garrison).

[824] "Doły," in the plural.

17.6.2. Jan Sehn

Judge Jan Sehn based his procedure regarding the alleged extermination on the above propagandistic basis. As van Pelt tells us, Sehn wrote the following in 1946 (p. 218):

> *"Together, therefore, the four new crematoria had 46 retorts, each with a capacity of 3-5 corpses. The burning of one retort load lasted about half an hour, and as the cleaning of the fireplaces took about an hour per day, so all the four crematoria could burn about 12,000 corpses in 24 hours, which would give 4,380,000 a year."*

Surprisingly, van Pelt shows some critical sense and says (*ibid*.):

> *"It is unclear why Sehn chose to change Dawidowski's assessment that the capacity of the four crematoria in Birkenau was 8,000 per day. Sehn's calculations do not make sense: even if we assume a load of 5 corpses per muffle and an incineration time of 30 minutes, and an operation period of 23 hours per day, we come to a capacity of 'only' (46×5×2×23) = 10,580 corpses per day."*

The explanation is that Sehn, when it came to propaganda, was more Soviet than the Soviets themselves; as we have seen in chapter 15.1., he went so far as to raise the number of victims from four million to five. We note that judge Sehn's assertion was at variance even with Jankowski who said that, as van Pelt tells us, "Crematoria 2 and 3 each had an incineration capacity of 2,500 corpses, while Crematoria 4 and 5 could burn 1,500 each" (p. 186) for a total of 8,000 and not 12,000 corpses per day. Van Pelt then goes on to quote the following passage from Jankowski's deposition (p. 186f.):

> *"The unloading ramp was situated opposite crematoria 2 and 3, more or less halfway between camps C and D. At that time about 18,000 Hungarians were daily murdered at Birkenau. Circa 30% of the then arriving transports, which kept coming one after another all day long, were selected to be put in the camp. They were registered in series A and B. If the number of persons to be gassed was not sufficiently large, they would be shot and burned in pits. It was a rule to use the gas chamber for groups of more than 200 persons, as it was not worthwhile to put the gas chamber in action for a smaller number of persons."*

The figure of 18,000 Hungarian Jews *assassinated* per day is absolutely unfounded. If we are to believe the witness, this figure represents 70% of the deported Hungarian Jews (the remaining 30% were regis-

tered), and so the total number of deportees should have stood at around 25,700 per day. Even the Auschwitz Museum, where Jankowski's deposition was published, had to admit (Bezwińska/Świebocka, note 74, p. 49):

> *"This figure is too high. According to the decisions taken in Vienna it was planned that 4 trains with 3,000 people each were to arrive every day."*

However, there was only a single day – June 17, 1944 – on which four transports arrived at Auschwitz, or 12,000 deportees; on all other days of the deportation period the number of trains was one, two or three (Mattogno 2001a, p. 392). Still, van Pelt's attention was not stirred by such a blatant lie, but by the shootings. He states in fact that "Jankowski was largely right in the last assertion" and then comes up with a fanciful description of the alleged practice of shooting near the pits, which he summarizes in the following words (p. 187):

> *"Most who were condemned to die could walk the relatively short distance from the place of selection to the crematoria. Because there was no transport available for those who could not, a situation arose in which those who had walked to the crematoria would have to wait a long time for those who were* [too] *lame and crippled to catch up. Such a delay would disturb the efficiency of the killing operation and produce greater anxiety, hence the SS decided not to wait for those who were unable to join the main body of those deportees to be gassed and to begin gassing those who were able to walk to the crematoria immediately after they had undressed themselves. From this evolved the practice of shooting those who were left behind."*

Van Pelt probably invented this alleged "evolution," because he considered Jankowski's assertions to be nonsense. Actually, the smallest of the alleged gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V had a surface area of 43.2 m², and one therefore does not understand why "it was not worthwhile" to gas fewer than 200 persons. The matter is even more mysterious from van Pelt's point of view, because he believed that in the alleged homicidal gas chambers only a minute quantity of Zyklon B was employed (see chapter 14.1.). Let me add that the tale invented by van Pelt is loudly refuted by Jankowski himself, who declared:[825]

> *"As far as the gassing itself is concerned, we must say that, when old people or children who were sick or mentally ill were brought in,*

[825] Deposition by S. Jankowski on April 13, 1945, before judge J. Sehn, in: Bezwińska/Świebocka, p. 55.

they were not ordered to get down from the truck, they were simply dumped in the yard [of the crematorium], *like dumping garbage, into trenches arranged for the purpose."*

Hence, contrary to what van Pelt says, those who were unable to walk were taken to the crematoria by truck. In his report on the investigations done at the camp, Sehn not only rejected the cremation capacity adopted by Jankowski, but did not even mention the shootings near the pits. All the same van Pelt writes (p. 187):

"Jankowski's statements provided a solid basis for Sehn's investigation."

But even Sehn's "investigation," just like Dawidowski's, was based on propaganda. This comes out very clearly when he speaks about the "cremation pits" in particular (Sehn 1946, p. 126):

"During the period between May and August 1944, when mass transports of Hungarian Jews and French insurgents were brought in, in the light of the turmoil created by the situation at the fronts, the Hungarians and the French were gassed in such numbers that the crematoria were unable to cremate all the corpses. Therefore, enormous trenches were dug near Crematorium V, and the old trenches near the gas chamber in the woods [bunker 2] *were reopened, and corpses were cremated without interruption. With all installations running at full speed, a figure of 24,000 cremated corpses per day was reached in August 1944!"*

The propagandistic character of these assertions is all too obvious. As we have just seen, the figure of "24,000" is absurd even with respect to the detainees *deported*, and all the more so with respect to those allegedly killed. On the other hand, the month – August 1944 – is an anachronism, because the deportation of Hungarian Jews ended on July 9, and the last transports reached Auschwitz on July 11, 1944. The story of the extermination of the French insurgents is hence a legend that was *en vogue* in the immediate postwar period: Filip Friedman states that they were estimated to have been 670,000! (Friedman, p. 55.) This legend survived through the 1970s and then left the scene (Mattogno 2005c, pp. 24f.). Finally, of all the witnesses who made their contradictory declarations on the "cremation pits," no one mentions the figure adopted by Jan Sehn.

Van Pelt ends this chapter by dedicating a few pages to the book by Ota Kraus and Erich Schön (a.k.a. Kulka) *Továrna na smrt* (The death factory) published in 1946 and re-edited in 1956, with another printing

the following year (Kraus/Kulka). The authors attempt to justify in this book the Soviet lie of the four million dead on the basis of fictitious transports: they invent transports of unregistered Jews allegedly gassed on arrival for a total of 3,500,000 persons, adding the 320,000 detainees who allegedly died at the camp and another 15,000 who allegedly died during the evacuation of the camp, and conclude in the end that their figure was not far off from the Soviet figure of four million! (Kraus/Kulka, pp. 203f.) Particularly strange was their description of Crematoria II and III, which van Pelt quotes (p. 221; cf. Kraus/Schön, p. 145):

> *"At the entrance to the gas chamber was a lift, behind double doors, for transporting the corpses to the furnace rooms on the ground-floor, with their three-stage*[826] *furnaces. At the bottom stage air was (brought) in by electric fans, at the middle the fuel was burnt, and at the top of (sic) corpses were placed, two or three at a time, on the stout fire-clay grate."*

These two would-be historians interpret and explain the German expression "*Dreimuffelofen*," triple-muffle oven, as designating an oven on three levels, although they themselves showed – on the preceding page – a photograph of the triple muffle ovens of Crematorium II. Van Pelt felt obliged to amend the text by adding the verb "brought," yet he was unmoved by the big mistake regarding the structure of the ovens. But then again, this is just another example of his historical and technical incompetence.

17.7. The Witnesses Bendel, Nyiszli, Müller

In his supposedly cognitive process van Pelt leaves aside three important "*Sonderkommando*" witnesses who, having been unable to follow the final development of the propaganda story about the gas chambers, as I have explained before, gave very different and contrasting accounts of their own.

17.7.1. Charles S. Bendel

Van Pelt presents us with a long excerpt from Bendel's deposition at the Belsen trial (pp. 234ff.), but without any comment, even though it contains various assertions which clash conspicuously with his credo, for example:

[826] The adjective used in the original text, "třístupňový" signifies "having three stages."

- the gassing of 80,000 Jews from the Lodz ghetto, although there were only 25,000 deportees (p. 112, see chapter 15.2.);
- the number (three), the size (12×6 m) and the capacity (1,000 corpses per hour) of the alleged "cremation pits" in the yard of Crematorium V are completely at variance with the assertions by Tauber, Dragon and Jankowski (and by all the other witnesses; see Mattogno 2005c, pp. 13-23);
- the death of the alleged victims within two minutes and the opening of the door of the alleged gas chamber after five minutes, whereas van Pelt speaks of "up to 30 minutes" (p. 388; see chapter 14.1.);

Van Pelt has even more reasons to keep quiet about the many later declarations Bendel made and which were either false or at variance with van Pelt's assumptions (cf. Mattogno 1990a, pp. 25-47), for example:

- The dimensions of the alleged gas chamber: 10×4×1.6 meters.
- The number and the size of the alleged gas chambers in Crematoria IV and V. In this respect the witness declared:[827]

  > *"For crematoriums 3 and 4 there were 2 other gas chambers, measuring each one 6 metres long and 3 metres wide and 1½ metres high."*

  Only children and very small adults could have stood upright in such a room. Instead, the three rooms presented as homicidal gas chambers measured 12.35×7.72, 11.69×8.40, and 11.69×3.70 meters and were 2.20 meters high (see chapter 5.10 & 5.7.).
- The herding of 1,000 persons into a room of 40 m². In this respect Bendel said (p. 29 of note 828):

  > *"Each gas chamber was 10 metres long and 4 metres wide. The people were herded in so tightly that there was no possibility even to put in one more. It was a great amusement for the SS to throw in children above the head of those who were packed tightly."* (Emph. added).

  He had obviously forgotten that he had indicated the height of the alleged gas chamber as being 1.5 or 1.6 meters – little more than five feet! When defense counsel Zippel asked him during the cross-examination how it had been possible to cram 1,000 persons into the space of 64 m³, Bendel merely replied (two pages later):

[827] Statement by C.S. Bendel dated October 21, 1945. NI-11390, p. 2.
[828] Interrogation of C.S. Bendel on March 2, 1946. NI-11953.

> *"This one must ask oneself. It can only be done by the German technique."*

- The existence of two gas chambers in each crematorium (Phillips, p. 135).
- The number of victims for the month of June, 1944: 25,000 per day: "During the month of June the number of gassed was 25,000 every day" (p. 28 of note 828) This amounts to 750,000 gassed victims for the month of June alone, but when replying to the question: "How many were gassed in May and June 1944?," Bendel said: "About 400,000" (*ibid*., p. 29).
- At the time of the Belsen trial the witness had heard the Soviet fable of the four million dead at Auschwitz and bent various other aspects of his own account to fit it, in particular: the harvest of gold teeth – some 17 tons (!; *ibid*., p. 30) – and the use of Zyklon B for homicidal purposes: "Two tins for one thousand persons; 25,000 per day; then we may say 50 tins per day" (*ibid*.), i.e. 1,500 cans per month. But then, contradicting himself once again, he declared:[829]

  > *"During the months of May and June of 1944 I estimate that a total of 400 tins of Zyklon B per month were used for killing people."*

17.7.2. Miklos Nyiszli

Van Pelt devotes only a couple of lines to Nyiszli and only in connection with the alleged killing of twins by Dr. Mengele (p. 445). This crime, about which he is the only witness to report, has no foundation in documents (see Mattogno 2005b, pp. 51-68). Nyiszli is the author of a memoir on Auschwitz which enjoyed great popularity in mainstream holocaust historiography over many years. The first edition in Hungarian appeared in 1946 and was entitled "*Dr. Mengele boncolóorvosa voltam az auschwitz-i krematóriumban*" (I was an anatomist with Dr. Mengele at the Auschwitz crematorium, Nyiszli 1946). It was soon translated into various languages. Van Pelt is well aware of the fact that Nyiszli was a mythomaniac – so much so that he published in the Budapest newspaper *Világ* ("World") the totally invented minutes of his questioning at the IG-Farben trial, although he had never appeared there as a witness (see Mattogno 2002a, pp. 231f.). His book bursts with con-

[829] Statement by C.S. Bendel dated October 21, 1945. NI-11390, p. 7.

tradictions, falsification and blatant errors. I have listed 120 in a specific study of this topic published in 1988.

An extreme example is what he says about the construction of the crematoria, which he dates to the winter of 1939-1940, when the Auschwitz camp as such did not yet exist. He attributes furnace halls some 150 m long (instead of 30) to Crematoria II and III with 15 individual ovens (instead of five ovens with three muffles each) and describes the alleged gas chamber as being a room 200 m long (instead of 30) and speaks also of four freight elevators (instead of a single one). In his words the crematoria were able to cremate three corpses in 20 minutes in each of the 15 ovens (muffles), a technically totally outrageous capacity which would correspond to 3,240 corpses in 24 hours, but he speaks explicitly of a cremation capacity of 5,000 corpses in 24 hours for each crematorium and of 20,000 for all four. He apparently does not even realize or care that in doing so he attributes to the 15 muffles of Crematoria II and III the same capacity as to the 8 muffles of Crematoria IV and V.

In this context Nyiszli inserts a chronology of the gassings which has direct mathematical ties with the fictitious data for the cremations. He tells us for example that the detainees of sector BIId of Birkenau, 10,500 persons, were *actually* cremated within one day in Crematoria III and IV, hence 5,250 corpses in each one; this is based on their fictional capacity given as 5,000 per day. For the same reason the 20,000 detainees coming from the Theresienstadt ghetto were *actually* cremated within 48 hours in Crematoria II and III, i.e. 5,000 corpses within 24 hours in each crematorium.

Nyiszli even believed that Zyklon B was made of chlorine, and as this gas has a higher density than air, he invents the story that it filled the gas chambers slowly, rising from below like water (Nyiszli 1961, p. 46):

> *"The bodies were not lying here and there throughout the room, but piled in a mass to the ceiling. The reason for this was that the gas first inundated the lower layers of air and rose but slowly toward the ceiling. This forced the victims to trample one another in a frantic effort to escape the gas."*

This witness knows nothing of "bunker 2" which did not exist as such for him: the respective house did in fact not contain homicidal gas chambers but only an undressing room for the victims who were then exterminated by a shot in the back of the neck near two "cremation

trenches." He claims to have seen with his own eyes the extermination of two million people in the gas chambers, but the total number of victims of the alleged gassings, which he himself mentions, is only around 605,000. For Nyiszli "Kanada" was not the *Effektenlager* (storage area of inmate belongings) with its 30 barracks, but an open-air dump in the yard of Crematorium II where refuse was burned. Finally he places Crematorium V two kilometers away from Birkenau! (See Mattogno 1988, pp. 9-60.)

17.7.3. Bendel's and Nyiszli's Testimonies According to Pressac

In the second chapter of the third part of his 1989 book, Pressac speaks about a "Critical study of the testimonies of doctors Bendel and Nyiszli concerning the Birkenau Krematorien and the homicide gassings." The subtitle specifies: "The testimonies of Doctors Miklos Nyiszli and Charles Sigismund or Paul Bendel or a demonstration of the impossibility of relying on raw testimony" (p. 469). Actually, Pressac brings in these two testimonies to show the fallacy of the previous historiographic method (p. 479):

> *"The historical methodology that consists of relying on raw testimony, considered to be 'sacrosanct,' such as the accounts of Bendel and Nyiszli lopping off the parts that seem 'dubious' or that 'don't fit' is a faulty methodology that necessarily leads to imprecision [for example, in 'Les chambres à gaz ont existé' by G Welters, p. 113, Bendel's account is cut without any indication that this has been done (lines 9 and 10) and in 'Les chambres à gaz: Secret d'Etat,' p. 205, the phrase concerning the presence of Himmler, considered unlikely, disappears]. Not authenticated by original documents, these early, precious, indispensible testimonies are full of imprecisions, errors and non sequiturs, even though on some points they correspond. They can be used only after historical verification and with explanations. This is how the historians of the Oswiecim Museum proceeded in producing their book 'Auschwitz vu par les SS.' Those who use raw testimony without taking such precautions cause the careful and logical reader to spontaneously reject the material. The 'shaky' parts of the accounts, of low or zero credibility, often systematically 'forgotten' are put forward BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE by the revisionist authors."*

Pressac analyzes two testimonies by Bendel and finds in both of them more than a dozen errors, exaggerations or inventions (pp. 470ff.). In his conclusion he asserts that he considers the statements put forward by the witness "with present knowledge and in the light of contemporary documents, to be untrue." This severe accusation is essentially valid also for van Pelt's method, who cuts off or "forgets" the "dubious" portions of the testimonies or those which "do not fit well," and if he really has to quote them, he puts on a poker face and lets them go without any comment.

Regarding the emphasis which revisionist authors have put on these passages, it is worth noting that they almost always concern essential points of the testimonies – otherwise they would not have been left out by the holocaust authors. On the other hand, if it can be shown that a witness lied deliberately on essential points of his testimony, it is most necessary to stress these falsifications first of all, as they devaluate the entire testimony.

The method of historical verification of the testimonies by means of documents and other objective elements of comparison is no doubt the best and highly recommendable, but it has to be applied rigorously. Otherwise it changes into van Pelt's "convergence of proof," in which the criterion of verification is replaced by a sterile circular reasoning of self-confirming internal fallacies.

17.7.4. Filip Müller

Van Pelt treats Müller as he does Nyiszli, although he values his testimony very highly, invoking it, as he does, to "confirm" Tauber's reliability (p. 205):

> *"Tauber's statements were largely corroborated by the contemporary testimonies of Jankowski and Dragon and by the later memoirs of Filip Müller."*

The method of "convergence" of allegedly "independent" testimonies becomes grotesque here, because "the later memoirs" came out in 1979! In spite of the holocaustic importance of this book, van Pelt allots merely a few lines to it in the context of the Vrba-Wetzler report, which I have already examined. Van Pelt certainly knew my article (1990b, pp. 5-24), in which I show that Müller has shamelessly plagiarized Nyiszli's book in its German translation, as it had appeared in the Munich magazine *Quick* in 1961 under the title "Auschwitz. Tagebuch

eines Lagerarztes." It appears to be just as certain that van Pelt did not know of Müller's participation in the trial of the camp garrison. In his deposition on that occasion Müller limited himself to an account of his (alleged) activity at Crematorium I of the Auschwitz main camp without ever mentioning his alleged work at the Birkenau crematoria, although 75% of his above book is dedicated to it (see Mattogno 2005e, pp. 33-48). From this we may deduce how "independent" his declarations about the alleged gas chambers at Birkenau really are and what value they have in terms of any "confirmation."

As a matter of fact, when analyzing the blueprint of Crematorium III reproduced in Müller's book (p. 287), we find that it matches almost perfectly the one reproduced in the book by Ota Kraus and Erich Kulka (1946 & 1957), see Illustration 2.

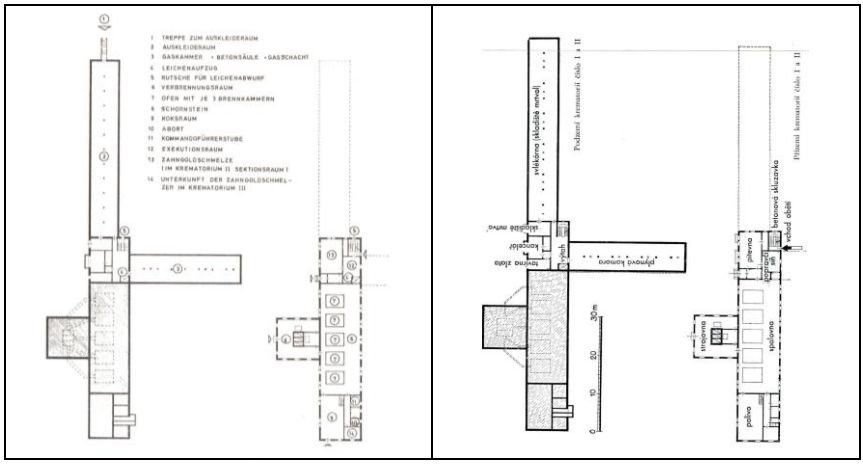

Illustration 2: Blueprints of Crematorium III as reproduced by Müller (left, 1979) and Kraus/Kulka (right, 1946). A clear case of plagiarism.

Kraus/Kulka added a non-existing entrance next to the chute, marked as "entrance for victims" ("*vchod obětí*"), wrong window locations at this point and other details. Müller copied it all, down to this drawing's unique graphic appearance. But he also made a few changes to the basement rooms: while he removed the little crosses between the pillars representing drains in the alleged undressing room (*Leichenkeller* 2), he converted them into "gas shafts" in the purported gas chamber (*Leichenkeller* 1), although Kraus/Kulka clearly said that there were allegedly only two such devices which are not shown in their plan (1956, 4th edition, p. 110; van Pelt 2002, p. 221). By accident Müller transformed one concrete pillar into a "gas shaft," though, probably because

he covered one cross with his number 3. He also plagiarized the description of the door leading into *Leichenkeller* 1 as a "double door" (pp. 184f.), which Kraus/Kulka had described as such as well (1957, p. 111), since their drawing is obviously based on an older original blueprint of that building.

One change made by Müller, his re-labeling of room no. 12 from "autopsy room," as reported by Kraus/Kulka, to "room for melting of gold fillings," is apparently based on Nyiszli's account, whom Müller must have considered a better source for his plagiarism in this case.

Interestingly, Müller's plagiarized version of the Kraus/Kulka drawing was later reproduced by yet another self-styled *Sonderkommando* member, including all the blunders: Daniel Bennahmias, see Illustration 3 (Fromer).

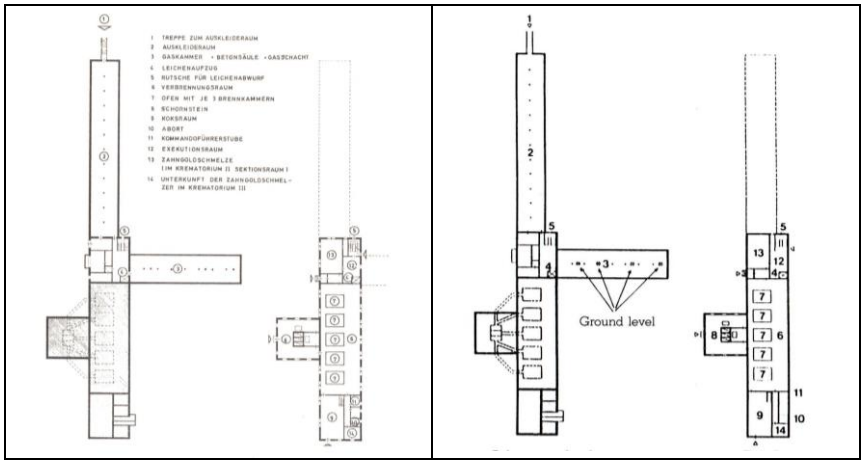

Illustration 3: Blueprints of Crematorium III as reproduced by Müller (left, 1979) and Bennahmias (right, Fromer 1993). Another clear case of plagiarism.

The drawing of Crematoria IV and V reproduced by Kraus/Kulka was plagiarized by Müller too, by the way.

As we can see, cross-pollination abounds among the self-styled members of the *Sonderkommando*.

17.8. The Lesser Witnesses

In his odd historiographic method van Pelt not only leaves aside the three witnesses of the "*Sonderkommando*" already mentioned, but in his frenetic search for "confirmations" goes so far as to revive a series of testimonies which are by now totally discredited, and by so doing he

demonstrates once more his surprising lack of critical sense. Things become really grotesque when he underwrites and even tries to justify those false testimonies.

17.8.1. Ada Bimko

At the Belsen trial the Polish Jewess Ada Bimko, a physician deported to Auschwitz on August 4, 1943, made the following statement (Phillips, pp. 66f.):

> *"In the first room I met a man who came from the same town as I do. There was also an S.S. man with a rank of Unterscharfuhrer, and he belonged to the Red Cross. I was told that in the first big room the people left their clothes, and from this room were led into a second, and I gained the impression that hundreds and hundreds might go into this room, it was so large. It resembled the shower-baths or ablution rooms we had in the camp. <u>There were many sprays all over the ceiling in rows which were parallel. All these people who went into this room were issued with a towel and a cake of soap, so that they should have the impression that they were going to have a bath, but for anybody who looked at the floor it was quite clear that it was not so, because there were no drains.</u> In this room there was a small door which opened to a room which was pitch dark and looked like a corridor. I saw a few lines of rails with a small wagon which they called a lorry* [in German 'Lore']*, and I was told that prisoners who were already gassed were put on these wagons and sent directly to the crematorium. I believe the crematorium was in the same building, but I myself did not see the stove* [sic!]*. There was yet another room a few steps higher than the previous one with a very low ceiling, and I noticed two pipes which I was told contained the gas. There were also two huge metal containers containing gas."* (Emph. added)

In order to confer a minimum of credibility to this witness, van Pelt writes "it seems that she visited Crematorium V," but Ada Bimko's description does in fact not fit the architecture of any of the crematoria. In particular, it does not apply to Crematorium V, because – as we shall see presently – the witness speaks of a "gas chamber below," whereas Crematorium V had only a ground floor and there was no basement of any sort. From her testimony, by the way, van Pelt quotes only the passage I have emphasized and so drops the grossest lies of this witness.

The peak of her grotesque description was actually the "two huge metal containers containing gas" from which the gas, piped through "two pipes," came out of the "sprays" of the alleged gas chamber, as the witness described in a deposition attached to the minutes of the trial (*ibid*., p. 742):

> *"The SS man told me that the pipes, which were in the floor, were connected to the spray fittings in the gas chamber below."*

The testimony is clearly false. Instead of admitting this obvious and irrefutable fact, van Pelt lamely tries to justify Ada Bimko's lies. In fact, he argues that the witness had seen "the ductwork of the ventilation system installed above the gas chambers" (p. 234), but she speaks of "tubes which were in the floor," hence not "above" but "below." Besides, none of the alleged gas chambers at Birkenau was equipped with a de-aeration (*Entlüftung*) consisting of visible metal pipework which someone could have mistaken for "two huge metal containers." *Leichenkellers* 1 of Crematoria II and III actually had a brick de-aeration duct which ran along the two lower edges of the room, as can be seen clearly on drawing 934 of January 27, 1943, which shows the *Leichenkeller* in section and which van Pelt himself publishes (pp. 364, 377). He shows, moreover, a drawing of his own of the inside of *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II in which the de-aeration ducts are correctly shown as brickwork (p. 194). Van Pelt has other drawings of his own making which represent the insides of the "undressing room" (p. 201) and of the "gas chambers" (p. 203), but not even on these is there any de-aeration ductwork.

Van Pelt knows very well that no rails or little carts existed in the alleged gas chambers, nor any rooms "a few steps higher" than others, nor rooms "with a very low ceiling," and precisely because he knew all this, he did not include these passages of Ada Bimko's deposition in his quotation. Then van Pelt attempts an explanation which is most ludicrous (p. 234):

> *"Her SS guide told her, erroneously, that the ducts which extracted the poison from the gas chambers served the opposite purpose, namely to force the hydrogen cyanide into the gas chambers, and he wrongly identified the cylindrical drums that contained the ventilators as gas cylinders. Not in a position to challenge his explanation, Bimko accepted it for what it was."*

So the poor *SS-Unterscharführer* has to take all the blame for Ada Bimko's lies! What is even more astonishing is that van Pelt knows

very well that the "cylindrical drums that contained the ventilators [*i.e. the housings*]" were located in the attics (*Dachgeschoss*) of Crematoria II and III and not in the alleged gas chambers; thus the false witness could never even have seen them![830] Not to say anything about the somewhat unusual behavior (to say the least) of this SS corporal who would immediately have spilled the beans about the "terrible secret" of Auschwitz to the first Jewish girl coming along. The SS tour guide is an obvious literary means brought in by Ada Bimko to explain and simultaneously lend credence to her "technical knowledge" of the alleged extermination installations. This is underlined by the fact that her tale is nothing but a variation on the lies contained in the Vrba-Wetzler report. That this witness is an outright liar is also demonstrated by the statement she made in a deposition included in the proceedings of the Belsen trial (Phillips, p. 740):

> *"I have examined the records of the numbers cremated and I say that the records show that about 4,000,000 persons were cremated at the camp."*

We see that van Pelt has simply tried to cover up Ada Bimko's lies with even more lies.

17.8.2. M.-C. Vaillant-Couturier and S. Shmaglevskaya

The first witness is introduced by van Pelt in the following manner (p. 246):

> *"On January 28, 1946, Marie Claude Vaillant-Couturier, deputy of the Constituent Assembly and Knight in the Legion of Honor, provided a long, precise, and important testimony on the situation in Auschwitz."*

He then quotes a long excerpt from the deposition this witness gave at Nuremberg. We can see that this excerpt is long, but why is it "precise and important"? If we just limit ourselves to the passage published by van Pelt (*ibid*.), the witness declared that "3 weeks after" her arrival at Auschwitz, which was on January 27, 1943, 1,200[831] Jewish women arrived at Auschwitz via Drancy from the Romainville fort near Paris. 125 were registered, the others were allegedly gassed. However, of the three transports which left the Drancy camp for Auschwitz during that time (February 9, 11, and 13, 1943) only transport no. 47 of February

[830] I have dealt at length with this "explanation" by van Pelt in Mattogno 2005g.
[831] Van Pelt erroneously has 3,000.

11 included any Jews from Romainville – 20 persons altogether.[832] The witness also said that "in the spring of 1944" "large convoys of Hungarian Jews – about 700,000" (van Pelt, p. 247) came to Auschwitz; this is almost twice the number of such persons who actually arrived there. The witness describes the alleged gassing process; her source was "a little Jewess from France" about whom she says (*ibid*., p. 248):

> *"When I met her she was employed to undress the babies before they were taken into the gas chamber."*

Apparently we have here the first (and only) female detainee of the "*Sonderkommando*" – a historical first! The witness goes on in her testimony which refers in particular to Crematorium II, which she could see from her block, no. 26 (*ibid*.):

> *"Once the people were undressed they took them into a room which was somewhat like a shower room, and gas capsules*[833] *were thrown through an opening in the ceiling. An SS man would watch the effect through a porthole. At the end of 5 or 7 minutes, when the gas had completed its work, he gave the signal to open the doors;*[834] *and men with gas masks – they too were internees – went in and removed the corpses. They told us that the internees must have suffered before dying, because they were closely clinging to one another and it was very difficult to separate them."* (Emph. added)

The "gas capsules" were a clear derivation of the "gas bombs" invented by J. Tabeau. The witness knew only a single opening in the ceiling and knew nothing about the ventilation; instead, she attributes "doors," in the plural, to the alleged gas chambers. Such mistakes are somewhat strange for a detainee who claimed to speak all the time with members of the "*Sonderkommando*," although these people, if we follow the mainstream historiography, were kept apart from the other detainees for reasons of secrecy and could not talk to anyone else.

The duration of the gassing, five to seven minutes, is of an order of magnitude van Pelt railed against in his attack on the *Leuchter Report*, for which he assumed an agony of the victims lasting "up to 30 minutes." This allows him to prop up his thesis that Zyklon B "concentrations at Auschwitz could have been as low as 100 ppm," which a duration of five to seven minutes obviously would not support (see chapter

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832 Klarsfeld 1978, "Convoi n° 47 en date du 11 fevrier 1943" (the book is unpaginated).
833 In the French text: "capsules de gaz." TMI, vol. VI, p. 225.
834 In the French text: "les portes," i.e. plural. *Ibid.*

14.1.). Besides, van Pelt stops his quotation before the witness utters other major absurdities:[835]

> *"At Auschwitz there were eight crematories but, as from 1944, these proved insufficient. The SS had large pits dug by the internees where they put branches, sprinkled with gasoline, which they set on fire. Then they threw the corpses into the pits. From our block we could see after about three-quarters of an hour or an hour after the arrival of a convoy, large flames coming from the crematory and the sky was lighted up by the burning pits."*

Hence there were eight crematoria at Auschwitz, and the chimney of Crematorium II spewed "large flames"! It is clear that Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier did nothing but repeat the propaganda legends which went around in the camp and invented anonymous sources to give them some credibility, just as Ada Bimko had already done. One of the most captivating tales, and hence one of the most widespread, is the story of babies being burned alive:[835]

> *"One night we were awakened by terrifying cries. And we discovered, on the following day, from the men working in the Sonderkommando, the 'Gas Kommando,' that on the preceding day, the gas supply having run out, they had thrown the children into the furnaces alive."*

This story was espoused, with more embroideries, by Severina Shmaglevskaya, another false witness in the Nuremberg trial, quoted by van Pelt for incredible reasons (p. 249):

> *"At that time, when the greatest number of Jews were exterminated in the gas chambers, an order was issued that the children were to be thrown into the crematory ovens or the crematory ditches without previous asphyxiation with gases."*

In a separate study I have demonstrated how this legend developed from the propagandistic theme of the burning of semi-conscious men invented by the secret resistance movement as early as 1943 (2004i, pp. 60ff.). The most incredible thing is that Pressac took this up again in his second book on Auschwitz (1993, p. 91):

> *"Toward the end of the summer* [of 1944]*, as Zyklon B was running low, those unfit for work from the transports that still were being directed to Auschwitz, would be dumped directly into burning trenches of Crematorium V and of bunker 2."*

[835] IMT, vol. VI, p. 216.

His source (note 293, p. 108) was a statement by Hermann Langbein at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, in which Langbein, in a fit of feverish imagination, had welded together the two literary themes of a scarcity of Zyklon B and the order to burn the children alive (Langbein, vol. 1, p. 88.):

> *"In 1944 children were thrown into the large fires which burned next to the crematoria. We heard about it in the Stammlager, and I reported it to the Standortarzt. Doctor Wirths would not believe me. The next day, when I went to see him for the dictation, he told me: 'It was an order from camp commander Höss, given because there was not enough gas.' From then on, Dr. Wirths believed everything I told him."*

Langbein later became one of the most important holocaust historians on Auschwitz. His trustworthiness can be judged from the following statement he made in Vienna on August 8, 1945, against Maximilian Grabner:[836]

> *"Of course Grabner was present at the mass gassings of the transports that came to Auschwitz. Within the scope of these transports some five million persons were gassed."*

Grabner, who was then detained in Vienna, picked up and bolstered the accusation, "confessing":[837]

> *"During the time I was head of the Political Department at Auschwitz,*[838] *some 3-6 million people were gassed in this or a similar way."*

Langbein, in turn, took his inspiration from the following declaration made by Grabner:[837]

> *"When the crematoria could not burn the large number of persons murdered, pyres were built and the corpses were burned on them. Obersturmbannführer Höss also ordered that people, children in particular, were to be thrown onto those pyres alive. I myself know the following utterance by Höss. He once said in the officers' club: 'Let them throw these creatures into the fire alive.'"*

The scarcity of Zyklon B at Auschwitz is a tale without any foundation. It is known with certainty that 195 kg of Zyklon B were supplied to Auschwitz on April 11, 1944, followed by a delivery of another lot of

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[836] Interrogation of H. Langbein by the Vienna Police, August 8, 1945. GARF, 7021-108-34, p. 22.

[837] Minutes of the interrogation of M. Grabner by the Directorate of the Vienna Police dated Spetember 1, 1945. GARF, 7021-108-34, p. 26a.

[838] From June 1940 until December 1943.

this product on April 27, and yet another of the same size on May 31 (PS-1553). Raul Hilberg has analyzed the question of the supply of Zyklon B to Auschwitz in 1944 on the basis of various documents from the IG-Farben trial and has come to the following conclusion (Hilberg 1995, p. 966):

> *"The supply was maintained until the very end. The SS were never short of gas."*

As far as the alleged order to burn children alive is concerned, it is needless to say that it has no basis in documents.

17.8.3. Janda Weiss

This witness was born on January 12, 1930, and was deported to Auschwitz from the Theresienstadt ghetto on May 18, 1944 (Kárný, vol. II, p. 403). Van Pelt writes that "members of the British parliament" visited the Buchenwald camp after its liberation and interviewed 150 detainees, among them Weiss (p. 167):

> *"One of the witnesses was 15-year-old Janda Weis, who had been deported to Birkenau a year earlier with a transport of 1,500 Jews from Theresienstadt. He was one of the 98 people of the family camp who was spared when the Theresienstadt Jews were gassed. As a kitchen helper, he visited the barracks where the Sonderkommandos were housed."*

The witness was 14 years old when he arrived at Birkenau but, as we know from D. Czech (1989, p. 698), in 1944 "children under the age of 14" were destined to be gassed immediately. The transport with which the witness arrived at Auschwitz (on May 19, 1944) counted not 1,500 but 2,499 persons. We see therefore that van Pelt does not even know mainstream holocaust historiography. With his usual lack of critical sense he accepts what the witness had said at face value. Weiss also stated (Hackett, p. 349):

> *"Many of the elderly refused to cooperate with the SS, which had taken the last little piece of food from them. They were killed on the spot."*

But this, too, is wrong, because the deportees were all registered (Czech, *ibid*.). The statement that only 98 persons were spared in the alleged gassing of July 10-11, 1944, is likewise false, because at least 3,580 of these detainees were transferred to other camps (Kraus/Schön,

p. 178). And in spite of his young age, the witness was obviously selected for work; he reports (Hackett, *ibid*.):

> *"We immediately went into camp; the rest of the family camp were gassed. In camp I became a helper in the kitchen. I visited the barracks of the Jewish work detail, which worked in the crematorium. These comrades told me about the horrors of the crematorium, where I would later work."*

This means that the alleged visits of the "*Sonderkommando* barracks"[839] by the witness took place after July 11, 1944, but as against this he was assigned to the crematoria at the end of June (Müller, pp. 236f.). Weiss' false statement hence undermines to some extent the reliability of his testimony, and van Pelt omits it for that reason.

Weiss, like the female witnesses examined above, does nothing but repeat the propaganda of the resistance movement in the camp, inventing a well-informed source (the men from the "*Sonderkommando*") to make his story sound more credible. He even picks up the little tales of the "horrible tongues of flame coming out of its smokestacks" (Hackett, p. 349), of people being "dumped into burning trenches while still alive,"[840] and of Moll's atrocities, who "grabbed infants by their little legs and smashed their skulls against the wall" (van Pelt, p. 168). The propagandistic nature of Weiss' statements appears clearly when he says (*ibid*.):

> *"There were three columns for the ventilators, through which the gas poured in."*

But the blowers for aeration and de-aeration were not located within the alleged gas chamber; instead, they were in the attic of the crematorium.[841] There is another revealing statement (van Pelt, *ibid*.):

> *"When the room was full, small children were thrown in through a window."*

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[839] It is known that according to mainstream holocaust historiography the "Sonderkommando" was initially housed in a single barrack at Birkenau, block 13.

[840] Van Pelt 2002, p. 167. Olère has also illustrated this propaganda story in two drawings which bear the following caption: "SS throwing children into a burning trench alive (Bunker 2/V)." The drawings show the rear portion of a truck on the edge of a burning "cremation trench"; the bed of the truck, full of children, is tipped toward the trench, and an SS soldier, likewise on the edge of the trench, pulls the children off and throws them into the fire. Another soldier, also on the edge of the trench, salutes with his arm stretched out. Actually, because of the intense heat radiating from the trench, the two soldiers would have been burned alive themselves and the fuel tank of the truck would have exploded within minutes. See Klarsfeld 1989, p. 40.

[841] Cf. the original drawings showing their position in: Pressac 1993, documents 14 and 15 outside of the text.

However, the alleged gas chambers in Crematoria II and III did not have any windows, whereas those of Crematoria IV and V had iron bars on the outside.

17.9. The Defendants of the Belsen Trial

17.9.1. Josef Kramer

As I have pointed out in chapter 16.4., the main defendant in the Belsen trial was the former *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Josef Kramer who had been camp commander of the Natzweiler-Struthof camp between October 1942 and May 1944, later commander of Auschwitz II – Birkenau, and from December 1944 onwards commander of the camp at Bergen-Belsen. Van Pelt writes about him (p. 236):

> *"Initially, during the pretrial interrogations, the former Lagerführer of Birkenau had maintained that there had been no gas chambers in Auschwitz. Yet he changed his story when the prosecution was able to present him proof that he had constructed and operated a gas chamber during his tenure as Kommandant of the camp at Natzweiler-Struthof. Confronted with this material, Kramer decided that it was better to confess the existence of gas chambers in both Natzweiler-Struthof and Auschwitz but to deny any direct responsibility. In the case of Auschwitz, where he served as Lagerführer of Birkenau, his denial of direct authority over the crematoria was, probably, justified. The crematoria were located outside the prisoner compound and were under the direct responsibility of the Political Department and the Kommandant."*

Kramer had stated in the undated declaration mentioned by van Pelt (Phillips, p. 731):

> *"I have heard of the allegations of former prisoners in Auschwitz referring to a gas chamber there, the mass executions and whippings, the cruelty of the guards employed, and that all this took place either in my presence or with my knowledge. All I can say to all this is that it is untrue from beginning to end."*

Actually, Kramer had not been confronted with any "proof" but only with a simple photograph of the alleged gas chamber at Natzweiler-Struthof (*ibid*., p. 174). He then decided to "confess" only because he realized that the existence of gas chambers at Natzweiler-Struthof and at Birkenau was an immutable legal dogma, accepted and expressed even by Kramer's lawyer with the following words: "the gas chamber

existed, there is no doubt about that" (*ibid*., p. 150). Thus the only potentially successful line of defense for Kramer was to subscribe to the dogma, but to deny his own direct responsibility, as he then did.

17.9.2. Hans Aumeier

The same choice, for the same reasons, was made also by Hans Aumeier, a former *SS-Hauptsturmführer* who had been transferred to Auschwitz on February 16, 1942, where he held the post of *1. Schutzhaftlagerführer* at the *Stammlager* until August 15, 1943.[842] From October 1943 onwards he was commander of KL Vaivara in Estonia; in February 1945 he commanded KL Mysen in Norway, the country where he was arrested by the British on June 11, 1945. Van Pelt writes that Aumeier "denied any knowledge of gas chambers" at Auschwitz in his first report, but "a month later, Aumeier admitted that gas chambers had been in operation in Auschwitz and that they were used for killing of Jews" (p. 230). Aumeier, too, experienced at his own expense the upsetting power of the propagandistic dogma of the gas chambers. Initially he did not understand what the British investigators actually wanted from him nor correspondingly what would be his best defensive strategy. In his first declaration, written in Oslo on June 29, 1945, he wrote:[843]

> *"In the Stammlager, there was a crematorium consisting of 2 ovens. The corpses were burned there. The crematorium was the responsibility of the head of the political department and of the camp surgeon (Lagerarzt). During my time, 2 or 3 crematoria were being built. I know nothing about any gas chambers and no detainee was gassed during my tour of duty. When I was transferred away, there were about 54,000 detainees at Auschwitz, among them some 15,000 women and children. Inmates who became ill were moved to the infirmary which was the exclusive responsibility of the Lagerarzt."*

Soon, however, Aumeier was made to understand. The British handed him a questionnaire which contained, i.a., the following questions:[844]

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[842] The following day, August 16, SS-Hauptsturmführer Schwarz replaced Aumeier as 1. Schutzhaftlagerführer, Aumeier was transferred to Riga. Standortsonderbefehl dated August 18, 1943. GARF, 7021-108-54, p. 124.

[843] PRO, File WO.208/4661, report "Gefangener Oslo, den 29 Juni 45," p. 5. These documents were discovered by D. Irving who has posted them on his website www.fpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/Aumeier/.

[844] PRO, File WO.208/4661. Questionaire "Freiwillige Aussage des Kriegsgefangenen Hans Aumeier."

"f) Exact data on Birkenau.

g) Gassings (with all details). Number of daily and total victims.

h) Confession of own responsibility at gassings. Who carried them out (indicate names) und who ordered these people to do this."

It thus became clear to Aumeier that the "gassings" were taken to have occurred by the British investigators, an immutable and undeniable fact, and he adapted to this for reasons of mere defensive strategy. In the "Report on the interrogation of prisoner no. 211, *Sturmbannführer* Aumeier, Hans," dated August 10, 1945, we read:[845]

"The interrogator is satisfied that the major part of the material of this report is in conformity with the truth regarding the facts, but the personal reactions of Aumeier may change a bit once his destiny has become worse." (Emph. added)

It is obvious that the British investigators had a "truth" of their own about Auschwitz which they had just extracted from the investigation leading up to the Belsen trial (which, as we know, began a few months later on September 17, 1945) and to which Aumeier simply had to subscribe, that being the measure of their "satisfaction." On the other hand, once he became aware that his destiny was to "become worse," he became very "cooperative." His report of July 25, 1945, cited by van Pelt, must be seen in this light.

17.9.3. Fritz Klein and the Other Defendants

Let us return to the Belsen trial. Another major defendant was *SS-Untersturmführer* Fritz Klein, who had been *Lagerarzt* at Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II – Birkenau. Van Pelt tells us that this physician declared to have personally participated in "selections" of detainees arriving in the camp with the transports and to have "admitted that he had visited a gas chamber when it was not in operation" (pp. 238f.). But this "admission," when viewed in its context, has no value, as we can see from the corresponding minutes of the trial:

"Question: Did you ever go down to the gas chamber [sic] *yourself?*

Klein: Yes, once, when it [sic] *was not working."*

As we know, orthodox holocaust teachings have it that there were at least 12 homicidal gas chambers at Birkenau,[846] and Major Winwood's

[845] *Ibid.*, "Report No. PWIS Det (N)/18 Report on interrogation of prisoner no. 211 Stubaf. Aumeier, Hans. Akershus prison – 10 Aug 45."

[846] 2 in Crematoria II and III, 6 in Crematoria IV and V and 4 in bunker 2.

question is hence a bit strange, to say the least, just like Doctor Klein's answer, which shows that he, in fact, did not know anything about homicidal gas chambers. He, too, "confessed" because of mere expediency. This also explains his uncertainties, which would otherwise be inexplicable for a true confessing sinner. Thus, for example, for Doctor Klein, those unable to work, selected by the physicians, were not *all* sent to the gas chambers but only a "part of them" (Phillips, p. 184) or else "yes, probably"! (*Ibid*., p. 188.) But there is another passage from Doctor Klein's deposition which van Pelt does not mention, yet which confirms what I have said above (*ibid*., p. 184):

> *"I have heard much talk about selections in the hospitals, but there were no real selections there. The only thing that was done was that the doctor was ordered to produce lists of the names of people who would be better in two, three or four weeks and people who had no chance of becoming better. Very often these people who were put on the lists were removed to another department, and sometimes they left the hospital. At one time several cases of scabies were reported and I made a selection and put all the people with scabies in a separate room."*

These statements are backed up by documents, even for this specific case. On December 3, 1943, at the detainee hospital of Auschwitz II – Birkenau, the order was posted to separately list the detainees having an infectious skin disease in the daily reports of the infirmary.[847] From the next day on patients with scabies were registered in a file showing "date," "yesterday's strength," "arrivals," "departures," "today's strength."[848]

A few days earlier, on November 25, the SS garrison surgeon had ordered to establish a list of all the detainees struck with malaria and to send it to him monthly.[849] Just as in the case of patients with scabies, this implied a selection in the Birkenau infirmaries, but certainly not one leading to the alleged gas chambers. As early as May 27, 1943, the commanders of Auschwitz and of Lublin received a telex from *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Liebehenschel, at the time deputy of *SS-Brigadeführer* Glücks, saying:[850]

[847] APMO, microfilm 1523/12; photocopy of the document in Strzelecka 1997, p. 116.
[848] APMO, microfilm 1523/10; see *ibid.*, p. 117.
[849] APMO, microfilm 1519/1; see *ibid.*, p. 113.
[850] APMO, D-AuI-3a/283, p. 281.

"KL Auschwitz will move immediately to KL Lublin a single transport of 800 patients with malaria."

The reason for the transfer is given in the "Quarterly report on the medical service at KL Auschwitz I" dated December 16, 1943, which states in this respect:[851]

"Patients with malaria and/or detainees who have undergone a malaria cure were moved, at the end of the quarter covered by the report, to KL Lublin, considered to be an area free from anopheles."

Thus, in spite of everything, Doctor Klein was not inclined to fully accept the British propaganda, in line with a few others. The former supervisor of the women's camp at Birkenau, Irma Grese, declared in fact (Phillips, p. 712):

"I know about the gas chamber at Auschwitz because prisoners who worked in it told us about it. I only saw it myself from a distance, but I have no doubt that many were gassed there."

Another supervisor, Elisabeth Volkenrath, dared push the matter further (*ibid*., p. 719):

"I often heard about the gas chamber from prisoners, but I never actually saw it, although from the distance I have seen the crematorium. I have been present when selections were made from prisoners, by the S.S. doctors, of those unfit for work. These people were all sent to Block 25 and to my knowledge they were never seen again. Obersturmführer Müller always told us that these people were being sent away to recuperate."

Former *SS-Obersturmführer* Franz Hössler, who had been *Schutzhaftlagerführer* in the women's camp from August 1943 onwards and had held the same post at the Auschwitz I camp from May 1944, belonged to the small group of major defendants. As such he chose a defensive strategy similar to Kramer's: acceptance of the reality of a gas chamber (in singular) and denial of any personal responsibility (*ibid*., p. 714):

"Everyone in the camp knew about the gas chamber at Auschwitz, but at no time did I take part in the selection of prisoners who were to go to the gas chamber and then be cremated."

In this way, he had even protested to Höss about "the way these people were sent to the gas chamber," but the camp commander had told him to mind his own business! (*Ibid*., p. 715.) Van Pelt, who also

[851] GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 97.

brings in this deposition (pp. 239f.), thus takes a procedural "truth," based on obvious motives of defensive strategy, to be a historical truth, and so creates a purely fictitious "convergence of evidence."

18. Origin and Development of the Gas-Chamber Story

18.1. Van Pelt's Historiographic Deficiencies

The official historiography of Auschwitz is known to be hinging upon an extermination order given by Hitler to Himmler in the spring of 1941 and then transmitted to Höss; it took shape in the construction of the alleged extermination camp of Birkenau. This order, now an integral part of the dogma, is said to have been progressively implemented in four phases: in September 1941 the first experimental homicidal gassing by means of Zyklon B was performed at Auschwitz yielding the "discovery" of the instrument for the extermination. In early 1942 the homicidal activities, still in the experimental stage, were moved to the morgue of the Auschwitz crematorium. Over the next so many months, two farm houses which stood in the vicinity but outside of the Birkenau camp were transformed into homicidal gas chambers (the so-called "bunkers"), and the mass exterminations of Jews and sick detainees began. Finally, from March 1943 onwards the extermination activity was moved into the four Birkenau crematoria, all equipped with homicidal gas chambers.

The three preliminary phases mentioned above constitute the indispensable prerequisites for the alleged gassings in the Birkenau crematoria and are thus fundamental and absolutely essential elements in the historiographic structure of the alleged holocaust. In spite of this importance, van Pelt treats them with astonishing superficiality, allotting to them no more than a few pages altogether. From the point of view of historiographic methodology, this is a serious deficiency, because in practice van Pelt jumps directly into the topic of the Birkenau crematoria. He does not worry about the preliminary phases, although whether they are founded or not weighs heavily on whether the historical thesis of the alleged homicidal gassings in the Birkenau crematoria is founded or not. In other words, van Pelt does not present any "convergence of evidence," as he moves from the alleged gassings in block 11 via those in Crematorium I and those in the "bunkers" to those in the Birkenau crematoria; the latter, however, lack any kind of intelligibility without the preliminary phases. Worse still, van Pelt presents no "evidence" at all in this respect.

18.2. The Alleged "First Homicidal Gassing"

This is a ghost-like event to which I have dedicated a specific book (2005a), the results of which I will summarize here. The first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz, as per Danuta Czech's official reconstruction, is based exclusively upon mutually contradictory statements by self-styled eyewitnesses, but is refuted by the documents and is therefore devoid of a historical foundation. Its background was elaborated in October 1941 by one of the centers for black propaganda which existed within the secret resistance movement at Auschwitz. Its inspiration was the idea developed earlier of an experimentation of the effect of unknown combat gases on human beings in an unidentified "bunker" or "concrete shelter" at Auschwitz. It was only later that the propagandists, taking their cue from the increasing use of Zyklon B for the disinfestations which became more and more frequent in the growing camp, introduced this substance into their accounts and localized the first homicidal gassing in the basement of block 11. The normal daily transports of corpses of registered detainees who had died in the camp from the morgue at block 28 to the crematorium provided new material with which to garnish the narrative still further.

In 1946 judge Sehn, faced with the task of unifying the conflicting accounts of the witnesses into an assemblage of fictitious facts which could be used in court, invented the nucleus of the story and filled it with the canonical elements regarding the number of victims and the various phases of the gassing procedure, but he did not include any specific dates.

In 1959 Danuta Czech, in an even more daring manipulation of the sources, unearthed Jan Sehn's account, completed it with a purely fictitious "convergence of evidence" retrieved from a mass of diverging testimonies, and provided it with a likewise fictitious date: the first homicidal gassing had become "history."

Van Pelt deals with the question very briefly. After having presented the article of the *Polish fortnightly Review* of July 1, 1942, he comments (p. 144):

> *"It is important to note that after the war various witnesses confirmed that in early September the Germans had used Block 11 in Auschwitz as an experimental gas chamber."*

But in order to prove his point, he brings in only one of the "various witnesses," Vojciech Barcz (note 25, p. 144; cf. p. 519). Two pages on he refers to a pamphlet by Natalia Zarembina and ends by saying:

> *"As we know today, the account was correct: both Pery Broad and Rudolf Höss would later corroborate it."*

Let me underline, first of all, that neither of the sources confirms van Pelt's dating ("in early September"): Barcz speaks of autumn 1941 in a general way (2005a, pp. 52f.) and Zarembina gives no date at all (*ibid*., 34ff.). The above article speaks of 1,000 victims, 700 Bolsheviks and 300 Poles, whereas Zarembina has 800 victims, 500 Bolsheviks and 300 Poles (*ibid*., p. 32), while Barcz has no figures. The removal of the corpses of the victims takes place – in the article mentioned – on the day after the gassing, Barcz has "three days later" and Zarembina "the fourth day." In Barcz's account the corpses were burned in mass graves; Zarembina has them taken to the crematorium. According to Höss, the gassing cannot have taken place before November 1941 and concerned only Soviet PoWs, and Broad speaks of the gassing of Russian prisoners in a single cell. We see clearly how solidly van Pelt's "convergence of proof" is based.

The available sources allow us to establish a framework which is somewhat different from Danuta Czech's and van Pelt's imaginative descriptions, a framework which clearly shows what the "convergence of proof" really is: a fraudulent method aiming at the creation of an apparently logical and coherent account that starts from a mosaic of divergent testimonies which are contradictory on the essential points. As opposed to that, the following is the "reconstruction" which can be arrived at on the basis of the sources: One day, sometime between the spring of 1941 and November to December 1942, at Auschwitz, either in the old crematorium, or in the basement of block 11, or possibly at Birkenau, human beings were gassed for the first time. Some witnesses give precise dates: August 14 or August 15, September 3-5 or September 5-6 or September 5-8, or October 9, 1941. The gassing was carried out after the evening roll-call, during *Blocksperre* (curfew) in such a way that no detainee could see anything, or else in broad daylight in front of detainees stretched out in the sun. Prior to that, the windows of the basement had been walled up, or covered with earth, or filled with sand, or closed by wooden boards. In the basement of block 11 only Russians PoWs were shut in who were only officers, or officers and non-coms, or simple soldiers, or partisan fighters, or political commissars, or else they

were actually not Russians but Poles or possibly Russian PoWs and Polish detainees. The victims of the gassing numbered 60 or 200 or 400 or 500 or 600 or 680 or 700 or 850 or 1,473 Russian prisoners and 100-150 or 190 or 196 or 200 or 220 or 250 or 257 or 260 or 300 or 400 or 1,000 Polish detainees. What is certain, however, is that the total number was 200 or 300 or 320 or 350 or 500 or 696 or 800 or 850 or 857 or 980 or 1,000 or 1,078 or 1,400 or 1,663. The sick detainees were selected in the hospital blocks by Dr. Schwela or Dr. Jung or maybe by Dr. Entress. These patients were taken into the cells of block 11 by medics or perhaps by detainees from the penal company. *Rapportführer* Gerhard Palitzsch by himself, or together with an SS man called "Tom Mix," or with another one called "The Strangler," or possibly *SS-Unterscharführer* Arthur Breitwieser dumped into the central corridor or into the cells either three cans of Zyklon B altogether or maybe two cans into each cell. The Zyklon B was fed through the door, or through the *Lüftungsklappe* (aeration trap), or through openings above the cell doors. The gassing took place in the cells, or in one cell, or in the corridor, or in the "*Gaskammer*," and the doors of the cells were either hermetically closed or else had been taken out. The victims died immediately or else were still alive after 15 hours. The corpses were removed either the following day, or the following night, or 1-2 days later, or 2 days later, or 3 days later, or on the fourth day, or on the sixth day, exclusively by medics, 20 or 30 or 80 to be exact, or perhaps only by 20 detainees from the penal company. The work took one whole day, or one whole night, or 2 nights, or 3 nights. The corpses were undressed in the corridor of block 11, or in the yard outside, or possibly not at all. The corpses of the victims were taken to the crematorium and incinerated, or perhaps to Birkenau and buried in mass graves, or possibly some of them were incinerated and some of them buried (for all this see *ibid*., pp. 69-90).

The only sensible conclusion one can draw from this impenetrable jungle of contradictions is the total lack of historical and technical reliability of the testimonies which speak of the first homicidal gassing.

18.3. The Alleged Homicidal Gassings in Crematorium I

18.3.1. Lack of Historical and Documental Basis

In the study which I have devoted to this topic (2005e) I have shown that the alleged gassings in Crematorium I at Auschwitz have no found-

ing in any historical reality. This story, like many others, is based exclusively on testimonies which are extremely short and mutually contradictory. The more detailed ones permitting an easier verification are patently and demonstrably false. The "reconstructions" by mainstream historians are purely conjectural and fictitious: they lack any documental foundation.

An analysis of the archives of the Auschwitz *Neubauleitung* (later *Bauleitung* and finally *Zentralbauleitung*) allows us to follow the development of the ventilation projects worked out by the Topf company for the crematorium and to establish with satisfactory precision how the various provisional devices that were installed there were realized and how they functioned. Projects and implementation followed a pattern suitable for an ordinary morgue, but not for a "homicidal gas chamber," a hypothesis which is not supported by even the faintest indication in documents. A close look at the alleged introduction openings for Zyklon B in the roof of the morgue as they exist today shows moreover that these openings, effected by the Poles immediately after WWII, reflected necessarily the structure of the building as it existed then, which was different from the lay-out the crematorium had in 1942. They therefore cannot have any kind of relationship with the alleged original openings. The existence of the latter is not borne out by any material or documentary traces. The alleged use of the morgue of Crematorium I at Auschwitz as a homicidal gas chamber thus lacks any historical base. It is not history, but historical propaganda, laboriously refashioned over many decades.

18.3.2. Pery Broad

Van Pelt restricts himself to the respective tale provided by Pery Broad without any critical remarks, and declares (p. 225):

> *"The Broad report, which was of independent origin, corroborated important elements of the picture that had begun to emerge in Sehn's investigation and added important new descriptions. Perhaps most important was Broad's recollection of the first gassings in Crematorium 1, which was located adjacent to his own office in the barrack that housed the camp's Political Department."*

The former *SS-Rottenführer* Pery Broad was transferred to Auschwitz on April 8, 1942. On June 18 he was assigned to the Political Department reporting to *SS-Untersturmführer* Maximilian Grabner. Broad

was arrested by the British on May 6, 1945, and released in 1947. On July 13, 1945, while in British custody, he drew up a report which was never properly registered by any Allied commission of inquiry and therefore received no archival identification. As I have demonstrated in the above-mentioned book (2005e, pp. 53-58), Broad's "report" is absolutely unreliable. Pressac recognizes at least that "the form and tone of his declaration sound false" and that "its present literary form is visibly coloured by a rather too flagrant Polish patriotism," adding that "the original manuscript of his declaration is not known" (1989, p. 128). In fact, the Broad "report" disappears entirely for nearly twenty years and suddenly resurfaces at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, but not in its original version, the whereabouts of which are unknown. Broad himself, having reread this document, declared (Langbein, vol. 1, p. 539):

> *"I recognize fully certain parts as being my notes, but not the document in its entirety."*

Van Pelt, on the other hand, has no scruples concerning the authenticity of the document and even goes so far as to claim that it describes "the first gassings in Crematorium I," forgetting that Broad asserts that he has been present only at a *single* homicidal gassing which took place *in July 1942*, whereas the first gassings are said to have begun in September 1941!

Regarding the assertion that the crematorium "was located adjacent to his own office in the barrack that housed the camp's Political Department" and that Broad – so van Pelt insinuates – could thus easily observe the alleged gassings, I have shown that this barrack, labeled "BW 86 Interrogation barrack, political department (near crematorium)," was erected between January 9 and 20, 1943, and was handed over to the camp administration on February 8, 1943, at a time when those alleged gassings had already officially stopped (Mattogno 2005e, pp. 32f.).

After having mentioned Broad's technical absurdities on the subject of the crematorium ovens, van Pelt comments (p. 227):

> *"It is important to remember that Broad provided this information independently of Tauber."*

Two pages on he adds that Broad "estimated the total number of victims at between 2.5 and 3 million." Van Pelt acknowledges that this figure is wrong, but it nonetheless "confirms" exactly the wrong figure "adopted independently by Höss" (see chapter 15.), which is just one more proof of the fact that the agreement of seemingly independent tes-

timonies cannot be a criterion of their validity. Van Pelt's method is thus intrinsically fallacious, because it limits itself to the search for "convergences" in the testimonies without in the least worrying about "divergences," i.e. false, absurd and contradictory assertions which would radically invalidate their credibility. With respect to Broad's "confirmation" of the alleged gassings in Crematorium I, I refer the reader to my specific treatment of the subject (2005e, pp. 53-58). Here, I will add some further considerations.

Broad says that in the double-muffle ovens of Crematorium I "4-6 corpses at a time" (Broad, p 19) and in the triple-muffle ovens "5-7 corpses in one oven"[852] were burned, which is technical nonsense, to say nothing about the flames, "several meters high," which he claims shot out regularly from the chimney of Crematorium I! (Broad, p. 20.) Just as absurd is the cremation capacity which the witness assigned to the Birkenau crematoria:[853]

> *"In crematoria 1 and 2* [= II and III] *3,000-4,000. In crematoria 3 and 4* [= IV and V] *2,000. In no. 5 there was only a gas stove, there 800-1,200."*

We note that he awkwardly invents an additional, fictitious crematorium with a "gas stove"! In the same foolish manner Broad declared (item 6 of note 852):

> *"Within the perimeter of Birkenau there were some 10 large burning sites (Brandstätten) where 200-1,000 persons were burned from time to time. The glow from these fires was visible within a radius of at least 30 kilometers. Within the same distance, one could smell the unmistakable odor of burned flesh."*

During the Tesch trial he was asked:

> *"What interval was there between the gassing of a certain number of people in a crematorium and the beginning of the next load?"*

Broad replied (p. 27 of note 853):

> *"In periods of great pressure – I am speaking of March and April of 1944 – when the trains were standing in line for their turn at the gas chambers, I can say with certainty that every three hours new arrivals were sent to these gas chambers."*

We will leave aside the error in chronology (the period with the maximum deportations was May-June 1944). Broad tells us a little further on that each gassing involved 2,000-3,000 persons at a time (*ibid*.),

[852] Sworn declaration by P. Broad dated October 20, 1947. NI-11984, item 7.
[853] Interrogation of P. Broad dated March 2, 1946, p. 24. NI-11954.

and thus in one crematorium eight gassings were carried out in 24 hours, yielding 16,000-24,000 corpses – but he also states that the total cremation capacity of all crematoria was 7,200 corpses per day, including the enigmatic "gas stove." What Broad really did see and what was the actual source of his assertions is revealed by this exchange of blows during the Tesch trial (*ibid*., p. 26):

> *"Question: Did you ever see the inside of a gas chamber?*
>
> *Broad: I did not see the inside of a gas chamber, <u>but</u> I was present at the disinfestation of garments in a room of a barrack, and the windows were made air-tight for the operation. I was referring to the gas chamber for disinfection and disinfestation of garments."* (Emph. added)

18.3.3. Hans Stark

SS-Unterscharführer Hans Stark served at Auschwitz from Christmas 1940 until November 1942. In June 1941 he was assigned to the Political Department of the camp and was made *SS-Oberscharführer* in the summer of 1942. On April 23, 1959, he was interrogated by the *Landeskriminalamt* (office of penal investigation) *Baden-Württemberg* during the preparation of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial and later became one of the defendants. Van Pelt cites his declarations "confirming" the reality of the gassings in the morgue of Crematorium I. He states that "Stark participated in some of those gassings" and that he was ordered at one time to pour Zyklon B into the alleged gas chamber (p. 368):

"It was essential, he claimed, that Zyklon B be poured simultaneously through both openings."

I will now summarize what I have written elsewhere on this witness (2005e, pp. 62-65). According to Stark the alleged first gassing occurred in October 1941 (Langbein, vol. 1, p. 438), a dating which is in disagreement with the one accepted by D. Czech (September 16, 1941). As far as the alleged gas chamber was concerned, Stark spoke only of one "door made especially [*gas*]-tight,"[854] but the morgue had two doors, one into the furnace hall, the other into the washroom. In this connection he speaks of "2 openings having a diameter of some 35 cm,"[854] hence round, something which is clearly at variance with the apertures of Broad who saw six square openings 10×10 cm. The victims

[854] Minutes of interrogation (Vernehmungsniederschrift) of Hans Stark, Köln, April 23, 1959. ZStL, Az: AR-Z 37/58 SB6, p. 947.

of the gassing were "exclusively Jews" (p. 955 of note 854), whereas for R. Höss they had been exclusively Soviet prisoners of war. The gassing at which Stark claimed to have directly participated concerned "200-250 Jews" (*ibid*., p. 948) and at the same time "150 or 200 […] Jews and Poles" (Langbein, vol. 1, p. 439). The victims were gassed for being Jews and at the same time because they had been condemned to death by a court-martial (*ibid*., p. 438). In this latter case there were obviously "no children" (*ibid*., 439), but then again the victims were made up of "men, women and children" (p. 948 of note 854). The witness asserted to have been present at each gassing "as head of the reception department" (*ibid*., p. 949). His particular task was in fact to check the number of victims. However, he was not in a position to indicate the number of victims of the alleged gassings, nor even the number of gassings implemented in his presence (*ibid*.):

> *"How many people were killed in my presence during that time I cannot say. I cannot say either how many gassings were implemented in my presence."*

Stark claims that the gassings had to be carried out by pouring Zyklon B through the two alleged openings simultaneously (which, as shown before, were six for Broad and Müller, two to three for Aumeier, one for Höss). Why simultaneously? Was it necessary? Not at all. We have here only a mere literary means invented by Stark to allow him to introduce the story of his participation in a homicidal gassing, of course against his will and under direct threat of death uttered by the commander himself. Grabner is in fact said to have ordered him to take part in the gassing, "because only one medic had arrived" (*ibid*.), who mysteriously could not perform the alleged gassing by himself, as was the case in Crematorium II where, according to Nyiszli, this simultaneity was in fact not "essential" (Nyiszli 1977, p. 39; Nyiszli 1961, p. 45).

Such artifices served to gain the good will of the investigators, because in this way the defendant thoroughly demonstrated his "cooperative" attitude. Stark himself had actually been named by Erwin Bartel and Filip Müller, and a "full confession" was for him the only way to walk away from the trial with a minimum sentence. But this defensive strategy was only partially successful for him: he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment (Langbein, vol. 2, p. 885).

18.3.4. The Novelized Account of the First Cremation in Crema I

In the book he wrote together with Debórah Dwork, van Pelt had already treated the alleged gassings in Crematorium I in passing. After describing the difficulties the SS ran into during the alleged first gassing in block 11, van Pelt[855] tells us an elaborate story of the first alleged gassing in Crematorium I (Dwork/van Pelt, p. 293):

> *"Fritsch* [sic] *remembered that the morgue of the crematorium in the Stammlager had a flat roof; it would be a simple matter to make one or more openings in it. He also knew that, a month or so earlier, the morgue had been equipped with a new and powerful ventilation system. As we have seen, the Political Department had begun to use the morgue as an execution site for those convicted by the Gestapo Summary Court.*
>
> *From the beginning, the executioners had complained about the nauseating smell, because it also served as a mortuary for the bodies of inmates who had died. Maximilian Grabner, the chief of the Political Department, had prevailed on Schlachter to install a more sophisticated ventilation system that not only extracted the foul air but also brought in fresh air from the outside. Fritsch realized that such a ventilation system could deal with poisonous gas.*
>
> *Fritsch's men punched three square portholes through the morgue roof and covered them with tightly fitting wooden lids. The murder of 900 Soviets inaugurated the new gas chamber on 16 September. 'The entire transport fit exactly in the room,' Höss recalled. 'The doors were closed and the gas poured in through the openings in the roof. How long the process lasted, I don't know, but for quite some time sounds could be heard. As the gas was thrown in some of them yelled: 'Gas!' and a tremendous screaming and shoving started toward both doors, but the doors were able to withstand all the force. A few hours later the fans were turned on and the doors opened.'"*

Van Pelt claims that the morgue of Crematorium I was turned into a homicidal gas chamber soon after the first gassing in block 11. He insinuates that *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Karl Fritzsch had the holes for the introduction of Zyklon B punched through the flat roof of the chamber, but that is mere conjecture without any back-up in the documents. Van

[855] The book's chapter concerning the history of KL Auschwitz was obviously written only by van Pelt.

Pelt affirms moreover that "a month or so earlier, the morgue had been equipped with a new and powerful ventilation system," and refers to a letter by Grabner dated June 7, 1941. Actually, as I have shown in chapter II of the book mentioned before (2005e, pp. 17-24), nothing proves that Grabner's request was granted right away; on the contrary, the documents tell us that the first work on the ventilation system for Crematorium I after the date of the letter was done between the end of September and the middle of October 1941, i.e. *after* the date of the alleged first homicidal gassing in Crematorium I. The date of the "first gassing" adopted by van Pelt (September 16, 1941) has been taken from Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989), but neither the date nor the alleged event itself has any basis in documents, as I have explained above. We are dealing here with nothing but an obfuscation by the Polish historian.

The claim that "Fritsch realized that such a ventilation system could deal with poisonous gas" is another assertion without any founding in documents, just like the assertion that follows: "Fritsch's men punched three square portholes through the morgue roof and covered them with tightly fitting wooden lids." Here van Pelt's amateurish approach really goes off on a tangent: no document establishes any link between Fritzsch and the alleged Zyklon B introduction openings; for that matter, no document mentions the realization of those holes at all. Van Pelt takes the reference to the "three square portholes" from an essay by Pressac (Pressac/van Pelt, p. 209), who, however, used as a source a photograph taken in 1945! (See Mattogno 2005e, pp. 89-97.) As far as the "wooden lids" are concerned, van Pelt simply bases himself on the Polish "reconstruction" of 1946-1947!

Höss's testimony, as is shown by the critical analysis I have presented in chapter 11, is absolutely unreliable and thus has no historical value. It is also at variance with van Pelt's thesis, because the Auschwitz commander asserted that the Zyklon B openings were realized "through the layers of earth and concrete of the morgue ceiling," while the transport of the 900 Soviets was still being unloaded, something which Pressac rightly qualifies as "unlikely" (1989, p. 127). For that reason van Pelt had to leave out the respective passage.

Van Pelt's final sentence – "A few hours later the fans were turned on and the doors opened" – is a real enigma: why would it have been necessary to wait "a few hours" before turning on the fans? There is no reason at all. Van Pelt says so merely because Höss had written "only after several hours [*the room*] was opened and de-aerated." This does

not really make sense for a room that was equipped with "a new and powerful ventilation system."

18.4. The Birkenau "Bunkers"

18.4.1. Total Lack of Proof

While the alleged homicidal gassings in block 11 and Crematorium I are said to represent the preliminary and experimental phases of the alleged extermination process, the so-called "bunkers" of Birkenau are claimed to be its first major implementation. In fact, van Pelt says that these "bunkers" "proved very efficient in the killing of more than 200,000 Jews" (p. 455). Hence, from the point of view of the mainstream holocaust scholars, they would merit an in-depth treatment. Yet van Pelt shows his usual historiographic sloppiness by ticking off this question here and there in a few notes which, placed next to one another, do not even make up one single page.

To this topic I have dedicated a 264-page study which assembles and analyzes all of the available sources – among them over 30 testimonies and a dozen reports – with 26 documents and 18 photographs (2004i). In that study I have shown that the tale of the gassings in those so-called "bunkers" at Birkenau does not even have the slightest base in documents. The "bunkers" appear neither in the construction maps nor in the 1941-1942 cost estimates for the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. The period March-June 1942, in which the two "bunkers" are said to have been rebuilt and put into operation, is fully covered by 14 reports[856] which list all construction sites (*Bauwerke*) active or finished with their launching date and the degree of progress in percent as well as their planned completion date or the actual date of completion for finished sites. Each *Bauwerk* is listed both with its identification number and its designation (e.g. "*BW 24 Kommandantenwohnhaus*," residence of commander). There is no hint regarding the "bunkers" in any of these documents, neither with this designation nor any other possibly coded designation.

Furthermore, two Birkenau maps – the "*Lageplan des Interessengebiets K.L. Auschwitz Nr. 1733*" dated October 5, 1942 and the "*Bebauungsplan für den Auf- u. Ausbau des Konzentrationslager u. Kriegsgefangenenlagers, Plan Nr. 2215*" dated March 1943 – show the two

[856] These documents belong to the series Baubericht, report on construction, and Baufristenplan, progress report for construction sites.

houses designated by mainstream holocaust historiography as "bunker 1" and "bunker 2," but neither of them shows a ZBL number for these sites, as opposed to those older buildings which were taken over by that office and which did receive numbers (e.g. the twelve houses which appear for the future construction section III, numbered in their respective order: H.(aus) 903-914). The two houses in question thus had no identification number, which means that they had not been taken over by ZBL and hence were not assigned any kind of function.

18.4.2. Van Pelt's First Interpretation

In a text published in 1994 van Pelt proposed a new and fanciful interpretation of the origins of "bunker 1" by saying (van Pelt 1994, p. 145):

> *"Kammler visited the camp on Thursday, February 27, 1942. In a letter written to Topf a week later, Bischoff related that Kammler had decided during that trip that the back-up incinerators were to be canceled, 'and that the five triple-muffle furnaces, ordered by the letter of October 22, 1941, correspondence register no. 215/41/ho, must be constructed in the prisoner of war camp.' In other words, the crematorium that had been intended for the main camp was now to be built in Birkenau."*

Van Pelt then observes that Pressac has not attributed any significance to such a decision, while Danuta Czech mentions neither Kammler's visit nor his decision in her *Kalendarium* (1989). Van Pelt adds (*ibid*.):

> *"I, however, believe that the decision to move the crematorium may be interpreted as the counterpart of an otherwise unrecorded decision to transform a red house belonging to the Polish peasant Wiechuja,*[857] *located at the northwest edge of the terrain reserved for the prisoner-of-war camp, into the extermination installation known as Bunker I – the place where the history of the Holocaust merged with the history of Auschwitz-Birkenau."*

Because the use of Crematorium I as a killing site disrupted the life of the main camp – so van Pelt continues (pp. 145f.) – Kammler, during his visit to Auschwitz on February 27, 1942,

> *"must have suggested that killings be moved to Birkenau. Allowing for two or three weeks to select and transform a house into a*

[857] Van Pelt confuses him with Harmata.

simple extermination facility, one would expect that the first killing could take place in Birkenau in the third week of March. Indeed, the historians at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum have determined March 20 as the date that Bunker I was put into operation."

In support of his argument van Pelt shows the drawing of a part of a "modified version" – allegedly done in early March 1942 – of the map of the Birkenau camp "of January 6, 1942" (*ibid*., p. 147), on which the new crematorium (the future Crematorium II) is indeed located in the north-west corner of the camp. The map in question entitled "*Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers Auschwitz – Ober-Schlesien, Plan Nr. 885*," was actually drawn at WVHA on January 5, 1942[858] – hence well ahead of the alleged installation of "bunker 1." If this were really a *later* "modified version" of the January 5 drawing, which shows the two *Verbrennungshallen* (cremation halls), it would carry a later date. Instead, the date of its establishment ("*gezeichnet*") is precisely that of January 5, 1942 ("*Datum: 5.1.42*").

There is no doubt regarding this point, because the drawing was checked ("*geprüft*") by *SS-Untersturmführer* Dejaco on January 5 and approved ("*genehmigt*") by Bischoff on January 6. Hence, the decision to move the location of the new crematorium from the concentration camp at Auschwitz to the PoW camp at Birkenau was taken at the beginning of January 1942 – two and a half months *prior* to the alleged start-up of "bunker 1" – and therefore has no suspicious character.

The new crematorium was already mentioned in the "explanatory report for the preliminary project of the construction of a Waffen-SS PoW camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia" of October 30, 1941.[859] In a letter Bischoff wrote to the Weimar *Rüstungskommando* (armaments command) on November 12, 1941, he explained:[860]

"The Topf & Söhne company, combustion installations, of Erfurt has been ordered by this office to build a cremation plant asap, because the Auschwitz concentration camp has been enlarged by the addition of a PoW camp which will rapidly be filled with 120 000 Russians. The construction of the incineration installation has therefore become most urgent, if epidemics and other risks are to be prevented."

[858] RGVA, 502-2-95, p. 7.
[859] Erläuterungsbericht zum Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S. RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 20.
[860] RGVA, 502-1-314, p. 8.

At that time the new crematorium was to be erected in the Auschwitz main camp, whereas the PoW camp at Birkenau was to receive two cremation installations (*Verbrennungshallen*), each one having a crematorium oven with three muffles of a simplified design. These installations appear on the drawing of the PoW camp of January 5, 1942, one of them located in the northwest corner of construction sector III, the other in the southwest corner of construction sector II. This is not the map No. 885 mentioned above, but a plant designed by ZBL draftsman *SS-Unterscharführer* Karl Ulmer (Pressac, 1989, p. 189). Map No. 885 retains in its caption the entry "*V...Verbrennungshalle*," (incineration hall), but the symbols representing Ulmer's two plants are gone, and in their place, as mentioned above, a "Krematorium" appears measuring 12.0 m × 55.50 m with an annex of 12.0 m × 10.0 m containing the chimney and garbage incinerator. Since this map came directly from the SS-WVHA, this proves that the decision to move the new crematorium to Birkenau dates from this period. On February 27, 1942, Kammler approved the decision already taken in early January to move the new crematorium to Birkenau, its natural location. Concerning the timeline of the events, van Pelt's connection between Kammler's approval and the start-up of "bunker 1" is entirely fictitious, because "the historians at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum" had set the date of March 20 in an absolutely arbitrary way, just as they had earlier given a general dating of January 1942 (Czech 1960, p. 49).

Van Pelt's assertion thus has no documentary backing and hence no historical value.

18.4.3. Van Pelt's Second Interpretation

In the book he wrote together with Debórah Dwork, van Pelt has proposed another original hypothesis on the subject of the alleged extermination activity at "bunker I." The two authors cite the agreement of February 1942 between the *Reich* and the Slovak government, on the basis of which Slovakia was to supply the Germans with 20,000 able-bodied Slovak Jews. 10,000 were to be sent to Auschwitz and 10,000 to Majdanek. At that time "Auschwitz already had become the destination for one particular group of Jews residing on Reich territory: those considered unfit for work in the so-called Schmelt program" (Dwork/van Pelt, p. 301). During the negotiations concerning the above agreement, 400 Jews of this category were shipped to Auschwitz, allegedly to be

gassed in Crematorium I of the main camp. As the operation was successful, van Pelt tells us, Eichmann decided to apply the same treatment also to the Slovak Jews unfit for work and, "as the Slovak Jews were to be brought to Birkenau and not to Auschwitz, and as killing them in Crematorium I would interrupt the life of the main camp, they considered building an extermination installation close to the new satellite camp" (*ibid*., p. 302).

18.4.4. Van Pelt's Final Interpretation

In *The Case for Auschwitz* van Pelt comes back to this question but drops the reference to the Jews unfit for work at the Schmelt organization. He writes (p. 72):

> *"When the Slovak government suggested that Himmler also take Jews unfit for labor in exchange for a cash payment, Himmler dispatched SS Construction Chief Hans Kammler to Auschwitz. Kammler toured the site and ordered that a peasant cottage there be converted into a gas chamber. Two months later, on July 4, 1942, the first Jews from Slovakia were sorted out. Those who could work were admitted to the camp. Those who could not were killed in the peasant cottage, now known as Bunker I. Killing at Auschwitz of selected categories of Jews had now changed from an 'incidental' practice, as had happened with some transports of Jews from Upper Silesia in late 1941, into what one could call 'continuing' practice, but it had not yet become policy. Bunker I was still a particular solution to a situation created by the combination of Slovak unwillingness to provide for old and very young Jews and German greed. The main purpose of Auschwitz, <u>at this time</u>, remained construction (of a plant, a city, and a region), not destruction (of Jews)."* (Emph. by van Pelt)

This interpretation is absolutely groundless, if only for reasons of chronology. The first transport of Slovak Jews reached Auschwitz on March 26, 1942. Up to June 20 a total of eleven transports of Slovak Jews were to follow with altogether 10,218 persons on board who were all properly registered. The first "selection" was carried out on July 4, the day of the arrival of a first transport made up of Slovak Jews partly unfit for work. "bunker 1," however, is said to have gone into operation on March 20, not only long before the first "selection," but also before the decision was made to also deport Slovak Jews unfit for work, be-

cause the request for a "cash payment" of 500 *Reichsmarks* for each deported Slovak Jew unfit for labor dates from April 29.[861]

What van Pelt states on the subject of Kammler's visit to Auschwitz on February 27, 1942 – i.e. that he was sent there by Himmler in order to plan for an extermination installation for the Slovak Jews unfit for work – is nothing but conjecture without any foundation in documents. The aim of Kammler's visit was merely to check on the construction program for Auschwitz in the third year of the war economy. The respective documentation – Pohl's letter of March 2, 1942, and Bischoff's letter of March 17 – does not contain any indication regarding the transformation of any "peasant cottage" into a gas chamber (see Mattogno 2004i, pp. 28-33). For van Pelt, however, this was the main reason for Kammler's visit. This visit was in fact a sequel to meetings between Höss and Kammler on June 13 and 14, 1941, which concerned precisely the construction projects of the third year of the war economy.[862]

Van Pelt's interpretation is therefore not only without any confirmation in documents, but at variance with the available documentation, and is thus arbitrary and groundless.

18.4.5. The Alleged Homicidal Activity of the "Bunkers"

Regarding the assessment by Dawidowski on the subject of the "bunkers" van Pelt writes (p. 212):

> *"When transports of Jews began to arrive in 1942, the gas chamber of the crematorium in Auschwitz proved inappropriate, and the SS transformed two buildings in Birkenau, the cottages of farmers Wiechuja and Harmata, into gas chambers.*
>
> *In his description of these extermination installations – Bunkers 1 and 2 – Dawidowski relied on Dragon's testimony and the remains of the buildings because he had not found any documents or blueprints describing the two buildings. In fact, none were ever found. It seems that the two cottages were transformed without much fuss."*

We see that van Pelt himself admits that there is no documentary evidence of the existence of the "bunkers." The last sentence of his statement does not signify anything at all. In the above-mentioned study (2004i, pp. 23-28) I have shown that a construction activity "without much fuss" would have been absurd within the Auschwitz-Birkenau

[861] Cf. in this respect Mattogno 2004h, pp. 29-35, in which I have dealt in detail with the question of the beginning of the deportations of Slovak Jews to Auschwitz.

[862] Letter from Kammler to Höss dated June 18, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-11, pp. 37-39.

complex: any kind of work done followed a rigid pattern of bureaucratic rules which were applied from the very opening up of a work-site – the site was given a number and a particular designation, with all the documentation which that kind of procedure entailed. As against this, the alleged "bunkers" had no designation and did not correspond to any work-site; not even a single document of ZBL contains the slightest mention of them. This means that the two existing Polish farmhouses were never turned into anything, let alone "gas chambers."

Van Pelt then goes on to say (p. 267):

> *"In fact, Bunker 1 had been in operation since March of that year* [1942] *and Bunker 2 since July."*

Needless to say this assertion has no historical basis. He also asserts (pp. 147f.):

> *"This* [WRB Report] *description of the killing in Bunker 2 was to be largely confirmed after the war both by Sonderkommando* [member] *Shlomo* [Szlama] *Dragon, who worked at that site, and by the archeological remains."*

Here van Pelt introduces an archeological "proof" as well as a witness. It is perfectly true that remains of the foundations of a house do actually exist which mainstream holocaust historians call "bunker 2," but as far as any alleged homicidal gassings are concerned, they do not prove anything. All they show is that at this location at one point in time there was a house, but not that there was an installation for homicidal gassings at that place. These remains are also in direct contradiction to Dragon's statements (see Mattogno 2004i, pp. 182ff.). This brings us to the witnesses. Van Pelt presents three main witnesses: Jerzy Tabeau, Szlama Dragon and David Olère, besides Pery Broad and Hans Aumeier. I have dealt with the three main witnesses in detail in my book mentioned above.

18.4.6. The Witnesses

18.4.6.1. Jerzy Tabeau

Jerzy Tabeau, born at Zabłotów on December 8, 1918, of Polish nationality, was deported to Auschwitz on March 26, 1942, and was registered with the ID number 27273 under the name of Jerzy Wesołoski. On November 19, 1943, he escaped from the camp. Between December 1943 and early 1944 he wrote a report about his time at Auschwitz, which was published by A. Silberschein as a mimeograph in August

1944 and later in November by the War Refugee Board. The author was stated to have been an anonymous "Polish major," who was identified as Jerzy Tabeau only several years after the end of the war.

In this report Tabeau describes the "special gas chambers" without ever calling them "bunker." He says nothing about their number, nor their structure, nor their dimensions, nor their capacity, nor their location. These rooms were equipped with valves (*wentylami*) which could be opened or hermetically closed; they had no other apertures. The inside had been made to look like a bath-house. Gassing was implemented by dumping bombs filled with hydrogen cyanide through the valves located in the walls.[863] This description was clearly inspired by the disinfestation installations in BW 5a and 5b, which actually possessed a hall with 50 showers and a disinfestation gas chamber employing hydrogen cyanide. This gas chamber was equipped with two ventilators set into two round openings located in the wall opposite the one which had two doors leading into the room. On the outside, two squat round sheet-metal tubes were set into the openings: they could be closed by means of round sheet-metal lids held by a hinge welded to the upper part of the tubes. In the propaganda of the secret resistance movement of the camp, these devices changed into "valves." The use of the Polish term "*wentyl*" which actually means "valve" (in German: "*Ventil*") can only be explained in this way. Buildings BW 5a and 5b thus provided all the paraphernalia needed for the alleged homicidal gas chambers in the "bunkers": they had a "bath-house" and "special gas chambers" for disinfestation which were equipped with "valves" which could be opened and closed as required, and apart from those they "had no other apertures." They were located *within* the camp, though, which certainly did not apply to the so-called "bunkers." The "bombs[864] filled with hydrogen cyanide," as I have explained in chapter 16.1., are a somewhat unfortunate literary invention which was quickly dropped in later writings (see Mattogno 2004i, chapter 4.4., pp. 62ff.).

18.4.6.2. Szlama Dragon

To Szlama Dragon's testimonies I have dedicated an entire chapter of my above-mentioned book (*ibid*., chapter 5, pp. 71-83). I am speaking here of testimonies in the plural, because aside from the well-known

[863] APMO, D-RO/88, t.Va, pp. 322b-323a (Polish manuscript of three pages attributed to J. Tabeau). See Silberschein, pp. 67f.

[864] It is known that Zyklon B was packaged in cans (Dosen) called "puszki" in Polish.

Polish deposition made on May 10 and 11, 1945, I have also analyzed a deposition the witness made to the Soviets on February 26, 1945.[865] Van Pelt, who is entirely unaware of it, writes (p. 188):

> *"Dragon was precise and reliable when he talked about what he had witnessed in person, and none of the details he told were part of the Soviet report."*

Actually, the report drawn up between February 14 and March 8, 1945, by the Polish-Soviet "experts" contains a section entitled "incineration of corpses on pyres" which deals specifically with the "gas chamber no. 1 with the pyres" and the "gas chamber no. 2 with the pyres."[866] Again, we note that at the time the term "bunker" was not yet in use. The data used in the report were taken precisely from Dragon's Soviet deposition. And it was precisely on the basis of this deposition that the "experts" calculated the daily capacity and the number of victims who allegedly perished in the two "bunkers": 795,000 persons! (See chapter 15.1.)

I have already shown above how "precise and reliable" Dragon's deposition was with respect to the number of victims. We must now examine what it says about the "bunkers" in particular. The first thing to note is that Dragon did not yet know the designations "bunker 1" and "bunker 2" in the Soviet deposition. He always speaks of "*gazokamera* no. 1 and no. 2" and declares explicitly that this was the official designation. In the Polish deposition the official designation of these extermination installations all of a sudden becomes "bunker" (Mattogno 2004i, pp. 75f.). The two depositions moreover contain blatant contradictions on the subject of the structure of the "bunkers" and their locations (*ibid*., pp. 76-79). Suffice it to say here that the two buildings are three km apart according to the Soviet deposition, yet in the Polish one the distance has shrunk to 0.5 km. A critical analysis of the two texts shows that the story told by the witness cannot have a factual historical basis (see *ibid*., pp. 79-82). Here, too, I will limit myself to a single point. Dragon states:[867]

> *"In 24 hours, in all the pits of chamber no. 2, no fewer than 10,000 persons were burned. On average, in all pits no* [fewer than]

[865] GARF, 7021-108-12, pp. 180-193.
[866] Protocol, February 14 – March 8, 1945. City of Oświęcim. GARF, 7021-108, pp. 7-9. Cf. the translation of the respective text in Mattogno 2004i, pp. 157-158.
[867] GARF, 7021-108-12, p. 185.

17,000-18,000 persons were cremated, but on certain occasions the number of persons cremated in 24 hours rose to 27,000-28,000."

Hence, between December 1942 and March 1943 no fewer than (17,000×30×4=) 2,040,000 persons, most of them Jews, were exterminated! However, over the above period only some 125,000 Jews arrived at Auschwitz, of which only ca. 105,000 were not registered (see Czech 1989). With respect to 1944, during the deportation of the Hungarian Jews, not even six or seven transports ever arrived within the span of one day. These outrageous figures are moreover at variance with the technical data furnished by the witness himself. For example, the removal of 7,000-8,000 corpses from the gas chambers of "bunker 1" at a rate of six every 15 minutes[868] would have taken between 290 and 333 hours, i.e. 12-13 days!

One of the most significant facts, however, is that Dragon does not furnish any indication which would permit even a rough determination of the two "bunker's" location (see Mattogno 2004i, pp. 82f.). In this respect, right after the liberation of the camp – at a time when the traces left by the SS were still fresh and could easily be followed by anyone who had really worked in the "bunkers" – the Soviets assigned different locations on two separate maps both to "bunker 1" and to "bunker 2." This means that in fact nobody knew anything about the location of those alleged extermination facilities – including the alleged eyewitnesses, Dragon first and foremost among them (*ibid*., pp. 158-161).

18.4.6.3. David Olère

The third witness, David Olère, was deported to Auschwitz from Drancy, France, on March 2, 1943. Next to nothing is known about his activities in the camp. He has left us over 120 paintings and drawings depicting horror scenes at Auschwitz, most of them stemming from the years 1945 through 1949. David Olère has never made any kind of official deposition, nor has he written any kind of account about his experience in the camp. His Auschwitz curriculum, as put together by Serge Klarsfeld (1989, pp. 8ff.), has simply been derived from the paintings and drawings mentioned above. Klarsfeld assumes – without proof – that Olère had personally seen all the things which he then represented in his works. Actually, if Klarsfeld's claim were true, Olère would have been present all over the camp. Olère is, among other things, the creator

[868] GARF, 7021-108-12, p. 184.

of a drawing of "bunker 2" which van Pelt comments in the following way (p. 180):

> *"The drawing shows not only Bunker 2, but also the undressing barrack in its correct position vis-à-vis the cottage. Of particular interest is the small window in the side of the cottage with the heavy wooden shutter. This was the opening through which the SS introduced the Zyklon B into the room. The same way of introducing the gas was adopted in Crematoria 4 and 5, and not only do the plans, elevations, and photographs of the crematoria show these openings, but three of these shutters still survive and are presently stored in the coke room of Crematorium 1. Even in its details, Olère's drawing is supported by surviving material evidence."*
>
> Let us take a look, first of all, at the details of the drawing.[869]

1) The trees

In the aerial photograph no. 3056, dated May 31, 1944, we can make out at least nine trees around the house allegedly used as a homicidal gas chamber ("bunker 2"). The map drawn on March 3, 1945, by the engineer Eugeniusz Nosal and labeled "Area of location of gas chamber no. 2 and pyres for burning of corpses at Birkenau" shows five trees around the house. In 1990 there were still four large trees around the foundations of the house. These trees can also be seen from the southern yard of the *Zentralsauna.* In May 1944 and February 1945 the area between the *Zentralsauna* and "bunker 2" was completely bare, and the trees in question could also be seen from the northern yard and better still from the strip of land between this building and the fence.

In Olère's drawing, the tree which is seen in front of the corner of the house (between the door and the little window) is shown in its true position, but the other two trees depicted to the left of the house are not: when viewed in the perspective of the drawing, there were no trees behind the house, as can be seen in the aerial photograph of May 31, 1944. Hence – if it is assumed that Olère had really witnessed the scene shown in his drawing – the absence of at least six trees is actually more surprising than the presence of the one in front of the house.

2) The background

Olère has placed in the background of his drawing two non-existent elements – a hill and the two structures which appear on it[870] – but has

[869] See Mattogno 2004i, pp. 88-92, for details.

not included an existing one which could not have escaped the eye of someone viewing the scene from this angle: the *Zentralsauna*. Even today anyone placing himself in the perspective of the drawing can still see in the background a large portion of the western wall of the *Zentralsauna*. Between May 1944 and February 1945 the view was even less obstructed, and the *Zentralsauna* could be seen fully; there were only here and there the trees already mentioned, but they were much smaller at the time.

3) The house

- The house drawn by Olère has nothing to do with Dragon's description or with Nosal's respective drawing. The latter has an east-west instead of a north-south orientation and shows the house turned southward by about 25 degrees (see the drawings in Mattogno 2004i, pp. 205, 207). It is true that the alleged Zyklon B introduction window is shown in the same position as on Nosal's drawing, but in this wall (toward NW) there should be three more windows (Nosal's openings O_3, O_4 and O_5) as well as three entrance doors (W_2, W_3 and W_4).
- The position of the entrance door was not in the middle of the wall; it was in the southern angle of the SE wall.
- On the left the roof of the house extends porch-like and is supported by a wooden post at its end: this, too, is at variance with Dragon's description, according to which a porch-like extension did not exist.
- Finally there is a mistake in the inscription which is shown above the door of the house – "*Dezinfektion*" – and it is in the wrong place. According to Szlama Dragon, the sign-boards with the inscriptions were on the door (one on the inside and one on the outside) and not above the door; as the door on Olère's drawing stands open, it should show the inscription "*Zum Baden*" also diligently adopted by Pressac in his respective drawing (1989, p. 172).
- Besides, the presence of such an inscription in 1944 is in contradiction with the testimonies of Wohlfarth, Paisikovic and Müller.

4) The undressing barrack

Van Pelt claims that the undressing barrack is shown "in its correct position" in the drawing. Actually, in the drawing this barrack appears next to a pit to the west of the house, whereas it should be in the east,

[870] The building on the right resembles a stable for horses (*Pferdestallbaracke)*, the one on the left a private house with many chimneys!

roughly where Olère has his hill. In that position one should see its front wall with the door. The "heavy wooden shutter" in the drawing may well be similar to the windows in Crematoria IV and V, but that, as far as "bunker 2" is concerned, proves absolutely nothing, just like the fact that the door of the house is a heavy wooden door similar to those in the hydrogen cyanide disinfestation chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau proves nothing either. Olère may quite easily have taken his inspiration precisely from these little windows or these doors, to which the Soviet and Polish propaganda had assigned criminal functions.

Van Pelt knows nothing of Nosal's other three windows and the three doors which should have been visible on the side of the house; he never mentions the second undressing barrack and speaks of a single window and a single room, as if the "bunker" is said to have contained only a single "gas chamber" instead of the four, as canonized by official historiography.

Summarizing, then, Olère's drawing of "bunker 2" is simply a visual representation of the written and oral propaganda which made the rounds at Auschwitz. The same is true for another drawing by the witness which I have analyzed previously (see chs. 10.2.4., 10.5.1., 13.3.2.). To this series of propaganda pictures we may also add the drawing of Crematorium III in which Olère depicts the nonsensical propaganda scene of the chimney spewing flames into the sky.[871] To top it all, Olère falls into the trap of the blue color of hydrogen cyanide – derived by some simple-minded detainees from *Blausäure* (blue acid), the German name of this entirely colorless substance. In an undated drawing in color, showing a gassing scene, he has blue vapors coming out of a can of Zyklon B! (Klarsfeld 1989, p. 54.)

A drawing from 1946, shown by van Pelt (p. 179), has a barber and a tooth-puller at work without gas masks in a gas chamber equipped with a wire-mesh column for the introduction of the "gas bombs." Olère probably did not yet know that the scene was to take place in the *Vorraum*, outside of the gas chamber. In yet another drawing with the caption "Opening of the door of the gas chamber" Olère represents two detainees bare-chested and without gas masks who are dragging corpses from the gas chamber to the ovens (Klarsfeld 1989, p. 56), forgetting the certainly not completely irrelevant fact that the alleged gas chamber

[871] Van Pelt 2002, p. 178; in fact, flame-spewing chimneys are a constant feature in Olère's drawings, see http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/gallery/Olere.htm; www.learntoquestion.com/resources/db/cgi/jump.cgi?ID=36.

was located in the half-basement whereas the furnace hall was on the ground floor. In other color drawings by Olère the Auschwitz propaganda comes to light in monstrous and repulsive ways, which tell us that we are dealing here with a profoundly disturbed mind (*ibid*., p. 97-101, 106). I include only one of them as an example (document 49).

18.4.6.4. The "convergence of evidence" concerning the "bunkers"

Olère's drawing is totally at variance with another drawing of "bunker 2" executed on the basis of the declarations of another witness from the "*Sonderkommando*," Dov Paisikovic (see Mattogno 2004i, pp. 210f.). A comparison of the two drawings yields the following differences:

1) The house

- Chimney: present for Olère, absent for Paisikovic.
- Side-wall of the house: Olère has one small window, Paisikovic has three doors and three windows.
- Front: Olère has a door with a sign-board "Dezinfektion" above it, Paisikovic has nothing: the wall is completely bare, no door, no windows, no sign-board.
- Tree: present for Olère, absent for Paisikovic.

2) The barrack

- The barrack drawn by Olère is absent in the Paisikovic drawing.

3) The pits

- Olère has the start of a trench, with its longitudinal axis placed more or less east-west, whereas Paisikovic has two trenches running north-south.

Paisikovic's sketches themselves are moreover in strong disagreement with Dragon's deposition. Nosal's drawing of "bunker 2," done on the basis of Dragon's Polish deposition, shows in fact four rooms, whereas the sketch drawn by Tadeusz Szymański on the basis of Paisikovic's story shows three rooms. For Dragon the four rooms all had different sizes, whereas for Paisikovic the three rooms all had the same floor area. For Dragon one of the long walls of the house had four entrance doors and one little window for the Zyklon B, whereas the opposite side had three exit doors and four little windows, and there was also an exit door in one of the shorter walls; for Paisikovic, on the other hand, one of the long walls had three entrance doors and three little windows, the opposite side had three exit doors and no window, and the

two remaining walls had neither doors nor windows. As far as the capacity of the "bunkers" is concerned, it was 2,500-2,550 persons for Dragon, but 300 for Paisikovic (*ibid*., pp. 108f.).

The ruins of the house, as they now stand, are at variance both with Dragon's and with Paisikovic's testimony. These ruins of the house show seven rooms, whereas Dragon mentions four and Paisikovic three. However, even a break-up of the house into three or four homicidal gas chambers would be technical nonsense, because – if we are to believe official historiography – the two "bunkers" had been set up specifically not for the occasional killing of small groups of people, but for a systematic *mass* extermination. As we have seen above, the Soviet commission of inquiry found that 3,000 persons per day were assassinated in "bunker 2," while Dragon even speaks of 10,000 per day.

In the ruins of the house there is moreover not even any trace of the entrance which, according to Szlama Dragon, was located in the northwest corner of the building. At that point the ruins consist of a wall made of earth, some 50 cm high, which does not present any trace of a threshold. This threshold could not have been any higher, because if we are to believe the witness, the house was at ground level and there were no steps leading up to it.

Furthermore, Nosal's drawing of "bunker 1," as based on Dragon's testimony, is in disagreement with the blueprint of the house of Józef Harmata, whose farm house is said to have been converted into "bunker 1" (Höss trial, vol. 11, p. 27). This blueprint was handed over, together with a report, to the Auschwitz Museum on August 5, 1980, by his niece Józefa Wisińska (see Mattogno 2004i, pp. 165ff.). Finally, the aerial photographs of Birkenau, taken in 1944, show clearly that, in contrast to all testimonies, there were no open-air cremation sites anywhere near "bunker 2" (see *ibid*., pp. 186-189; Mattogno 2005c, pp. 56-58).

In conclusion it may therefore be said that there is total disagreement and contradiction of the available evidence also on the subject of the "bunkers."

18.4.6.5. Johann Paul Kremer

Van Pelt cites the following entry from the diary of Dr. Johann Paul Kremer for October 12, 1942 (p. 287):

> *"Second typhus shot, then in the evening strong general reaction (fever). But still, during the night present at a special action from*

Holland (1,600 persons). Dreadful scene in front of the last bunker! That was the 10th special action (Hössler).”

In his attempt to use this document as an alleged “converging proof,” van Pelt is not afraid of false and nonsensical conjectures. He asserts that this diary “is therefore a particularly honest document, and as such it presents a big problem for negationists” (p. 284). As far as I am concerned, this document does not present any problem at all, neither small nor big. It has no value as evidence because the “special actions” it mentions do not, in fact, refer to any alleged homicidal gassings at all (see Mattogno 2004h, pp. 75-87). Van Pelt instead claims that “both the SS and the inmates referred in common parlance to those extermination installation as ‘bunkers’” (p. 287) and adds on the following page that “the noun ‘bunker’ referred in camp jargon either to the two cottages (1 and 2, or perhaps ‘the first’ and ‘the last’) that served as gas chambers or, after the completion of Crematoria 2, 3, 4 and 5, it referred to their gas chambers.” Actually, as I have explained above, no document speaks of the two alleged gassing houses, and no testimony prior to April 1945 employs the term “bunker” to designate them. It is a word unknown to Tabeau, to Dragon and to Tauber (in his Soviet deposition) as well as to the Soviet “experts,” who called those houses “gas chamber no. 1” and “gas chamber no. 2.” As to the SS men themselves, before April 1945 none of them speak of any “bunkers” in connection with the two alleged extermination installations either.

Van Pelt bases his assertions exclusively on Dr. Kremer’s diary, assuming *a priori* that Kremer’s “bunkers” were the alleged gassing installations. But things are not as simple as that, because Kremer speaks of a “last bunker,” something that would not be applicable, if there had been merely *two* such “bunkers”: van Pelt cannot but state, against all reason, that the “bunkers” 1 and 2 were not “the first” and “the *second*” but “the first” and “the *last*”! Regarding the meaning of Dr. Kremer’s diary entry as cited above and the term “last bunker,” I refer the reader to my study (Mattogno 2004h, p. 82-87).

18.4.6.6. Hans Aumeier

Van Pelt also calls upon the testimony by Hans Aumeier for “converging evidence” concerning the “bunkers.” This officer, at the time *SS-Hauptsturmführer*, was posted to Auschwitz on February 16, 1942, as “*1. Schutzhaftlagerführer*” of the main camp and held that position until August 15, 1943. He was arrested by the British in Norway on

June 11, 1945. I have dealt with this witness both with respect to the alleged gassings in Crematorium I (2005e, pp. 48ff.) and in connection with the Birkenau "bunkers" (2004i, pp. 133-136). The main points: In his first deposition, at Oslo on June 19, 1945, he denied squarely the tale of homicidal gas chambers:

> *"I know nothing of any gas chambers and during my tour of duty no detainee was gassed."*

He soon came to understand, however, that the British wanted him to "confess" *their* "truth," as it had been outlined during the preparation of the Belsen trial. Hence, in his account of July 25, 1945, Aumeier speaks of homicidal gassings and also of the "bunkers,"[872] a term which, as we have seen, was coined some months previously at Auschwitz during judge Sehn's investigations. In line with Jankowski,[873] Aumeier "confessed" that the first gassing had taken place in November or December 1942 in the morgue of Crematorium I, thus contradicting the respective account of Filip Müller.

[872] PRO, File WO.208/4661. Report by H. Aumeier dated July 25, 1945, pp. 7-8.
[873] Deposition by S. Jankowski, April 13, 1945, before judge Jan Sehn, in: Bezwińska/Świebocka, p. 48.

19. Van Pelt's Method

19.1. The Legend of the "Terrible Secret" of Auschwitz

In an effort to explain in some way the fantastic reports which I have discussed at length in chapter 16, mainstream holocaust historiography asserts that the extermination of the Jews constituted what Walter Laqueur called a "terrible secret" which transpired only slowly and laboriously.

Van Pelt also brings up the complex make-up of the camp. Replying to Irving's arguments that the release of any detainees from Auschwitz appeared "incompatible with the character of a top-secret mass extermination centre" (p. 88) he argues (p. 90):

> *"If Auschwitz had only been a (top-secret) mass extermination center, located in one place, Irving's argument could have been conclusive. Yet Auschwitz encompassed many different sites, and as an institution it was engaged in many different functions. Furthermore, it functioned as a (top-secret) mass extermination center for only part of its history. If the released prisoners had included the so-called Sonderkommandos who operated the crematoria, Irving would have a point. They did not."*

Here van Pelt shows just one more time his tragic ignorance on the subject of Auschwitz. In this specific case he completely omits the secret resistance movement active in the camp. From the very beginning on Auschwitz saw the rise of Polish resistance groups. By 1942 other nationalities had joined them: Austrians, Frenchmen, Belgians, Russians, Germans, Czechs, Yugoslavs. In early May 1943 these groups were united under one central directorate, which took on the name of "*Kampfgruppe Auschwitz*" and which had its contacts also among the resistance group of the so-called "*Sonderkommando*." This underground movement enjoyed the help of a dense network of contacts and support outside the camp, among the local Polish population, and from various secret institutions which were linked with the *Delegatura*, the local representation of the Polish government-in-exile at London (Jarosz 1978, pp. 133ff.; Świebocki 1995, pp. 5-187). Barbara Jarosz describes the way in which the information was gathered and smuggled out of the camp (1978, pp. 149ff.):

"Another and very important form of the resistance movement's activity was the gathering of evidence of the crimes committed by the SS and sending it out of the camp. The most important documents sent from the camp included: […].

(4) three photographs taken illegally in camp in summer 1944, showing women being herded to the gas chamber and the burning of bodies on pyres;

(5) plans of the crematoria and gas chambers, stolen in 1944 from the office of the SS-Bauleitung by women prisoners employed there: Krystyna Horczak (Poland) and Véra Flotynova [Foltynova] *and Valeria Vlanova (Czechoslovakia);*

(6) numbered charts of transports of male and female prisoners brought to the camp. Copies of the original transport lists were made by prisoners working in the reception office of the Political Department.

Besides documents, reports were also smuggled out of the camp in which exact figures were given concerning the number of prisoners confined in the camp, the number of transports arriving and departing, the names of prisoners who were shot, and the names of SS men of the camp staff. Living conditions were described, and dates and routes of escapes fixed. […].

The data contained in the reports were obtained by prisoners employed in the camp's various administrative offices, in the main registration room, the camp hospital and the offices of the Political and Employment Departments. At the risk of their lives they made copies of documents, plans and reports. […]. *Both letters and documents were sent from the camp via permanent contact routes. The role of intermediaries between the organisation in the camp and those outside was played by civilians employed inside the camp: Stanislaw Mordarski, Jozef Cholewa and Franciszek Walisko, as well as Helena Daton who served in the SS canteen in Haus 7. The prisoners passed letters and documents to them, and they in turn delivered them to Brzeszcze. Thence they were forwarded to Cracow by the Kornas family in Spytkowice or Aniela Kieres in Chrzanow. In 1944 the organisation acquired yet another contact route which led through Maria Stromberger, an Austrian nurse working in the hospital for SS men."*

There was in fact no place in Auschwitz without a *Kommando* of detainees, and there was no *Kommando* of detainees which did not

contain, directly or indirectly, members of the resistance movement. The former detainee Otto Wolken has drawn up a list of over 100 such *Kommandos* at Auschwitz, which shows in all its detail the ramifications of the flow of information within the camp, see Table 27 at the end of this chapter (p. 658f.).[874] Besides these, we obviously have the *Kommandos* of detainees who worked in the Birkenau crematoria, initially designated as 206-B, 207-B, later 57-B/61-B. These *Kommandos* constantly watched the entire camp, and nothing remained unknown to them.

Of particular interest for our topic were the *Zentralbauleitung Kommandos*. In February 1943, the *Baubüro* office employed 96 detainees, most of them (85) Polish, but also two Jews: Mordcha Gothein (ID number 64034) and Ernst Kohn (ID number 71134).[875] Among other duties, these detainees drew various blueprints for the crematoria, such as blueprint 1300 of June 18, 1942, for Crematorium II (detainee 17133), blueprint 2136 of February 22, 1943, for Crematorium III (detainee 538, Leo Sawka), blueprint 2197 of March 19, 1943 (detainee 71134, Ernst Kohn), blueprint 2036 of January 11, 1943, for Crematoria IV/V (detainee 127, Josef Sikora) or blueprint 1241 of April 10, 1942, for Crematorium I (detainee 20033, Stefan Swiszczowski). Other *Zentralbauleitung Kommandos* were entirely free to move throughout the camp in the execution of their particular tasks. Part of the *Baubüro Kommando* detainees worked within the ZBL offices, others worked outside the camp and were entirely free in their comings and goings. A "List of detainees employed outside of guard perimeter" dated August 26, 1943, has 52 such names, split among the following *Kommandos*:

Bauleitung Meliorationen (soil improvement; 16 detainees), *Abteilung Vermessung* (surveying; 8), *Wasserversorgung, Kanalisation* (water supply, sewers; 9), *Bauleitung KGL*. (construction office PoW camp; 10), *Planungsabteilung* (planning dept.; 3), *Bauleitung KL*. (construction office concentration camp; 3), *Bauleitung Industriegelände* (construction office, industrial sites; 2) and *Abteilung Buchhaltung* (bookkeeping dept.; 1). The Jewish detainee Kurzweig, ID number 65655,[876] was among the members of the first group.

[874] AGK, NTN, 149, pp. 7-11.
[875] RGVA, 502-1-256, "Kommando: Baubüro der Zentralbauleitung," name list of February 16, 1943.
[876] RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 150.

In May 1943 the *Vermessungskommando* had 29 detainees; three "surveyors" escaped on May 21,[877] which is proof of their liberty of movement. During the Höss trial, one of these detainees, Wilhelm Wohlfahrt, declared he had witnessed from afar a homicidal gassing in one of the so-called "bunkers" (see Mattogno 2004i, pp. 103ff.)

The role played by the civilian employees in the gathering and transmission of information was undoubtedly far greater than what has just been described. There were actually at least 46 civilian firms working at Auschwitz with a total of some 1,300 civilian employees, almost all of them Polish (see Mattogno 2005h, pp. 51-55). A letter from *SS-Sturmbannführer* Friedrich Hartjenstein, at that time commander of the Auschwitz II – Birkenau camp, shows the extent to which the civilian employees could enjoy freedom of movement. In the evening of April 12, 1944, a civilian employee by the name of Wilhelm Lorenz was stopped "on the railroad crossing of Auschwitz-Birkenau." He showed a pass given to him by the Lenz Co. on March 23, 1944, on the basis of which "this man is entitled to enter the worksites without supervision after the posting of the great chain of guards," something which Hartjenstein thought unacceptable and vetoed for reasons of security.[878]

Many civilian worksites were scattered all over the Birkenau camp area: the series of daily "work assignment" reports has 20 such "companies working under orders of the construction office":

- 351-B: Knauth Kanalisation BII (sewers at construction sector II)
- 352-B: Strassenbau b.d. Kartoffellager (road works near potato storage)
- 353-B: Lenz Truppen-Kommandantur (troop headquarters)
- 359-B: Lenz Lebensmittelmagazin (food storage)
- 354-B: Riedel Strassenbau KL. II (road works at camp II)
- 361-B: Riedel Strassenbau FL. (road works at women's camp)
- 372-B: Riedel Strassenbau BI/b FL. (road works at construction sector I/b, women's camp)
- 355-B: Brandt Kanalisation BII (sewers at construction sector II)
- 356-B: Deutsche Bau AG b. Kläranlage II (at sewage plant)
- 357-B: Richter Brunnenbau (well drilling)
- 358-B: Keil Splittergrabenkommando (air-raid trench detail)
- 360-B: Anhalt Barackenausbau BII (indoor work on barracks at construction sector II)

[877] Aktenvermerk dated May 21, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-60, p. 67.
[878] RGVA, 502-1-83, p. 18.

- 373-B: Anhalt Gleisanschluss (railway spur)
- 362-B: Hirt Kanalisation (sewers)
- 363-B: Huta Barackenausbau BII (indoor work on barracks at B II)
- 364-B: Conti Wasserwerksgesellschaft (water works)
- 365-B: Wagner Strassenbau BII (road works at B II)
- 368-B: Spirra Brunnenbau (well drilling)
- 372-B: Spirra Brunnenbau (well drilling)
- 370-B: Falk Barackeninstallation (piping in barracks).

The presence of these companies in the (incomplete) archive portion which has survived is documented for the period of April 20 through October 3, 1944.[879] On June 1, 1944, 20 companies worked in the Birkenau area, among them eight which have not been mentioned above: Josef Kluge, Richard Reckmann, Industriebau Zöllner, Wodak, Köhler, Bälz, Wedag, Süddeutsche Abwasserreinigungs A.G.[880]

Another category of civilians who moved about in the Auschwitz area concerned the families of SS personnel on duty there. Visits were allowed by the camp regulations and announced in the "*Standortbefehl*" (garrison order). For example, "*Standortbefehl* Nr. 40/43" of November 2, 1943, has ten such entries in its "residence permits" section. The first one reads:[881]

> *"SS-Sturmmann Josef Beitzel, visit with family October 29 through November 30, 1943. Residence: Babitz no. 27 c/o Flegel."*

"Standortbefehl Nr. 16/43" of April 22, 1943, lists even eighteen. "Standortbefehl Nr. 51/43" dated November 16, 1943, has the following announcement as item 4:[882]

> *"Civilians in camp perimeter. Over the next few days all entry points to camp area will receive boards with the following text in German and Polish: 'Camp area. Entry permitted for civilians only with stamped arm-band and respective permit by local officer. Civilians without permit will be arrested.' Every SS member is requested to aid in the implementation of this order."*

In August 1944 the influx of families members of the SS staff "had reached such dimensions that it became impossible to issue more per-

[879] APMO, D-AuI-3/1; D-AuII-3a/16; D-AuII-3a/25-49.
[880] Letter from Bauleitung of KL Auschwitz II "to all companies working in the area of camp II, Birkenau" (an alle Firmen die im Bereich des Lagers II, Birkenau beschäftigt sind). RGVA, 502-2-83, p. 368.
[881] GARF, 7021-108-54, p. 54a.
[882] GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 72.

mits."[883] Overall about 270 visits are documented. The problem of civilians moving about in the camp was so serious that Höss had to issue a specific "*Sonderbefehl*" (special order) on June 10, 1944, beginning as follows:[884]

> *"In order to prevent once and for all the loitering of civilians within the area of the Birkenau camp, I have instituted increased patrols by the local police company effective immediately. Among other duties, the patrols are to verify in detail the papers of any civilians, including women accompanied by SS men. All doubtful persons will be arrested and presented to the Political Department."*

There were also numerous escapes of detainees from Auschwitz, often arranged by the resistance movement. In the papers of the trial of the camp garrison there is a list, no doubt incomplete, of 144 escapees between the end of 1942 and early 1944. It has 17 names for 1942, 114 for 1943, 8 for 1944, and 5 without a date.[885] According to Tadeusz Iwaszko (pp. 49ff.), at least 667 detainees altogether fled from the Auschwitz complex: at least 120 in 1942, 310 in 1943, and 209 in 1944. Those recaptured amounted to some 41% of all cases. At least 105 detainees escaped from Birkenau.

This brings us to the released detainees. Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium* (1989) has a total of 1,255 releases, with the following categories: 575 *Erziehungshäftlinge* (re-educational detainees), 465 *Schutzhäftlinge* (detainees in protective custody), 167 female detainees, 47 Jewish detainees, 1 *Kriegsgefangener* (PoW). The periods covered run from January 19 through July 17, 1942, and from November 4, 1944, through January 17, 1945. Other releases, however, are listed in the *Stärkemeldungen*[886] of the Birkenau women's camp of October 1944: 9 releases on the 7th, 10 on the 12th, and 38 on the 13th.[887] Further 23 released detainees, among them seven Jews, are registered in the "*Kommandobuch*." Yet another register which has numerous releases is the "*Nummernbuch* 150000-200000," in which we find 168 releases of male detainees for the first 30,000 ID numbers over the period of September 1943 through November 1944 (re. *Nummernbuch* see chapter 6.1.3.). In the series of reports entitled "Summary of numbers and assignments of

[883] Frei et al., p. 482. Standortbefehl Nr. 22/44, Aug. 18, 1944.
[884] AGK, TNT, 121, p. 129.
[885] AGK, NTN, 155, pp. 292-296.
[886] Series of reports on the strength of the Frauenlager covering the period of October 1 through December 1, 1944.
[887] APMO, AuII- 3a, FKL, pp. 56, 61a, 62a.

the female detainees of the Auschwitz O/S concentration camp," of which some specimens have survived, 83 female detainees appear as having been released between April 2 and June 30, 1944 (see chapter 7.4.).

In 1943 and 1944 numerous persons were interned at the so-called "*Arbeitserziehungslager* Birkenau" (educational camp B.) later labeled "*Arbeitserziehungslager* Auschwitz I." All of them were foreign civilian workers who had broken their labor contracts After their release they were transferred to the Bielitz labor office (*Arbeitsamt Bielitz, Nebenstelle Auschwitz*), which sent them back to their former employers or to work elsewhere. These detainees were not officially registered in the camp and therefore did not receive a number in the "E" (*Erziehungshäftlinge*) category. The available documents tell us that at least 304 detainees of this category were arrested and later released, among them 205 men and 99 women. The table below shows some details.

Table 26: No. of Foreign Civilian Workers Released from Auschwitz

Month	#	*Month*	#	*Month*	#
July 1943	2	January 1944	1	August 1944	37
August 1943	3	April 1944	4	September 1944	50
September 1943	3	May 1944	27	October 1944	29
October 1943	7	June 1944	57	November 1944	2
November 1943	3	July 1944	67	December 1944	1
December 1943	11			Total:	304

These figures are incomplete. In July 1944, 71 detainees (33 men and 38 women)[888] were released and presented to *Arbeitsamt* Bielitz, and in August 1944, 84 detainees (43 men and 41 women),[889] which brings the total to at least 355 released detainees.

Finally, in 1944 no fewer than 192,300 detainees were moved from Auschwitz to other camps, not counting the about 67,000 still present in the camp on January 17, 1945, and then evacuated. Among the above 192,300 detainees transferred elsewhere, there were at least 98,600 unregistered Jews (see Mattogno 2006d, pp. 293-300).

In short, the resistance movement at Auschwitz, through its dense network of informers, surveyed all important sites at the camp and had access to all important documents including the drawings of the crematoria. The civilian workers, most of them Poles, were another precious source of information and at once the primary link with the outside

[888] RGVA, 502-1-437, p. 24.
[889] RGVA, 502-1-437, p. 62.

world. Escaped detainees, together with those who were officially released, constituted yet other streams of information which reached the *Delegatura*.

In practice, then, everyone at Auschwitz knew everything there was to know, and it is therefore obvious that the policy of releases and transfers followed by the SS does not in any way agree with the story about the "top-secret mass extermination center." From what has been sketched out above, we may draw another and most important conclusion: the resistance movement had all the details and all the means to spread the allegedly "true" story of homicidal gassings right from the start, if there ever was one, i.e. the version more or less accepted today by mainstream historiography as concocted by the Soviet commission of inquiry. But then, why on earth did it put together a hodge-podge of false and nonsensical reports prior to the liberation of the camp, culminating in the fantastic tale told by Vrba and Wetzler? The answer is simple: the story of the homicidal gas chambers is not a hidden truth which came to light little by little, but an initially disparate propaganda story which was step by step transmogrified into "truth."

19.2. Visits to Auschwitz by High-Ranking SS Officers

In the preceding chapter I have shown that there was no "terrible secret" to be kept hidden at Auschwitz. There was actually nothing secret about Auschwitz. It was located at the intersection of three railway lines operated from Cracow by the Directorate General of the Eastern Railway (*Generaldirektion der Ostbahn in Krakau*): line 149 (Oderberg-Dzieditz-Auschwitz-Trzebinia-Cracow and back with express trains to and from Vienna and Warsaw, some of these stopping also at Auschwitz), line 146d (Kattowitz-Auschwitz and back) and line 532e (Cracow-Auschwitz; see Generaldirektion, p. 8; cf. document 50). On each of these lines the passenger traffic ran normally in spite of the alleged extermination activity of the camp (*ibid*., p. 54, 68, 104; cf. docs. 50a-c).

In the report entitled "Auschwitz. Explanations concerning spatial planning," drawn up on March 30, 1941, by the architectural engineer Hans Stosberg, the location of Auschwitz as a hub of railroad links is stressed in particular:[890]

[890] APK, Land Pl Go/S 467, pp. 198-199.

"Trunk line: Vienna – Mährisch-Ostrau – Auschwitz – Cracow (the so-called Kaiser-Ferdinand-Nordbahn)

Feeders: Auschwitz – Kattowitz – industrial area (with a branch-off to Bierun-Nikolai); Auschwitz – Zator – Skawina – Cracow, or Zator – Wadowitz – Sucha –Zakopane."

As has already been said, at Auschwitz everything was known, and the story of the homicidal gassings was put together by the detainees who formed the secret resistance movement of the camp. This is fully borne out by the incredible ignorance among the SS staff. Between 1942 and 1944 Auschwitz received visits by high-ranking SS officers on several occasions who looked into various aspects of organization and logistics, but none of them mentioned – not even vaguely or in a "coded language" – anything about the alleged mass exterminations of Jews, although this was what is said to have been the main function of the camp. We will review the most important such visits in this chapter.

On June 4, 1942, *SS- Hauptsturmführer* Kurt May, head of Amt W IV (woodworking plants) at SS-WVHA came to Auschwitz. He was exclusively concerned with the company *Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke*, which he described in the six sections of his report.[891] A file memo (*Aktenvermerk*) dated September 20, 1942, refers to the visit to Auschwitz of *SS-Sturmbannführer* Ohle, head of Amt W III (*Ernährungsbetriebe*) (food plants) at SS-WVHA two days previously. The subject of the discussions was the enlargement of the bakery and the improvement of the slaughter-house. Concerning the former, the document notes:

"The bakery must be enlarged correspondingly for it to produce the bread required for 160,000 men."

For the slaughter-house the proposal concerned new machinery and structural modifications.[892] On September 23, 1942, *SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS* Oswald Pohl, head of SS-WVHA, visited the camp together with Kammler. In the morning, between 9:30 and 12:30, meetings were held at the "*Haus der Waffen-SS*" in which, besides Pohl and Kammler, three SS officers as well as 19 high civilian officials took part, among them the *Gauleiter* of Upper Silesia, Fritz

[891] Bericht über die Dienstreise vom 1.-8.6.42 nach Butschowitz, Auschwitz, Lemberg, Lublin und Posen written in Berlin by SS-Hauptsturmführer May on June 11, 1942. NO-1216.

[892] RGVA, 502-1-19, pp. 83-84.

Bracht.[893] Höss wrote the minutes of the meetings the next day, noting the following points:[894]

> *"Item 1: Fixation of boundaries; area of interest vs. town of Auschwitz.*
>
> *Item 2: Irrigation and water consumption*
>
> *Item 3: Treatment of effluents*
>
> *Item 4a: Removal of planned railroad shunting yard from KL Auschwitz area*
>
> *Item 4b: Removal of railroad away from KL Auschwitz area of interest."*

That afternoon, between 2 and 6 p.m., Pohl inspected the Auschwitz *Interessengebiet*.[895] In his closing speech at 6 p.m. in the "*Führerheim*" (officers club) Pohl praised the Auschwitz officers for the progress of their construction work in the camp and exhorted them to keep on doing their duty.[896] On April 20, 1943, Pohl's deputy at SS-WVHA, *SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS* August Frank, came to Auschwitz. The following day he met Bischoff who wrote the minutes of their conversation. They discussed "general planning" concerning the localization of the housing development in the agriculture area, the *Bauleitung* garden, the "aerial photographs of KL Auschwitz," the "construction office of KL Auschwitz" (assignment of materials within the contingencies), then undertook "site visits" of the following sites: "temporary bakery," "central heating plant," "troop lodgings KGL (PoW camp)."[897]

Then there was Kammler's visit on May 7, 1943. Between 8:15 and 11:30 p.m. he talked at the "*Führerheim*" with Höss, with *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Karl Ernst Möckel, head of *SS-Standortverwaltung* (administration), with Bischoff, with *SS-Sturmbannführer* Joachim Caesar, head of agricultural development, with *SS* garrison surgeon Wirths and with Kirschneck. The topics were: "agricultural buildings," "build-

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[893] Teilnehmer an den Besprechungen anlässlich der Anwesenheit des SS-Obergruppenführers Pohl. September 23, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-19, p. 94.

[894] Inhalt der Besprechungen anlässlich des Besuches des SS-Obergruppenführers Pohl im "Haus der Waffen-SS" in Auschwitz am 23.9.1942. RGVA, 502-1-19, pp. 97-101.

[895] Besichtigung des SS-Obergruppenführers Pohl am 23.9.1942. RGVA, 502-1-19, p. 86.

[896] Bericht über Inhalt der Schlussbesprechung des Hauptamtschefs, SS-Obergruppenführer Pohl mit sämtlichen SS-Führern des K.L. Auschwitz am 23.9.1942. RGVA, 502-1-19, pp. 95-96.

[897] Niederschrift über die Besprechung am 21. April 1943 mit SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Frank anläßlich der Besichtigung des K.L. Auschwitz. RGVA, 502-1-26, pp. 171-174.

ings under the responsibility of the garrison surgeon," and "buildings for the camp administration." On May 9 Bischoff wrote a detailed report. From the minutes we can glean that the only worries on the side of the SS were of a sanitary and hygienic nature:

> *"General presentation by the garrison surgeon that the maintenance of the state of health of the detainees does not appear to be guaranteed for the great tasks ahead on account of the bad conditions of the toilet system, an insufficient sewer system, a lack of sickbays, and of separate toilets for the patients, as well as the lack of washing, bathing and disinfestation facilities."*

Dr. Wirths therefore asked Kammler to remedy the situation and to increase the conversions of "horse-stable type barracks into sickbays" as well as to improve the means of disinfestation:[898]

> *"For a complete solution of the delousing problem in the PoW camp, the garrison surgeon suggested to create, in each subsector of the construction zones, complete disinfestation installations, 10 altogether, including bathing facilities."*

Kammler stayed at Auschwitz at least until May 10, for on the 12th he himself wrote a four-page report concerning "water supply and waste water removal at KL and PoW camp Auschwitz," referring to a "meeting on May 10, 1943."[899] As mentioned above, this meeting gave rise to the "Special measures for the improvement of the hygiene facilities," which resulted, among other things, in the partly realized project of an inmate sickbay in construction sector III of Birkenau, which was to consist of "114 barracks for patients" (BW 3e) and "12 barracks for seriously ill patients (BW 12b).[900] On May 22, 1943, Kammler returned to Auschwitz. During a meeting, in which participated the camp commander as well as Möckel, Bischoff, Kirschneck, Dr. Wirths, two officers from SS-WVHA, two officials from "Reich ministry of armaments and munitions" and two representatives of the "Plenipotentiary for the control of construction industries" at Breslau, Höss gave a speech in which he summarized the history of the camp as follows:[901]

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[898] Aktenvermerk by Bischoff, May 9, 1943, concerning "Besprechung mit dem Amtsgruppenchef C SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr.-Ing. Kammler." RGVA, 502-2-117, pp. 4-9.

[899] RGVA, 502-1-233, pp. 39-42.

[900] Cf. Mattogno 2004k, IV., "The Detainee Sickbay…," pp. 289-294.

[901] Aktenvermerk dated May 22, 1943 without a heading and without a date, probably written by Bischoff. RGVA, 502-1-26, pp. 85-87.

"After the evacuation of 7 Polish villages in the Vistula-Sola triangle in 1940, the Auschwitz camp was created by the revamping of existing artillery barracks necessitating many additions, new buildings and changes, in which much waste material was re-used. [The site] *was originally intended to be a quarantine camp, but later became a Reich camp and thus was given a new objective. The location on the border between the Reich and the G*[eneral] *G*[overnment] *turned out to be particularly suitable, because it assured the supply of a workforce at the camp even at critical moments as they occurred from time to time. Of late, the solution of the Jewish question has been added, which required the creation of housing facilities for a strength of initially 60,000, but quickly becoming 100,000 detainees, which had to be realized at very short notice. The inmates of the camp are primarily slated to be deployed at the large industries evolving in this area. Within its area of interest the camp counts various armament industries which regularly require workers."*

Höss's speech demonstrates that the "solution of the Jewish question" did not require cremation and extermination facilities, but construction measures for housing 100,000 inmates, and that the destination of Auschwitz as an extermination camp was not only far from being at the top of the agenda, but was totally absent from it! This confirms fully what the SS had decided eight months earlier. On September 15, 1942, a meeting between Reich minister Speer and Pohl took place, about which the latter wrote a detailed report for Himmler the following day. The discussion had concerned four points, the first one of which was "Enlargement of barrack camp Auschwitz on account of migration to the east." Pohl wrote:

"Reich minister Prof. Speer has given his full approval to the enlargement of the Auschwitz barrack camp and set aside an additional budget of 13.7 million Reichsmarks for Auschwitz.

This budget comprises the erection of about 300 barracks with the necessary supply and ancillary installations.

The raw materials needed will be allocated in the 4th quarter of 1942 and in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of 1943. Once this additional construction project is terminated, a total of 132,000 men can be accommodated at Auschwitz."

Pohl then goes on to note that

"all concerned shared the opinion that the workforce available in the concentration camps would now have to be used for large-scale armament projects."

After having stressed the necessity of pulling the German and foreign workers out of understaffed armament production installations (to plug holes in other such plants) and to substitute them by detainees from the concentration camps, Pohl continued:[902]

"This way Reich minister Prof. Speer wants to ensure the immediate availability of an initial force of 50,000 able-bodied Jews in independent factories with existing housing.

The respective workers will be siphoned off at Auschwitz from the migration to the east in order to make sure that the production and enlargement of our existing plants will not be disrupted by a constantly changing workforce.

The able-bodied Jews destined for the migration to the east will thus have to interrupt their journey and work on armaments."

The "migration to the east" (*Ostwanderung*) was the deportation of Jews toward the east. In this context, the last sentence in the paragraph above signifies that the Jews in the *Ostwanderung* who were unfit for work would not interrupt their migration and would thus not stay at Auschwitz, but would continue their "journey" east. Where at least part of these persons were directed to, results from a report by *SS-Untersturmführer* Ahnert concerning a meeting held on August 28, 1942, at *Referat* IV B 4 of RSHA. The meeting was organized to review the situation of the Jews, especially in respect of the "evacuation of Jews in the occupied foreign states," and to discuss the problem of transportation. The evacuation of the Jews to the east was to be channeled via the Auschwitz camp. Among the question reviewed, we find as item c) of the agenda the following topic:

"Provision of blankets, shoes and cooking utensils for the participants of transports.

The commander of the Auschwitz internment camp has requested that the necessary blankets, shoes and cooking utensils have to be provided unconditionally. To the extent that this has not been done in the past, these objects must be sent on to the camp immediately."

Item e) concerns the "purchase of barracks" (*Barackenankauf*):[903]

[902] Report by Pohl to Himmler dated September 16, 1942 concerning: "a) Rüstungsarbeiten. b) Bombenschäden." BAK, NS 19/14, pp. 131-133.

[903] Report by SS-Untersturmführer Ahnert dated September 1, 1942. CDJC, XXVI-59.

"SS-Obersturmbannführer Eichmann requested to implement immediately the purchase of the barracks ordered by the head of the security police at The Hague. The camp is to be erected in Russia. The transportation of the barracks can be done in such a way that each transport train will take along 3-5 barracks."

The function of Auschwitz as a transit camp for detainees unfit for work is demonstrated also by other documents. In a note dated July 21, 1942, concerning a telephone conversation that took place the day before, *SS- Hauptsturmführer* Theodor Dannecker wrote (RF-1233):

"The question of the evacuation of children was discussed with SS-Obersturmbannführer Eichmann. He decided that transports of children are to take place as soon as transports into the General Government are again possible. SS-Obersturmführer Nowak promised to provide about 6 transports to the General Government at the end of August / beginning of September, which may contain Jews of all kinds (also those unfit for work and old Jews)."

In those years the territory around Auschwitz had been incorporated into the Reich, hence formed a part of Germany rather than the General Government. Also, at that time the deportations to Auschwitz were not impeded but rather in high gear: in fact, between July 17 and 31 fourteen transports of Jews arrived at that camp, four from Holland, two from Slovakia, seven from France and one from an unknown origin (Czech 1989, pp. 250-262). Hence the six transports just mentioned, which should have contained children and people unfit for work, could not have had Auschwitz as their destination.

Even earlier, Jewish women and children from Slovakia had been moved to the ghettos of the Lublin district. For example, the local commissioner (*Landkommissar*) of Lubartów wrote the following letter on April 16, 1942, to the county commissioner (*Kreiskommissar*) at Lublin:[904]

"Yesterday afternoon around 18 hours another transport of some 800 Jews arrived without prior notice. About half of them were women and children under 14. There were no men at all on this transport. The Jews are, likewise, from Slovakia. Altogether, on Monday and Wednesday 1,600 Jews have newly arrived, almost none of them fit for work. 200 Jews were moved on to Kamionka, 300 to Ostrow and 80 to Firlej."

[904] Kermisz 1946, p. 48. Cf. Mattogno/Graf 2004, Chapter VIII, "Indirect Transports…," pp. 233-273.

The RSHA later decided otherwise, though. On August 13 *SS-Sturmbannführer* Rolf Günther sent a cable to the SS authorities in Paris concerning "Transportation of Jews to Auschwitz, [specifically] expulsion of Jewish children," in which he specified that the Jewish children detained in the camps of Pitiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande could be deported to Auschwitz a few at a time with the scheduled transports, but transports of children exclusively were not allowed.[905]

As we have seen in chapter 11.1., van Pelt accepts that initially (in the fall of 1941) Auschwitz "was to serve as a transit point [for German and Czech Jews] between Germany, Bohemia and the projected [Jewish] reservation in the East" (Dwork/van Pelt, p. 291).

Pohl went again to Auschwitz on August 17, 1943. At 8:30 a.m., he was received in the offices of ZBL where camp construction projects were discussed. Then came a tour of the area of interest. Bischoff wrote a report about the visit that same day, according to which Pohl had inspected the slaughterhouse, the bakery, the so-called "Monopol" building as well as the laundry and reception building of the main camp, then the *Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke* (D.A.W.), the camp for the civilian workers and the Birkenau camp, about which Bischoff noted:

> *"Then there was a detailed tour of construction sections I and II of the PoW camp as well as the crematoria and the troop lodgings. The clean internal facilities of the detainee lodgings in the newly commissioned construction section III received special praise."*

The inspection then proceeded to the "water treatment plant of the PoW camp." These are the only references to the Birkenau camp in this three-page report. After visiting the women's camp at Budy, Pohl retired to the generals' quarters, then inspected the milling facilities and the effluent and waste-gas recovery plant. Pohl's tour ended at 1 p.m. In the afternoon Pohl was at Golleschau and returned to the offices of ZBL around 7 o'clock.[906]

On June 16, 1944, Pohl returned once more to Auschwitz and had a meeting with nine SS officers of the camp. They talked about the difficulties of obtaining cement and about the enlargement of the bakery by another two ovens, "as there exists an increased demand for bread and the ovens now in permanent operation are in urgent need of repairs."

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[905] CDJC, XXVb-126. Photocopy of the document in Aynat 1994, p. 87.

[906] Aktenvermerk by Bischoff dated August 17, 1943 concerning: "Besuch des Hauptamtchefs, SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS Pohl in Auschwitz." RGVA, 502-2-105, pp. 60-63.

Pohl then approved, "after examining the degree of urgency," a total of 29 *Bauwerke*. First on the list was "Enlargement of the bakery by two baking ovens." Item 9 concerned "3 barracks for immediate measure '*Judenaktion*'"; I have discussed elsewhere the historical context and the significance of this topic.[907] Item 9, on the other hand, covered "camouflage of crematoria and security measures by erection of a second fence (camouflage is to be effected by reed matting to be provided by local SS administration)."[908] This measure must be viewed in the light of the following secret directive from Glücks concerning "special buildings in the concentration camps," distributed by Liebehenschel on June 15, 1943, to the commanders of the Sachsenhausen, Dachau, Neuengamme and Auschwitz camps (NO-1242):

> *"The Head of the Main Office has informed* [me] *that* [he] *noted on occasions of visits to completed special buildings that these have not been well placed. Head of the Main Office has ordered that care must be taken in the erection of further special buildings to ensure that these buildings be located somewhat out of the way in accordance with their purpose and cannot be stared at by just anyone who happens to pass by."*

As early as October 21, 1943, Höss had ordered the planting of a row of trees around Crematoria II and III to create a "natural separation from the camp."[909] For the execution of this order Jothann requested from *SS-Sturmbannführer* Caesar the supply of 1,600 trees and shrubs.[910] On November 25, 1944, however, *SS-Unterscharführer* Kamann informed Jothann that the agricultural section, i.e. Caesar, had not yet approved this request.

A "list of *Bauwerke* under construction with degree of advancement" drawn up by Jothann on September 4, 1944, mentions, under item 17 of section b), the "camouflage of crematoria and security measures by erection of a second fence" as being 90% complete.[911] Still, the number of guards assigned to the crematoria remained essentially unchanged from the end of July to the end of August: 22 guards for 903 or

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[907] Mattogno 2004h., pp. 96-98.

[908] Aktenvermerk by Jothann dated June 17, 1944 concerning: "Besprechung anläßlich des Besuches des Hauptamtchefs, SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS Pohl über bauliche Belange in Auschwirz." APMO, D-AuI-1/119 and NO-2359.

[909] Vermerk by Jothann dated October 21, 1943 concerning "Anlagen von Grüngürteln um die Krematorien I und II im KGL." RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 21.

[910] APMO, BW 30/43, p. 14.

[911] RGVA, 502-1-85, p. 196.

873 inmates (as of August 11). On August 30 there were 22 guards for 874 detainees, a ratio of 1:40, on September 7 there were 12 guards for 874 detainees, a ratio of about 1:70.[912] This can obviously not correspond to any "camouflage" or "security measures" in connection with the alleged homicidal gassings. They were rather aimed at the numerous civilians who moved about in the camp.

On June 26, 1944, seven high government officials, among them *Reichshauptamtsleiter* Giese of the *Kanzlei des Führers*, inspected Auschwitz; *Ministerialrat* Müller and Dr. Gündner of RStA (*Reichsstaatsanwaltschaft*, Attorney General office) wrote a detailed secret journey report of eight pages.[913] It described the structure and the organization of the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex; it had 135,000 detainees at that time, 30,000 of whom were in the main camp (p. 57 of note 913). The report mentions certain known facts, such as the possibility the detainees had of writing letters to their relatives and to receive food packages, it speaks of "a [brass] band of at least 60 detainees" giving a "public concert," of the *Häftlingslazarett* in the main camp with its 60 "prisoner doctors" and its 2,000 detainees (*ibid*., p. 58), of the bonus system which rewarded detainees for good work with "vouchers of 1 and 2 Reichsmarks for the purchase of goods" in the camp (*ibid*., pp. 60, 60a). Other aspects are less well known (*ibid*., p. 58a):

> *"Another barrack of* [main camp] *Kommandantur 1 was inspected in which there is an exhibition of objects made by the detainees (drawings, paintings, carvings etc.) and of objects taken from the detainees. There is also the secretariat staffed by detainees where these detainees also take care of the personal affairs of the prisoners and similar matters, which in institutions operated by the justice administration are not entrusted to prisoners.* […].
>
> *The secretariat is equipped with a not overly spacious library; according to the detainee in charge it has 45,000 volumes."*

The report also describes the activities of the various factories and offices located within the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex. The visit took place at the height of the deportation of the Hungarian Jews to Ausch-

[912] Mattogno 2005c, pp. 80-88; cf. chapter 10.4.5.

[913] Reisebericht. Besichtigung des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz am 28. Juni 1944 durch MinDirektor Engert, MinRat Müller und RStA Dr. Gündner (RJM), GStA Dr. Haffner, OstA Scheunpfung und Vizepräsident Kaliebe (Kattowitz), Reichshauptamtsleiter Giese (Kanzlei des Führers). Berichtsverfasser: MinRat Müller und RStA Dr. Gündner. BAK; R22/1468, pp. 57-60a.

witz, and the visitors even witnessed the arrival of a transport (*ibid*., p. 59):

> *"At another loading station, a freight train with Hungarian Jews was being unloaded. In the area is a camp* [Birkenau] *under construction with wooden barracks devoid of windows, which can only be illuminated and aerated from above by means of tower-like structures on the roof. While we drove past, we could not make out in any detail the organization and the purpose of this camp. One could only see a colorful mixture of male and female detainees of all races, primarily Jews."*

The group, however, passed alongside of Crematorium V; the report notes (p. 59a):

> *"On the way back we passed a crematorium where apparently corpses were also burned on pyres."*

This report, stamped "*Geheim!*" (secret) on its first page, shows that the visitors – who were, as we have seen, high government officials – knew nothing of any mass exterminations at Auschwitz and neither saw nor heard anything during their visit which might have aroused their suspicion in this regard.

All the reports mentioned in this section constitute a convergence of proof of the absolute ignorance within the SS of any mass extermination of Jews, an ignorance which would be unimaginable, if this extermination had actually taken place.

19.3. The Illusion of the "Convergence of Evidence"

As we have seen, van Pelt's methodical principle is the "convergence of evidence," with the convergence of testimonies being one of its indispensable assumptions. It implies that the testimonies must not only be in agreement, but must also be really independent from one another. Polemicizing against Irving, van Pelt asserts that it is "highly implausible that knowledge about Auschwitz was a wartime fabrication by British propagandists" and claims to have demonstrated that

> *"knowledge about Auschwitz emerged cumulatively from a convergence of independent accounts, acquiring an epistemological status located somewhere in the realm framed on the one hand by a judgment that knows a fact 'beyond reasonable doubt,' and the other hand by the always receding horizon that promises unqualified certainty."*

He concludes that the alleged extermination of Jews at Auschwitz must be considered "a moral certainty" (p. 292), which indicates that van Pelt is more concerned about moral judgment than about scholarship. Actually, because the claims about the alleged extermination of Jews at Auschwitz is based essentially on deception, we should rather speak of an "immoral certainty." The tale of the homicidal gas chambers, as I have documented above, was not "a wartime fabrication by British propagandists," but a fabrication by propagandists of the secret resistance movement in the camp. This is something that was even admitted very frankly by Bruno Baum, a former detainee who had founded the German resistance group made up of interned communists, social democrats and other anti-fascists. In 1949 he published a book about the activities of the secret resistance movement in which he says (p. 34):

> *"From my location the material moved on to Cyrankiewicz who passed it on. Starting in mid-1944, we sent something out at least twice a week. Now the Auschwitz tragedy went into the world. I think it is no exaggeration to say that the better part of the Auschwitz propaganda which spread through the world at that time was written by us in the camp itself."*

The final version of the story emerged stepwise from the rehashing of mutually dependent propaganda tales which enriched themselves in a steady progression up to the essential apex, which was reached with the Vrba-Wetzler report. All the witnesses who remained at Auschwitz were impregnated with this propaganda which, as I have shown, even shows up in an apparently "independent" Hungarian testimony of 1945.

After the liberation of Auschwitz, the former detainees who had stayed behind lived in close proximity to each other and the events unfolding in the camp for at least another two months. They were exposed to the pressure of Soviet propaganda, as we can see from the appeal "*An die Internationale Öffentlichkeit*" (to the international public) launched by Dr. Mansfeld Geza, university professor at Budapest, Dr. Berthold Epstein, university professor at Prague, by "Dozent Dr. Bruno Fischer, Prague," and by Henri Limousin, university professor at Clermont-Ferrand. This report contains the final version of the story of the homicidal gas chambers, but without giving up any of the preceding horror stories: babies being burned alive, use of human fat for the cremation of

corpses and for the production of "technical oils and fats for machinery, and even laundry soap."[914]

The alleged "Sonderkommando" witnesses, like Tauber, Dragon and Mandelbaum, could and did not only talk things over among themselves and agree on an acceptable version (see p. 531), but could also consult German blueprints and documents and inspect the installations and devices of the crematoria and the oven parts still stored at the *Bauhof*.

On the other hand, those detainees who were moved away from Auschwitz before the arrival of the Soviet troops and who testified right after the end of the hostilities could not know the final version of the gas chamber story, as it was elaborated at the camp in February and March 1945. This explains the fact that the testimonies of the "Sonderkommando" detainees who had remained behind at Auschwitz (Tauber, Dragon, Jankowski, Mandelbaum) are by and large in good agreement with one another and with the Soviet propaganda version, whereas those given by detainees who had been moved out previously (Bendel, Nyiszli, Gertner, Lettich) vary greatly.

As against this, all testimonies initially drew from the same propagandistic source and are therefore in agreement on points which are patently false or absurd:

1) Tauber, Dragon, Jankowski, and Bendel "confirmed" the Soviet propaganda figure of four million victims at Auschwitz (see chapter 15.3.), thus exhibiting a convergence on a falsehood.
2) All witnesses "confirmed" the existence of immense "cremation pit(s)" (between one and four) near "bunker 2," where there never were any, and in the yard of Crematorium V (between two and five), where there was only one of very small size. Again, we have convergence on a falsehood (see chapter 8.8.5.).
3) All witnesses "confirmed" the heat technological absurdities around the crematorium ovens invented by the propaganda of the secret resistance movement in the camp in an effort to underpin the credibility of a mass extermination (see chapter 8.8.7.), yielding a convergence of testimonies on absurdities.

We may say in conclusion that the "convergence of independent accounts" is nothing but an illusion and has no value in terms of epistemological knowledge or moral (or any other kind of) certainty. No testimony is "independent" of the others, and the mere "confirmation" of

[914] Original text of the report with handwritten signatures in: GARF, 7021-108-46, pp. 8-11.

one testimonial item by another does not show it to be true. The "convergence" toward four million victims does not in any way prove the reality of this figure either.

The case of Belzec illustrates very well the fallacy of van Pelt's working method of "convergence of independent accounts." This is a case in point of a "convergence" of allegedly "independent accounts" on a fact known to be false: the extermination by means of electric current. Van Pelt says in this respect (pp. 144f.):

> *"Only later that year did the* Polish Fortnightly Review *begin to mention camps as execution sites of Jews. Many reports had reached the Polish government-in-exile about deportations from the Warsaw ghetto. In the fall of 1942, an eyewitness to the fate of the deportees had made his way to England. The Polish underground fighter Jan Kozielewski (better known by his underground name Jan Karski) had visited an extermination camp at Belzec disguised as a Latvian policeman and had witnessed the destruction of a transport of Jews. Karski informed the Polish government-in-exile, and on December 1, 1942, the* Polish Fortnightly Review *published as its main item an article entitled 'Extermination of Polish Jewry,' in which it reported that the Warsaw ghetto had been subject to daily deportations of 7,000 people per day since July 24.* […]
>
> *Remarkably, the* Polish Fortnightly Review *did not publish all of Karski's observations at Belzec but chose to print as an annex to the report an earlier description of the 'Jew-extermination camp at Belzec.' Dated July 10, 1942, it was obviously based on hearsay."*

As we know, the report described the alleged exterminations at Belzec as being performed by means of "an electrified plate."[915] Van Pelt continues (p. 145):

> *"In the summer of 1942, when the report was written, no one who was not part of the execution team had left Belzec alive, and thus the description of the method of killing was largely based on rumor."*

Walter Laqueur (p. 230) has explained that Karski was "engaged in 'black propaganda' among German soldiers, printing and distributing leaflets in German," and his reports are in fact nothing but that. In a specific study of the Belzec camp I have examined the genesis and the

[915] Meldunek nadzwyczajny z miejsca tracenia w Bełżcu z 10.VII.42r. SPP, Jcha 15, poz. 81.

development of the tale told by Karski, which can be summarized in the following way:[916]

> *"The first version of this story, dating back to November 1942, did mention trains of death, but only as an instrument of torture, taking the Jews from the Warsaw ghetto 'to special camps at Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor,' where they would be killed. With respect to the camp at Belzec, Karski not only did not yet pretend to have visited it but ascribed to it the method of extermination in vogue at the time – electrocution. However, by December 1942 Karski had invented the story of his phantom visit – disguised as a Polish* [!] *policeman – to a 'marshalling camp' fifty kilometers from Belzec, rehashing 'the trains of death' motif, the trains having now become a means of extermination in themselves, although he was still assigning to Belzec the methods of murder by poison gas and electric current. In the final elaboration of his story* [1944], *Karski transformed the 'marshalling camp' into the camp at Belzec, which he now pretended to have visited disguised as an Estonian* [!] *guard!"*

As far as the source of the report of July 10, 1942, is concerned, the report itself states that it was written "according to information from a German who is employed there" (p. 12 of note 916) – this means that the source was indeed someone "who was part of the execution team"!

Furthermore, as Michael Tregenza has stressed, Belzec could not have hidden any secret, both because of the location of the camp and because the local Ukrainian population had close personal ties with the personnel of the camp to the point that civilians were actually working inside the camp (*ibid*., pp. 41-44). Therefore, as he asserts explicitly, "from the very beginning, every single villager knew what was going on in the camp" (*ibid*., p. 43). And so, if the various reports still spoke of an alleged extermination involving electric current and trains full of quicklime, it is obvious that we have here a clear case of black propaganda. In this case one should not speak of "hearsay" or of "rumors." One should rather speak of deliberate lies.[917]

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[916] Mattogno 2004o, p. 22. Concerning the whole question, cf. chapter II, 3, pp. 22-33.

[917] On the subject of Belzec van Pelt adds: "Only recently in Belzec, with the uncovering of the enormous mass graves, has it become possible to acquire, at the location of the massacre, some visual sense of the atrocities that passed there" (van Pelt 2002, p. 12). As I have demonstrated in the study mentioned, the alleged 33 "*enormous* mass graves" with their total volume of some 21,300 m³ would have been sufficient, in theory, for only about 170,000 out of the 600,000 Jews allegedly gassed and buried at Belzec; for the latter number of victims, mass graves with a total volume of about 75,000 m³ would have been required. Actually, the original graves were fewer than 33 and their volume was much

The "convergence of evidence" is van Pelt's fundamental methodical principle. It consists in the extension of an alleged "convergence of independent accounts" to documental sources (documents, photographs, archeological findings). The results should be a "convergence" between the testimonies and the documents, i.e. a reciprocal "confirmation": the documental sources would corroborate the testimonies and vice versa. The most important "convergence" adopted by van Pelt concerns the cremation: Tauber's testimony is said to be "confirmed" on the one hand by other testimonies (those of Jankowski, Dragon, Broad, Müller and Höss) and on the other hand by documents (the ZBL letter of June 18, 1943, and Sanders's patent application).

In reality, as I have shown in chapter 12, such a "convergence" is purely imaginary, because the testimonies are technical nonsense and thus result in a "convergence" on a falsehood, the data in the letter are in total conflict with the experiments carried out at Gusen, and the Sander oven (which was never built and to which van Pelt assigns an inappropriately extrapolated cremation capacity and moreover an absurd operation without additional fuel, which clearly is not mentioned in the patent) has no technical relation whatsoever to the Auschwitz-Birkenau ovens and can therefore not "confirm" anything.

Likewise unfounded is the alleged "convergence of evidence" in respect of the Zyklon B introduction openings, based as it is on fanciful testimonies (Tauber, Kula), on a drawing which illustrates those fantasies graphically (Olère), and on an aerial photograph interpreted in a just as fantastic a manner.

In conclusion we may therefore say that the testimonies produced by van Pelt are not "independent" (and many are not even "in agreement") and the documents – whose content he systematically disfigures – provide for their part no "confirmation" at all. This destroys his historical method in a radical way and completely refutes all the conclusions which are based upon it.

less than the 21,300 m³ mentioned above. In fact, 9 graves were opened by order of the district judge Cz. Godziszewski on October 12, 1945, during his investigations, and the area remained accessible for indiscriminate diggings by the local population in search of valuables until the end of 1963. This caused, among other things, a fusion of small neighboring graves into larger units by the removal of the earth that had originally separated them. In any case, the graves at Belzec demonstrate that this camp was not one in which mass exterminations were carried out. Mattogno 2004o, pp. 71-96.

Table 27: Labor Kommandos in Auschwitz acc. to Otto Wolken	
ARBEITSKOMMANDO (TRANSLATION)	ARBEITSPLATZ (TRANSLATION)
Abbruchkommando Bauleitung (demolition detail of construction office)	b. DAW (AT DAW)
Arbeitseinsatz (Work assignment)	Baracke Abteilung III (barrack, dep. III)
Aufräumungskommando DEST (clean-up detail DEST)	b. Eisenbahnbrücke (at railroad bridge)
Baubüro (construction office)	Bauleitungsbaracken (bauleitung barracks)
Bauhof (storage yard)	Bauhof (storage yard)
BBD (BBD [*?*])	BBD
Bekleidungswerkstätten (clothing workshop)	Lagererweiterung (camp enlargement)
Betonkolonne Huta (concrete detail of Huta Co.)	Auschwitz
Brotauflader (bread loaders)	Lagerbäckerei (camp bakery)
Brunnenbohrer Spiar [*Spirra*] (well-driller Spiar [*Spirra*])	b. Bauleitungsbaracke (at barracks of construction office)
Brunnenbohrer Wodak (well-driller Wodak)	Lagerbereich (camp area)
DAW. – Hallen (DAW-Halls)	b. DAW (at DAW)
DAW/Deutsche Ausrichtungs Werke[918] (German Equipment Works)	DAW
DAW/Werkstätten (DAW workshops)	bei Werkstätten DAW (at DAW workshops)
Druckerei (printing shop)	Lagererweiterung (camp enlargement)
Elektriker Verwaltung (administration, electricians)	BBD
Entseuchungskommando (disinfestation detail)	Lagerbereich (camp area)
Entwesungskammer (disinfestation chamber)	bei DAW (at DAW)
Erweiterungsarbeiten (enlargement works)	b. Haus VII (at house VII)
Essenfahrer (Food drivers)	innerhalb u. ausserhalb (interior and exterior)
Fa. Boos Aufnahmegebäude (Boos Co., reception building)	Truppenlazarett (troop sickbay)
Fa. Boos Transportkommando (Boos Co., transport detail)	Werkhalle (work hall)
Fa. Industrie Bau A.G. (company name)	Sicher-Werkstätte (security workshop)
Fa. Niegel Ofenbau (company name)	Lagererweiterung (camp en-

[918] Recte: Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke.

ARBEITSKOMMANDO (TRANSLATION)	ARBEITSPLATZ (TRANSLATION)
	largement)
Fa. Petersen (company name)	hin. Bauleitungsbaracken (behind[?] barracks of construction office)
Fa. Wagner (company name)	Neue Wäscherei (new laundry)
Fahrbereitschaft Bauleitung (motor pool of construction office)	Bauhof (storage yard)
Fahrbereitschaft Kommandantur (head quarter motor pool)	Lagerbereich (camp area)
Faulgasanlage (waste water gas plant)	Auschwitz
Feuerlöschteich (fire-fighting reservoir)	b. Sicher. Werkstätte Lenz (at Security(?) Workshop Lenz)
Feuerlöschteich (fire-fighting reservoir)	Rajsko (village near Auschwitz)
Flusskies (river gravel)	Rajsko
Flusskies DEST (river gravel DEST)	a.d. Sola (sola river)
Fourier (food supply)	Kommandantur (headquarters)
Fourier Baubüro (food supply construction office)	Bauleitung Baracken (barracks of construction office)
Garagen Prahga-Halle (Garages Praga-Hall)	Praga Halle (Praga hall)
Gärtner Aussen (gardeners, exterior)	SS-Siedlung (SS-housing area)
Gärtner Bauleitung (gardeners, construction office)	Bauleitungsbaracken (barracks of construction office)
Gärtner Haus Höss (gardeners, Höss house)	Haus Höss (höss house)
Gärtnerei Rajsko (Rajsko horticulture)	Rajsko
Gemeinschaft Schuhe (community, shoes)	b. Monopol-Gebäude (at Monopol building)
Gemeinschaftsküche (community kitchen)	DAW.–Unterkünfte (DAW lodgings)
Gemeinschaftslager (community camp)	bei Werkhalle (at work hall)
Getreidespeicher (grain storage)	Monopolgebäude (monopol building)
Grasmäher Bauleitung (lawn mowers, construction office)	b. Bauleitungsbaracke (at barracks of construction office)
Haus 157 (House 157)	Haus 157 (house 157)
Holzhof (lumber yard)	Holzhof (lumber yard)
Hygiene Institut Rajsko (Rajsko hygiene institute)	Rajsko
Kantine Wirtschaftsbaracke (mess hall facilities)	Wirtschaftsbaracke (mess hall barrack)
Kantinenverwaltung (mess hall administration)	Haus VII (house VII)
Kartoffelfahrer (potato drivers)	Kartoffelbunker (potato bunker)
Kartoffelschäler (potato peelers)	SS-Küche (SS-kitchen)
Kohlenplatz (coal storage)	Kohlenplatz (coal yard)

ARBEITSKOMMANDO (TRANSLATION)	ARBEITSPLATZ (TRANSLATION)
Koksablader und Heizer (coke unloaders and stokers)	Monopol-Gebäude (Monopol building)
Kurzwellenentwesung (short-wave disinfestation)	Neue Wäscherei (new laundry)
Lagerbäckerei Tagschicht/Nachtschicht (camp bakery day-shift/night-shift)	Lagerbäckerei (camp bakery)
Lederfabrik (leather factory)	Auschwitz
Luftschutz (civil defense [*air-raids*])	Baracke Abteilung III (barrack dept. III)
Luftwaffenbaracke Rajsko (*Luftwaffe* barrack Rajsko)	Rajsko
Materialschuppen (storage shed)	Neuer Bauhof (new storage yard)
Mehlfahrer (flour drivers)	b. Mühle Auschwitz (at Auschwitz mill)
Melioration Bauleitung (soil improvement, Bauleitung)	Bauleitungsbaracken (barracks of construction office)
Molkerei (dairy)	beim Schlachthaus (at slaughter-house)
Mühle Auschwitz (Auschwitz mill)	Auschwitz
Mühlfahrer Landwirtschaft (mill drivers, agriculture)	Lagerbereich (camp area)
Neuer Bauhof (new building yard)	Neuer Bauhof (new storage yard)
Pferdestall-Baracken Bauleitung (horse-stable barracks, construction office)	beim Gemeinschaftslager (at community camp)
Pferdestall Landwirtschaft (horse-stable, agriculture)	Neuer Stall (new stable)
Planierungskommando DLGM (levelling detail DLGM)	DAW–Unterkünfte (DAW lodgings)
Politische Abteilung I (political department I)	Kommandantur (headquarters)
Politische Abteilung II (political department II)	Blockführerstube (block elders room)
Poststelle (mail service)	Blockführerstube (block elders room)
Provisorische Bäckerei (temporary bakery)	Lagerbäckerei (camp bakery)
Reiniger Kommandantur (janitors, headquarters)	Kommandantur (headquarters)
Reiniger Truppe (janitors, troops)	Lagerbereich (camp area)
Rollkommando (movers)	Holzhof (lumber yard)
Sandgrube Haus Palitsch (sand pit, Palitsch house)	Haus Palitsch (Palitsch house)
Sandgrube Haus VII (sand pit, house VII)	Haus VII (house VII)
Schädlingsbekämpfung (disinfestation)	Lagererweiterung (camp extension)

ARBEITSKOMMANDO (TRANSLATION)	ARBEITSPLATZ (TRANSLATION)
Schlachthaus (slaughter-house)	Lagerbereich (camp area)
Schmiede Landwirtschaft (blacksmith shop, agriculture)	Schmiede (blacksmith shop)
Splittergraben (air-raid trenches)	Auschwitz
SS-Apotheke (SS pharmacy)	SS-Revier (SS sickbay)
SS-Bekleidungskammer (SS clothing store)	Lagererweiterung (camp enlargement)
SS-Friseure (SS barbers)	SS-Revier (SS sickbay)
SS-Küche (SS kitchen)	Wirtschaftsbaracke (mess hall barrack)
SS-Magazin (SS storage)	Wirtschaftsbaracke (mess hall barrack)
SS-Revier (SS sickbay)	SS-Revier (SS sickbay)
SS-Unterkunftskammer (SS housing goods)	Lagererweiterung (camp enlargement)
SS-Zahnstation (SS dentist)	SS-Revier (SS sickbay)
Strasse zum Bahnhof (road to station)	b. Führerheim (at officers' club)
Strassenbau Lagererweiterung (road works, camp enlargement)	Lagererweiterung (camp enlargement)
Strassenbau u. Kanalisation (road works and sewers)	hint. Bauhof (behind storage yard)
Truppenwirtschaftslager (troop goods storage)	TWL (=troop goods storage)
Übergabestation Kluge (transfer station Kluge)	Bauhof (storage yard)
Waffenmeisterei (arms storage)	b. Werkstätten (at workshops)
Warenlager (goods storage)	Theater Gebäude (theater building)
Wasserturm Riedel (Riedel Co. water tower)	Bauhof (storage yard)
Wasserversorgung (water supply)	hin. Bäckerei (behind [?] bakery)
Werkhalle Union (Union Co. work hall)	Werkhalle Union (Union work hall)
Werkstätten Bauleitung (workshops, construction office)	Werkstätten (workshops)
Wirtschaftshof (storage yard)	Lagerbereich (camp area)
Wohnhäuserausbau Rajsko (housing works Rajsko)	Rajsko
Zivilarbeiterwerkstätten (workshops, civilian workers)	b. Gemeinschaftslager (at community camp)

Conclusion

Van Pelt pronounces himself on the subject of historical revisionism with great arrogance and ignorance. He labels the respective literature "an insult to the intellect" (p. 69) and criticizes its alleged incapacity to present a historiographic alternative (p. 318):

> *"The negationists claim to be revisionist historians, but they have yet to produce a history that offers a credible, 'revised' explanation of the events in question."*

This is exactly what I have done in the numerous studies mentioned in the present work. Many of them had appeared prior to "The Pelt Report," some even in English. Still, while van Pelt discusses the theses of all other revisionists who have ever written a few pages on the subject of Auschwitz, he never mentioned me in "The Pelt Report" nor in *The Case for Auschwitz*. His silence is obviously intentional.

In October of 1999, as stated in chapter 8.1 above, John C. Zimmerman published a critique of the English internet version of my article "The Crematoria Ovens of Auschwitz and Birkenau" (1994c). I replied to his unfounded accusations with the article "John C. Zimmerman and 'Body Disposal at Auschwitz': Preliminary Observations,"[919] in which I documented Zimmermann's historical, technical and documental incompetence as well as his glaring bad faith. After my reply he wrote another even sillier article "My Response to Carlo Mattogno."[920] I immediately wrote a long and detailed response – "Supplementary Response to John C. Zimmerman on his 'Body disposal at Auschwitz'"[921] – in which I dismantled one by one all of Zimmermann's claims. This reply was posted on the web in the year 2000. John C. Zimmermann has kept quiet ever since. He did publish a book in the same year with a number of critical remarks leveled against me, but this was simply a rehash of the historical and technical hot air of his previous articles. In spite of this, in a later study I have refuted his fanciful analyses of the Birkenau aerial photographs he showed (2005c, pp. 43-68). It is a fact that Zimmermann has been unable to oppose anything to my final reply, and his silence reflects an unconditional surrender on his part, an ad-

[919] http://vho.org/GB/c/CM/jcz.html
[920] www.holocaust-history.org/auschwitz/response-to-mattogno/
[921] http://vho.org/GB/c/CM/Risposta-new-eng.html

mission that his arguments were unfounded and unsustainable and will remain so.[922]

We must remember that this Zimmermann was one of van Pelt's advisors. In view of the fact that the problem of the cremations has a fundamental significance within van Pelt's kingdom of an alleged "convergence of evidence," as I have already underlined, can one seriously believe that the two men did not discuss at length my above article?

Clearly, they must have come to the conclusion that it was safer not to deal with any questions which they could not handle and which would have threatened to topple van Pelt's already shaky system of proof. And for the same reason they felt that it would be preferable not to deal at all with any of my studies. Ignoring scholarly works of central importance to an issue, though, is first-rate evidence for unscientific behavior, which means that van Pelt's work is scientifically worthless.

The accusation launched by van Pelt against revisionists in general, hence also against me, can therefore easily be deflected: his study of Auschwitz has no scientific and historiographic value,

- because it ignores works of crucial importance;
- because it does not even mention essential opposing views and arguments;
- because it fails to approach pivotal technical issues with technical means;
- because it is highly inconsistent;
- because it uses deceptive methods;
- because it presents conflicting sources without due source criticism;
- because it reveals a decidedly threadbare knowledge of the camp's history;
- because it deforms all sources to serve the alleged "extermination" aspects of Auschwitz;
- and because even regarding the claimed "extermination" aspects it exhibits an incomplete and superficial grasp.

The Case for Auschwitz is neither a scholarly nor a historical work; it is only a biased journalistic assemblage of poorly understood and poorly interpreted historical sources.

[922] Cf. the revised and corrected edition of my answers to Zimmerman: Mattogno 2005f, pp. 87-194.

Appendices

1. Glossary

Abbruchkommando	Demolition detail
Abluft	Exhaust air
Abluftgebläse	Exhaust air blower
Abluftlöcher	Exhaust air vents or holes
Abschlagszahlung	Down payment or part payment
Abschrift	(Type)written copy
Abzugskanal	Exhaust gas channel (flue duct)
Achtmuffel-Einäscherungsofen	8-muffle incineration oven
Aktenvermerk	Note for the file
Amt	Office
Amtsgruppe	Group of offices within SS-WVHA
Amtsgruppenchef	Head of group of offices at SS-WVHA
Ansaugöffnung	Opening for suction
Antragsteller	Applicant
"Anzeigegeräte für Blausäure-Reste"	"Indicating devices for hydrogen cyanide residues" (these devices never existed)
Arbeitseinsatz	Work assignment
Arbeitserziehungslager Auschwitz I	Labor re-education camp at Auschwitz I
Arbeitserziehungslager Birkenau	Labor re-education camp at Birkenau
Arbeitskarte	Work sheet
Arbeitszeit-Bescheinigung	Certificate of hours worked
Areginal	Disinfestant based on ethyl formate
Areginal-Vergasung	Gassing with Areginal
Ascheentnahmetür(en)	Ash removal door(s) in a crematorium oven
Aschekapsel	Urn for corpse ashes
Aschenraum	Urn storage room in a crematorium
Aschenschräge	Inclined plane for ashes in a crematorium oven
Atemeinsätze "J"	Special filters "J"-type for gas-masks
Aufbahrungsraum	Lying in state room for corpses in crematoria
Auffangblech für das Zyklon	Collecting device for Zyklon B pellets in *Kreislaufgerät*
Aufstellung	List
Auftrag	(Work) order
Auftragserteilung	Assignment of an order for work of supply
Aufzug	Elevator
Ausbau, Erweiterung	Extension, finishing (of a building project)
Auskleidekeller	Undressing cellar

Auskleideraum	Undressing room
B-Keller = Belüfteter Keller or	Ventilated cellar/room (*Leichenkeller* 1 of
B-Raum = Belüfteter Raum	Crematoria II and III at Birkenau)
Bäckerei (BW 31)	Bakery (*Bauwerk* 31) at Birkenau
Backöfen	Baking ovens for *Bäckerei*
Badeanstalten für Sonderaktionen	Bathing installations, baths, for special actions
Baderaum	Bathing room
Baracken für Schwerkranke (BW 12b)	Barracks for the seriously ill (*BW 12b*) of *Häftlingslazarett*
Bauabschnitt, BA, B	Construction sector
B I, II, III	Construction sectors I, II and III of Birkenau
BIa, B Ib	Sections of Sector I of Birkenau
BIIa, b, c, d, e, f	Sections of sector II of Birkenau
Bauausgabebuch	Expense ledger for a *Bauwerk*
Baubericht	Construction report
Baufristenplan	Construction schedule for a *Bauwerk*
Bauführer	Head of contruction site
Bauhof	Building materials yard
Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei "Schlesien"	Construction inspectorate of Waffen-SS and police "Silesia"
Bauleiter	Construction superintendent, head of a *Bauleitung*
Bauleitung	Construction (head) office
Bauvorhaben, Vorhaben	Construction project
Bauwerk, BW	Designation of a building or group of similar buildings
Bebauungplan	Construction master plan
Begasungskammer	Gassing chamber for disinfestation
Belüftung	Aeration, ventilation
Belüftungsgebläse	Aeration blower
Bericht	Report
Bestandplan	Inventory blueprint
Bestellschein	Order sheet
Betondruckplatte	Concrete foundation plate to resist ground water pressure
Betrifft, Bezug	Concerns, "re:" (in correspondence)
Birkenwald	Birch grove at Birkenau
Blausäure	Hydrogen cyanide (also hydrocyanic acid)
Blausäure-Entwesung	Disinfestation by means of hydrogen cyanide
Blausäurevergasung	Gassing by means of hydrogen cyanide
Blocksperre	Block closure (detainees not allowed to leave housing barrack(s))
Brausen	Showers
Brauseraum	Shower room
Dauerbetrieb	Continuous operation

D.A.W.	see Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke
"Degasungskammer"	Deformation of *Begasungskammer*, disinfestation chamber using gas
Degesch	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingsbekämpfung; German association for pest control
Degesch-Kreislauf	Degesch system of recirculation of air in disinfestation chambers using Zyklon B
Desinfektion	Disinfection
Desinfektions- und Entwesungsanlage (BW 32), Zentralsauna	Disinfection and disinfestation installation (*BW 32*), *Zentralsauna*
Desinfektionskommando	Disinfection detail
Desinfektionsraum	Disinfection room
Desinfektoren	Disinfectors (also for disinfestation)
Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke, D.A.W.	German Equipment Works, manufacturing construction materials and equipment for the SS
Doppelmuffel-Einäscherungsofen	Double-muffle incineration oven
Dosenöffner	Can opener (for cans containing Zyklon B for *Kreislaufgerät*)
Drahtnetzeinschiebevorrichtung	Wire-mesh introduction device
Drehscheibe	Rotating platform for corpse introduction device
Dreimuffel-Einäscherungsofen	Triple-muffle incineration oven
Druckluftanlage	Compressed air equipment (for crematorium oven)
Druckluftgebläse	Blower for compressed air (dto.)
Druckluftleitung	Compressed air piping (dto.)
Druckrohrleitung	Duct in pressure for a ventilation device
Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung	Implementation of special treatment
Durchführung der Sondermassnahmen	Implementation of special measures
Durchgangslager	(Birkenau) transit camp
Durchgasungsleiter	Person in charge of a disinfestation by means of gas
Effektenlager	Personal goods storage at Birkenau (called Kanada II in camp jargon)
Einäscherungsanlage	Incineration plant
Einäscherungskammer	Incineration chamber
Einäscherungsofen	Incineration oven
Einführrollen, Laufrollen, Führungsrollen	Guide-rolls for the corpse introduction device (*Leicheneinführungs-Vorrichtung*)
Einführtrage, Trage	Stretcher for the introduction of a corpse into the muffle

Einführ(ungs)tür(en)	Muffle door(s) for corpse introduction
Einwurfblende	Feeding trap
Empfangsschein	Receipt
Entlassungen	Releases (from detention)
Entlausungs- und Effektenbaracken (BW 28), Kanada I	(Goods) delousing and storage barracks (*BW 28*) (called Kanada I in the camp jargon
Entlausungsanlage	Delousing plant
Entlausungsbaracke (BW 5a e 5b)	Delousing barrack (BW 5a and 5b)
Entlausungskammer	Delousing chamber
Entlüftungsanlage	De-aeration unit
Entlüftungskanal, Entlüftungs-Leitung	De-aeration conduit
Entlüftungsschacht	De-aeration shaft
Entwesungsapparat	Disinfestation device
Entwesungskammer	Disinfestation chamber
Entwesungsofen	Disinfestation oven
Erläuterungsbericht	Explanatory report
Erziehungshäftlinge	Detainees in re-education
Faulgas	Exhaust gas from waste (water)
Feldofen	Field oven
Fernheizwerk	Centralized heating plant
Fernschreiben	Telex
Fertigstellung	Completion of a *Bauwerk* or a *Bauvorhaben*
Fertigstellungsgrad	Degree of advancement of a *Bauwerk*
Feuerung	Hearth (of gasifier)
Fibel über Normalgaskammern	Operating manual for normal gas chambers
Fleckfieber	Typhus
Fleckfieberepidemie	Typhus epidemic
Frauenkonzentrationslager, FKL	Women's concentration camp
Fuchs	Flue duct
Fuchseinsteigeschacht	Access shaft to flue duct
Funk-Spruch	Radio message
Für die Richtigkeit der Abschrift, F.d.R.d.A.	Certification of (typed) copy
Führerheim	Officers' club
Gasdichte Tür, Gasdichtetür	Gas-tight door
Gaskammer	Gas chamber
Gaskeller	Gas cellar
Gasmaske	Gas-mask
Gasprüfer	Tester (for combusted gas)
Gasrestnachweisgerät für Zyklon	Testing device for Zyklon B residues
Gasrestprobe	Test for gas residues (for disinfestations using hydrogen cyanide)

Gastür	Gas(-tight) door
Gebäudebeschreibung	Building description (document attached to hand-over transaction of a *Bauwerk*)
Gebläse	Blower
Gehäuse zu Gebläsen	Housing for blower(s)
Generalbevollmächtigter für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft	The Plenipotentiary General for the control of the building industry (Reich minister Speer)
Generator	Gasifier
Generatorfüllschacht	Gasifier loading shaft
Generatorfülltür	Trap for gasifier loading shaft
Grundwasser	Ground-water
Gummikappe	Rubber closure for Zyklon B cans
Häftlingslazarett	Detainee hospital or sick-bay in *BA III* of Birkenau
Häftlings-Schlosserei, Schlosserei	(Detainee) metal workshop
Handwinde	Manual winch
Hauptkanalschieber	Gate-valve for main flue duct
Haus der Waffen-SS	Waffen-SS clubhouse and hotel
Hausverfügung	Local decree
Heißluftapparat	Hot-air device for disinfestation
Heißluftentwesung	Disinfestation by means of hot air
Heißluft-Entwesungsanlage	Hot-air disinfestation plant
Heißluft-Entwesungskammer	Hot-air disinfestation chamber
Heizaggregat	Heater (for Degesch *Kreislaufgerät*)
Heizer	Stoker (for crematorium ovens)
Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten, HHB	Main office for management and buildings
Holzablader	Wood unloader (for crematoria)
Holzblende	Wooden shutter
Holzgebläse	Wooden blower
Huta	Construction company from Breslau/Wroclaw
Interessengebiet	Area of interest (area under the jurisdiction of Auschwitz camp)
Kellergeschoß	(semi-)basement
Kennziffer	Assignment code for metals from *SS-Rohstoffamt* (raw materials office) at Berlin-Halensee
KGL, Kriegsgefangenenlager	Camp for prisoners of war
KL, Konzentrationslager	Concentration camp
Kläranlage	Settling pond
Knochenentfettungsapparat	Bone degreasing device
Kohleneinwurffenster	Coal introduction window (in coal storage room of Crematoria IV and V)
Koksfeuerung	Coke-firing
Koksgenerator	Coke-fired gasifier

Kolonne	Work detail, squad
Kolonnenführer	Detail leader
Kommando	Command, unit of detainee workers
Kommandantur	Office of commander, headquarters
Kommandantur-Befehl	Order from commander
Kommandobuch	Ledger of Kommandos
Königsgraben	Main drainage ditch (called *Königsgraben*)
Kontingente	Material assignments
Kontrollschacht	Control shaft
Kostenangebot	Proposed cost (of an order)
Kostenanschlag, Kostenvoranschlag	Cost (pre-)estimate
Krankenbaracken (BW 3e)	Detainee sick-bay barracks (*BW 3e* of *Häftlingslazarett*)
Kratze(n)	Rake(s)
Kreislaufgerät	*Degesch-Kreislauf* apparatus for disinfestation with recirculating air
Krematorium, Krema	Crematorium
Lageplan	Lay-out map
Lager	Camp
Lagerabschnitt	Camp sector
L-Keller = Leichenkeller or L-Raum = Leichenraum	Corpse cellar/room (*Leichenkeller* 2 of Crematoria II and III at Birkenau)
Lagerarzt	Camp physician
Lagersperre	Camp closure (for quarantine)
Landwirtschaftsbetriebe	Agricultural activities (of Auschwitz camp)
Laufschienen	Rails for corpse insertion device (*Leicheneinführungs-Vorrichtung*)
Leichenbaracke	Corpse storage shed or barrack
Leicheneinführungs-Vorrichtung	Corpse insertion device
Leichenhalle	Morgue hall
Leichenhallenbuch	Register for morgue in Block 28 at Auschwitz
Leichenkeller, L-Keller	Corpse cellar; basement morgue
Leichenkommando	Detail of detainees for corpse transportation
Leichenraum, L-Raum	Morgue
Leichenzelle	Cell for corpses (in Crematorium I)
Lufteintritte	Admission vents for combustion air in crematorium ovens
Lufterhitzer	Air heater
Luftkanäle	Channels for combustion air in crematorium ovens
Luftkanalverschlüsse	Closures for air channels in crematorium ovens
Lüftungsleitung	De-aeration conduit in *Kreislaufgerät*
Luftwechsel	(Number of) air exchanges

Männerkonzentrationslager, MKL	Men's concentration camp
Material für Sonderbehandlung	Material for special treatment
Materialien für Judenumsiedlung	Materials for resettlement of Jews
Materialverbrauch	Consumption of materials
Materialverwaltung	Administration of goods' store
Meldung der Fertigstellung	Report of completion of a *Bauwerk* or a *Bauvorhaben* to the head of *Amt C* at SS-WVHA
Muffel	Muffle
Muffelabsperrschieber	Closure for muffle (in 8-muffle oven)
Müllverbrennungsofen	Garbage incinerator (in Crematoria II and III at Birkenau)
Müllverbrennungsraum	Room for garbage incineration
Nachglühraum	Post-combustion chamber
Nachverbrennung	Post-combustion
Nebenlager	Subcamp
Normalgaskammer	Normal or standard gas chamber
Nummernbuch	Ledger of ID numbers assigned to detainees
Ofentüren	Oven doors
offene Verbrennungskammer	Open combustion chamber (in project for Crematorium VI)
Ölfeuerung	Oil or naphtha firing
Ordner	File for documents
Ostwanderung	Migration east (of Jews via Auschwitz where the able-bodied were retained)
Patentanmeldung, PA	Patent application
Pferdestallbaracke	Barrack of horse-stable type
Planrost	Flat grate in hearths
Plateauaufzug	Elevator with simple plate floor
Provisorische Erdbecken	Temporary earth basin (for water treatment)
Prüfbericht	Test report
Rauchkanal	Flue channel
Rauchkanalschieber	Flue channel valve
Rechnung	Invoice
Regenerator	Regenerator
Registratur	(Camp) records office
Reichssicherheitshauptamt	Imperial Security Main Office
reine Seite	Clean side (in a disinfestation device)
Reinigungstür	Opening (for chimney cleaning)
Rekuperator	Recuperator
Ring-Einäscherungs-Ofen	Annular incineration oven
Rollwagenkommando	Detail of detainees assigned to movement of carts
Rost	Grate (of a gasifier)
RSHA	see *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*

Sachgebiete	Technical departments within *Zentralbauleitung*
Sanitätsdienstgrade	Paramedics
Sargeinführungswagen	Coffin introduction cart
Saugleitung	Suction conduit in *Kreislaufgerät*
Saugrohrleitung	Suction tube in a mechanical ventilation device
Saugzuganlage	Induced or forced draft device
Sauna	Sauna
Schamotterost	Refractory grid (in a muffle)
Schamotteroststeine	Refractory bricks for grid
Schieberplatte	Sliding valve plate (for closure of entry opening to forced draft device)
Schlachthaus BV 33B	Slaughter-house at Birkenau, *Bauwerk 33B*
Schlageisen	Chisel-like tool for opening Zyklon B cans
Schlussabrechnung	(Bank) transfer for final payment
Schluss-Rechnung, Schlussrechnung	Final invoice
Schornstein	Chimney
Schutzhäftlinge	Detainees in preventive custody
Sezierraum	Dissecting room
Sofortmaßnahme	Immediate measure
Sofortprogramm	Immediate program
Sonderaktion	Special action
Sonderbaumassnahme	Special construction measure
Sonderbefehl	Special order
Sonderbehandlung	Special treatment
Sonderkeller	Special basement
Sonderkommando	Special detail
Sondermassnahme	Special measure
Sonderprogramm	Special program
Sondertransporte	Special transport
Sperrgebiet	Off-limits zone
Spezialeinrichtungen	Special installations
SS-Neubauleitung	SS-*Bauleitung* for new facilities
SS-Standortarzt	SS garrison surgeon
SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt, SS-WVHA	SS main office for management and administration
Stabsgebäude	HQ building
Stammlager	(Auschwitz) main camp
Standortbefehl	Local order
Standortverwaltung	Local administration (of a military unit)
Stärkebuch	Ledger giving camp strength for Auschwitz men's camp
Stärkemeldung	Series of reports on variations of strength in *Frauenlager*

Sterbebücher	Death registers
Sterbeurkunde	Death certificate
Tagesbericht	Daily report on works
Tätigkeitsbericht	Activity report
Teil-Rechnung	Invoice in part
Totenbuch	Register of deaths (among the Soviet PoWs)
Truppenarzt	Troop surgeon
Übergabeverhandlung	Handover transaction for a *Bauwerk*
unreine Seite	Unclean side in a disinfestation installation
Verbrennung	Cremation, combustion, incineration
Verbrennungsofen	Cremation oven (usually for corpses)
Verbrennungsraum	Cremation room (usually for corpses)
Vergasung	Gassing
Vergasungskeller	Gassing basement
Vergasungsraum	Gassing room
Versandanzeige	Shipping advice
Verschiebewagen	Movable cart (in corpse introduction device)
Verteiler	List of addressees or files for copies of a document
Verwaltung	Administration
Vierwegschalter	Four-way switch (for introduction of a can of Zyklon B into a *Kreislaufgerät*)
Warmluftzuführungsanlage	Hot-air feeding device
Wäscherei- und Aufnahmegebäude mit Entlausungsanlage und Häftlingsbad	Building (*BW* 160) of *Stammlager* for laundry and reception (of detainees) with a disinfestation section and a bathing installation
Waschraum	Corpse washing room (in a crematorium)
Wasseraufbereitungsanlage	Water treatment plant
“Wasserinstallation”	Water pipes, fixtures etc. (in Crematoria IV and V)
Wehrmacht-Frachtbriefe	*Wehrmacht* bill of lading
Werkstätten	Workshops (of Zentralbauleitung)
Werkstättenleiter	Head of workshops
Werkstättenleitung	Workshop administration
WVHA	see *SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt*
Zentralbauleitung	Central construction office
Zivilarbeiter	Civilian employee
Zivilarbeiter-Lager	Camp for civilian employees
Zugverstärkungs-Anlage	Device for increasing draft (in a chimney)

2. Bureaucratic Structures

1. Structure of SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt (1942)

Leiter (head): SS-Gruppenführer Pohl
- Amtsgruppe A – Truppenverwaltung (Troop administration) – SS-Brigadeführer Frank
- Amtsgruppe B – Truppenwirtschaft (Troop management) – SS-Brigadeführer Lörner
- Amtsgruppe C – Bauwesen (Constructions) – SS-Oberführer Kammler
  - Amt C I – Allgemeine Bauaufgaben (General construction activities) – SS-Sturmbannführer Seseman
  - Amt C II – Sonderbauaufgaben (Special construction activities) – SS-Sturmbannführer Kiefer
  - Amt C III – Technische Fachgebiete (Technical sections) – SS-Sturmbannführer Wirt
  - Amt C IV – Künstlerische Fachgebiete (Artistic sections) – SS-Sturmbannführer Blaschek
  - Amt C V – Zentrale Bauinspektion (Central building inspectorate) – SS-Sturmbannführer Lenzer
  - Amt C VI – Bauunterhaltung und Betriebswirtschaft (Maintenance and management of buildings) – SS-Standartenführer Eirenschmalz
- Amtsgruppe D – Konzentrationslager (Concentration camps) – SS-Brigadeführer Glücks
  - Amt D I – Zentralamt (Central office) – SS-Obersturmbannführer Liebehenschel
  - Amt D II – Arbeitseinsatz der Häftlinge (Work assignment of detainees – SS-Sturmbannführer Maurer
  - Amt D III – Sanitätswesen und Lagerhygiene (Camp hygiene and sanitary matters) – SS-Obersturmbannführer Lolling
  - Amt D IV – KL-Verwaltung (Adminstration of concentration camps) – SS-Obersturmbannführer Kaindl
- Amtsgruppe W – Wirtschaftliche Unternehmungen (Commercial activities) – SS-Gruppenführer Pohl

2. Departments (Abteilungen) and Structure of KL Auschwitz

Lagerkommandant: SS-Hauptsturmführer Schwarz.

– Abteilung I – Kommandantur (Camp command)
– Abteilung II – Politische Abteilung (Political department)
– Abteilung III – Schutzhaftlagerführung (Administration of camp for detainees in preventive custody)
– Abteilung IIIa – Arbeitseinsatz (Work assignment)
– Abteilung IV – Verwaltung (Administration)
– Abteilung V – Standortarzt (Garrison surgeon)
– Abteilung VI – Fürsorge, Schulung und Truppenbetreuung (Welfare, schooling and troop social services)
– Zentralbauleitung: Central construction office (SS-Sturmbannführer Karl Bischoff).
– SS-Truppenwirtschaftsmagazine: Depository for food, uniforms and transport equipment for SS troops.
– Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke: German armaments works (company).
– Deutsche Lebensmittel-Werke: German food works (company)
– Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke: German earth and stoneworks (company; quarries).
– Landwirtschaftsbetriebe KL Auschwitz: Agricultural activities of KL Auschwitz (SS-Sturmbannführer Joachim Caesar).
– Hygiene-Institut der Waffen-SS, Rajsko: Institute for bacteriological research at Rajsko (SS-Standartenführer Joachim Mrugowski).

On November 22, 1943, the Auschwitz complex was divided into three camps:
– Konzentrationslager Auschwitz I – Stammlager (Main camp)
Lagerkommandant (camp commander): SS-Obersturmbannführer Liebehenschel
– Konzentrationslager Auschwitz II – Birkenau
Lagerkommandant: SS-Sturmbannführer Hartjenstein
– Konzentrationslager Auschwitz III – Aussenlager (Satellite camps, especially Monowitz)

3. Explanatory Note on the Position of the Auschwitz *Zentralbauleitung* within the Structure of the SS Hierarchy

The Auschwitz construction office was initially called *SS-Neubauleitung* and was headed by *SS-Unterscharführer* August Schlachter. On July 1, 1941, the *SS-Neubauleitung* took on the name of *Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz*. On November 14, 1941, the *Baulei-*

tung was promoted to *Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz*, and its head, *SS-Haupsturmführer* Karl Bischoff (who had succeeded Schlachter on October 1), initially *Bauleiter*, became *Leiter der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz*.

In 1941 the Auschwitz concentration camp constituted the *Bauvorhaben* (construction project) *SS-Unterkunft und Konzentrationslager Auschwitz* of *Waffen SS und Polizei*, and as such it was attached, for all of its technical, financial and administrative aspects, to *AMT II – Bauten* of *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* (HHB), headed by SS-*Oberführer* Kammler. As the camp was located on *Reich* territory, it was attached to the inspectorate of *Amt II*, which had jurisdiction over this region, *viz. Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei Reich Ost*, with its seat at Posen; in November 1941 the latter supervised the *Zentralbauleitungen* at Auschwitz, Danzig, Posen and Breslau (Gdansk, Poznan, Wrocław).

For all questions of construction industry (*Bauwirtschaft*), the *Bauvorhaben* at Auschwitz were attached to the *Gebietsbeauftragter für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft im Wehrkreis VIII*, located at Kattowitz and representing *Reichsminister* Speer in his quality of *Generalbevollmachtigter für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft* (G.B.-Bau). The implementation of a *Bauvorhaben* required, first of all, an administrative act: its placement (*Einstufung*) within the ranking of projects (*Wehrkreisrangfolgelisten*) for the military district concerned, for which a construction approval (*Baufreigabe*) was needed.

Initially, according to the rules of *G.B.-Bau* of July 12, 1941, for the third financial year of the war, this approval was issued by the control commission (*Prüfungskommission*) of military district VIII (*Wehrkreis VIII*) – a branch of *Gebietsbeauftragter für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft im Wehrkreis VIII* – and entailed a location sketch (*Lageskizze*), a description of the project (*Baubeschreibung*) and an approximate cost indication (*Kostenüberschlag*), later replaced by a cost estimate (*Kostenvoranschlag*). Then G.B.-Bau assigned the overall volume (*Bauvolumen*), a notion which specified also the corresponding expense.

From February 1, 1942, onward, *Zentralbauleitung* at Auschwitz, for its financial, technical and administrative aspects, was attached to *Amtsgruppe C – Bauwesen* of *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt* (SS-WVHA), headed by *SS-Oberführer* Kammler, but continued to report to *Reichsminister* Speer for construction questions.

Amt C/I (*Allgemeine Bauaufgaben*) of SS-WVHA, headed by *SS-Sturmbannführer* Sesemann, exercised a supervisory activity for normal building projects and the corresponding costs; *Amt C/III* (*Technische Fachgebiete)*, run by *SS-Sturmbannführer* Wirtz, had the same authority as far as technical projects were concerned.

Within SS-WVHA, the *Bauinspektionen* of *Amt II* of HHB were taken over by *Amt C/V* (*Zentralbauinspektion*), which now had a double role to play: a supervisory one via *Amt C V/1a* (*Bauinspektionen, Zentralbauleitungen und Bauleitungen*), and a financial one via *Amt C V/2a* (*Haushalt und Rechnungslegung*).

The *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei Reich-Ost*, which supervised the Auschwitz *Zentralbauleitung* as early as November 1941, reported to both of these offices. It was later succeeded in the supervisory capacity by *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei* "*Schlesien*," located at Kattowitz, set up in mid-1943, and likewise attached to *Amt C/V* of SS-WVHA.

For questions of construction industry, *Zentralbauleitung* reported to Speer via two branches of his organization: *Gebietsbeauftragter des Generalbevollmächtigten für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft im Wehrkreis VIII*, located at Kattowitz, which handled administrative questions (*Einstufung*, *Baufreigabe*, etc.), and *Der Gebietsbeauftragte für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft im Wehrkreis VIII*, located at Breslau, which handled the assignment of building materials.

Aspects of camp sanitation were in the competence of *Amt D III*, *Sanitätswesen und Lagerhygiene* (Camp health and hygiene) of SS-WVHA, headed by *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Enno Lolling.

4. Sectors of *Zentralbauleitung* at Auschwitz in January 1943

1) *Sachgebiet Hochbau*: Structural engineering
2) *Sachgebiet Tiefbau*: Civil engineering
3) *Sachgebiet Bewässerung*: Irrigation
4) *Sachgebiet Meliorationen und Vermessung*: Soil improvement and surveying
5) *Sachgebiet Planung*: Planning
6) *Rohstoffstelle und Einkauf*: Raw materials and purchasing
7) *Verwaltung*: Administration
8) *Fahrbereitschaft*: Motor pool
9) *Technische Abteilung*: Technical services
10) *Arbeitseinsatz*: Work assignment

11) *Werkstätten*: Workshops
12) *Zimmereibetrieb und Dachdeckerbetrieb*: Carpentry work and roofing
13) *Gartengestaltung*: Gardens/Landscaping
14) *Sachgebiet Statistik*: Statistics

5. *Bauleitungen* Attached to Auschwitz *Zentralbauleitung*, January 1943

I: Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz. K.L. Auschwitz und Landwirtschaft Auschwitz / Construction Office of Waffen-SS and police Auschwitz. Auschwitz concentration camp and Auschwitz agricultural projects
II: Bauleitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers / Construction Office of prisoner of war camp (Birkenau)
III: Bauleitung Industriegelände Auschwitz / Construction Office of Auschwitz industrial area
IV: Bauleitung Hauptwirtschaftslager der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz und Truppenwirtschaftslager Oderberg / Construction Office of supply camp for Waffen-SS and police as well as for troop requirements at Oderberg
V: Bauleitung Werk und Gut Freudenthal und Gut Partschendorf / Construction Office for Freudenthal works and agricultural estate and Partschendorf agricultural estate.

6. Organization of J.A.Topf & Söhne Co., Erfurt, in the Late 1930s

Abteilung A: Getreidepflege-Anlagen (Installations for grain conservation; sections 1-8)
Abteilung B: Heizung – Lüftung – Gebläsebau (heating – ventilation – blowers; sections 9-17)
Abteilung C: Stahlbau (steel structures; sections 18-20)
Abteilung D I: Kesselhaus- u. Feuerungsbau (Boiler plants and furnaces)

(section 21) Furnaces with horizontal grates / Planrostfeuerungen
(section 22) Semi-mechanical furnaces / Halbmechanische Feuerungen
(section 23) Other types of furnaces / Sonstige Feuerungen
(section 24) Grate feeders / Rostbeschicker
(section 25) Individual parts of grates, fixtures for furnaces / Einzelne Rostteile, Feuerungsarmaturen

(section 26) F.A.V. superheaters and other proprietary systems / Überhitzer F.A.V. und Anderes eigener Bauart
(section 27) Free-standing steam boilers, economizers and accessories / Dampfkesssel, Economiser und Zubehör (ohne Einmauerung)
(section 28) Brickwork and other building tasks for D I / Einmauerungen und sonstige Bauarbeiten für D I
(section 29) Brickwork and other building tasks for D II / Einmauerungen und sonstige Bauarbeiten für D II
(section 30) Other spare parts (without grate supports and furnace castings) / Sonstige Ersatzteile (ohne Roststäbe und Feuerungsguss)
(section 31) Purchased parts (according to list) / Bezogene Gegenstände (laut Liste)
(section 32) Metal workshop / Schlosser-Montagen
(section 33) Subcontractors /Auswärts vergebene Arbeiten

Abteilung D II: Topf-Rost Bau (Construction of Topf grates)
(section 34) Fully automatic furnaces (free-standing) / Vollmechanische Feuerungsanlagen (ohne Einmauerung)
(section 35) Single grate parts, furnace fittings / Einzelne Rostteile, Feuerungsarmaturen
(section 36) Purchased parts (according to list) / Bezogene Gegenstände (laut Liste)
(section 37) Metal workshop / Schlosser-Montagen

Abteilung D III: Industrieschornsteinbau (Industrial chimneys)
(section 38) Industrial chimneys, fixed-price / Industrie-Schornsteinbau zum Festpreis
(section 39) Flue gas channels, fixed price / Rauchkanäle zum Festpreis
(section 40) Work at hourly rates / Zeitlohnarbeiten
(section 41) Subcontracted work (at fixed price and hourly rates) / Auswärts vergebene Arbeiten (Festpreis u. Zeitlohn)

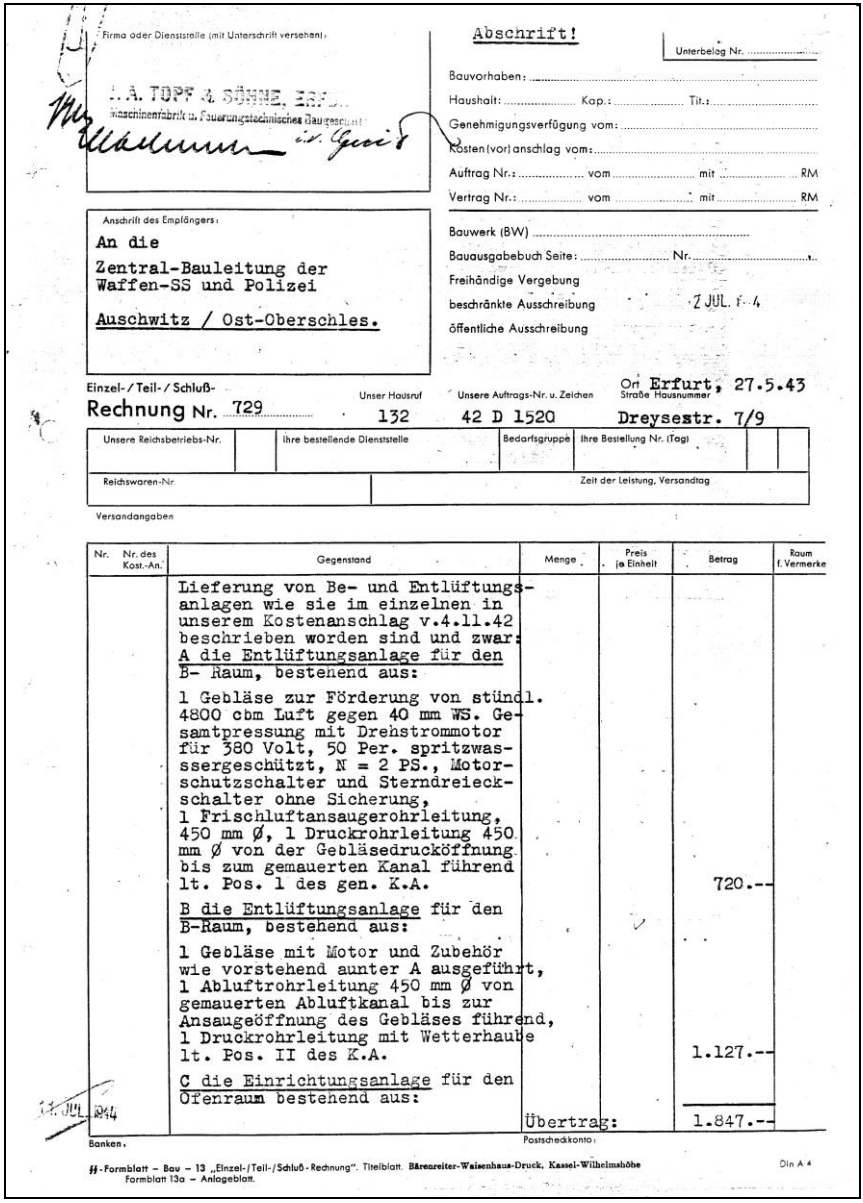
Abteilung D IV: Ofenbau (Ovens)
(section 42) Crematoria (complete) / Krematorien (komplett)
(section 43) [Garbage] destruction ovens, recovery ovens [for (precious) metals] (complete) / Vernichtungsöfen, Rückgewinnungsöfen (komplett)
(section 44) Spare parts / Ersatzteile
(section 45) Purchased parts (according to list) / Bezogene Gegenstände (laut Liste)
(section 46) Brick work / Maurer-Montagen
(section 47) Metal work / Schlosser-Montagen

Abteilung E I: Mälzereibau (Malt houses; (sectors 48-68)
Abteilung E II: Speicherbau (Silos; (sectors 69-76)
Abteilung E III: Luftförder-Anlagen (pneumatic conveyors; (sectors 77-81)
Abteilung E IV: Kornbearbeitungs-Anlagen (Grain handling plants; (sectors 82-89)
Abteilung F: Mechanische Förderanlagen (Mechanical conveyors; (sectors 90-95)
Abteilung Betrieb (Operations; sectors 96-99)

3. SS Ranks and U.S. Army Equivalents

SS	U.S. ARMY
SS Mann	Private
Sturmmann	Private First Class
Rottenführer	Corporal
Unterscharführer	Sergeant
Scharführer	Staff Sergeant
Oberscharführer	Technical Sergeant
Hauptscharführer	Master Sergeant
Sturmscharführer	First Sergeant
Untersturmführer	Second Lieutenant
Obersturmführer	First Lieutenant
Hauptsturmführer	Captain
Sturmbannführer	Major
Obersturmbannführer	Lieutenant Colonel
Standartenführer	Colonel
Oberführer	Colonel
Brigadeführer	Brigadier General
Gruppenführer	Lieutenant General
Obergruppenführer	General
Oberstgruppenführer	General of the Army

4. Documents



Firma oder Dienststelle (mit Unterschrift versehen):

J. A. TOPF & SÖHNE, ERF...
Maschinenfabrik u. feuerungstechnisches Baugeschäft

Abschrift!

Unterbelag Nr. .....

Bauvorhaben: .....
Haushalt: ..... Kap.: ..... Tit.: .....
Genehmigungsverfügung vom: .....
Kosten(vor)anschlag vom: .....
Auftrag Nr.: ..... vom ..... mit ..... RM
Vertrag Nr.: ..... vom ..... mit ..... RM

Anschrift des Empfängers:
An die
Zentral-Bauleitung der
Waffen-SS und Polizei
Auschwitz / Ost-Oberschles.

Bauwerk (BW) .....
Bauausgabebuch Seite: ..... Nr. .....
Freihändige Vergebung
beschränkte Ausschreibung — 7 JUL. f. 4
öffentliche Ausschreibung

Einzel-/Teil-/Schluß-Rechnung Nr. 729 | Unser Hausruf 132 | Unsere Auftrags-Nr. u. Zeichen 42 D 1520 | Ort Erfurt, 27.5.43 | Straße Hausnummer Dreysestr. 7/9

Unsere Reichsbetriebs-Nr.		Ihre bestellende Dienststelle	Bedarfsgruppe	Ihre Bestellung Nr. (Tag)		
Reichswaren-Nr.		Zeit der Leistung, Versandtag				

Versandangaben

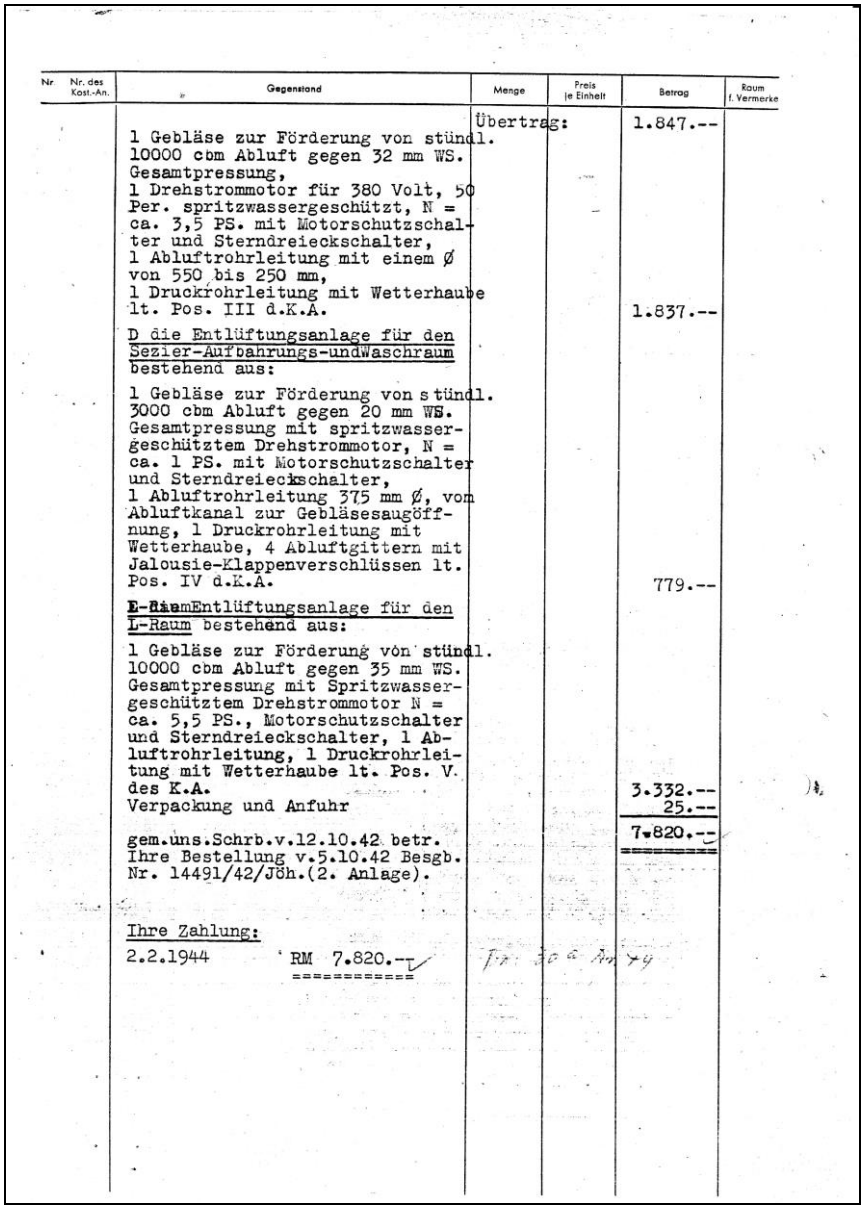
Nr.	Nr. des Kost.-An.	Gegenstand	Menge	Preis je Einheit	Betrag	Raum f. Vermerke
		Lieferung von Be- und Entlüftungs-anlagen wie sie im einzelnen in unserem Kostenanschlag v.4.11.42 beschrieben worden sind und zwar: A die Entlüftungsanlage für den B- Raum, bestehend aus: 1 Gebläse zur Förderung von stündl. 4800 cbm Luft gegen 40 mm WS. Gesamtpressung mit Drehstrommotor für 380 Volt, 50 Per. spritzwassergeschützt, N = 2 PS., Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter ohne Sicherung, 1 Frischluftansaugerohrleitung, 450 mm Ø, 1 Druckrohrleitung 450 mm Ø von der Gebläsedrucköffnung bis zum gemauerten Kanal führend lt. Pos. 1 des gen. K.A.			720.--	
		B die Entlüftungsanlage für den B-Raum, bestehend aus: 1 Gebläse mit Motor und Zubehör wie vorstehend aunter A ausgeführt, 1 Abluftrohrleitung 450 mm Ø von gemauerten Abluftkanal bis zur Ansaugeöffnung des Gebläses führend, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube lt. Pos. II des K.A.			1.127.--	
		C die Einrichtungsanlage für den Ofenraum bestehend aus:				
				Übertrag:	1.847.--	

13. JUL. 1944

Banken: Postscheckkonto:

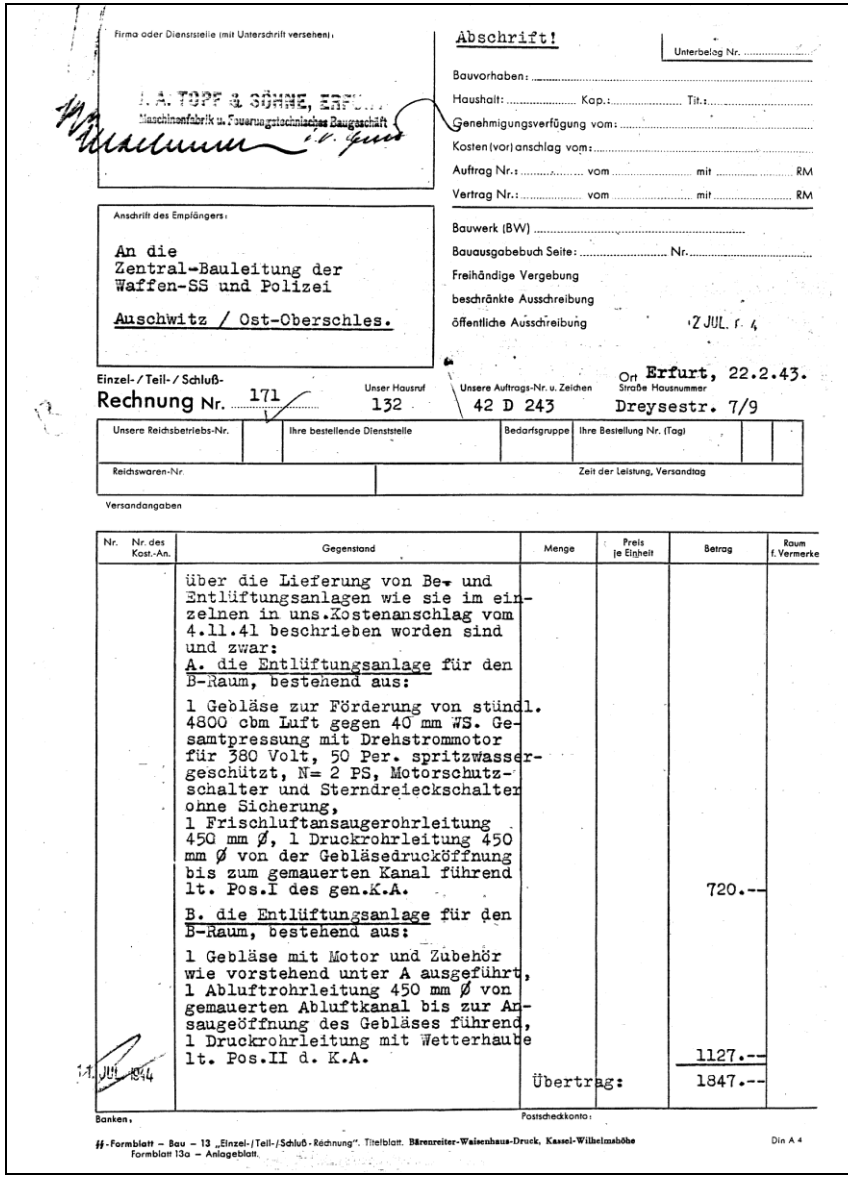
#-Formblatt – Bau – 13 „Einzel-/Teil-/Schluß-Rechnung". Titelblatt. Bärenreiter-Waisenhaus-Druck, Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe
Formblatt 13a – Anlageblatt. DIN A 4

Document 1: Topf invoice no. 729 dated May 27, 1943, concerning the ventilation equipment for Crematorium III at Birkenau. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 16 and 16a.



Nr	Nr. des Kost.-An.	Gegenstand	Menge	Preis je Einheit	Betrag	Raum f. Vermerke
			Übertrag:		1.847.--	
		1 Gebläse zur Förderung von stündl. 10000 cbm Abluft gegen 32 mm WS. Gesamtpressung, 1 Drehstrommotor für 380 Volt, 50 Per. spritzwassergeschützt, N = ca. 3,5 PS. mit Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter, 1 Abluftrohrleitung mit einem Ø von 550 bis 250 mm, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube lt. Pos. III d.K.A.			1.837.--	
		D die Entlüftungsanlage für den Sezier-Aufbahrungs-undWaschraum bestehend aus:				
		1 Gebläse zur Förderung von stündl. 3000 cbm Abluft gegen 20 mm WS. Gesamtpressung mit spritzwassergeschütztem Drehstrommotor, N = ca. 1 PS. mit Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter, 1 Abluftrohrleitung 375 mm Ø, vom Abluftkanal zur Gebläsesaugöffnung, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube, 4 Abluftgittern mit Jalousie-Klappenverschlüssen lt. Pos. IV d.K.A.			779.--	
		E-Raum Entlüftungsanlage für den L-Raum bestehend aus:				
		1 Gebläse zur Förderung von stündl. 10000 cbm Abluft gegen 35 mm WS. Gesamtpressung mit Spritzwassergeschütztem Drehstrommotor N = ca. 5,5 PS., Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter, 1 Abluftrohrleitung, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube lt. Pos. V. des K.A.			3.332.--	
		Verpackung und Anfuhr			25.--	
		gem.uns.Schrb.v.12.10.42 betr. Ihre Bestellung v.5.10.42 Besgb. Nr. 14491/42/Jöh.(2. Anlage).			7.820.--	
		Ihre Zahlung:				
		2.2.1944 RM 7.820.--				

Document 1: continued.



Firma oder Dienststelle (mit Unterschrift versehen):

J. A. TOPF & SÖHNE, ERF...
Maschinenfabrik u. Feuerungstechnisches Baugeschäft

Abschrift!

Unterbelag Nr. .....

Bauvorhaben: .....
Haushalt: ..... Kap.: ..... Tit.: .....
Genehmigungsverfügung vom: .....
Kosten (vor) anschlag vom: .....
Auftrag Nr.: ..... vom ..... mit ..... RM
Vertrag Nr.: ..... vom ..... mit ..... RM

Anschrift des Empfängers:

An die
Zentral-Bauleitung der
Waffen-SS und Polizei

Auschwitz / Ost-Oberschles.

Bauwerk (BW) .....
Bauausgabebuch Seite: ..... Nr. .....
Freihändige Vergebung
beschränkte Ausschreibung
öffentliche Ausschreibung

Z JUL. 4

Einzel- / Teil- / Schluß-
Rechnung Nr. 171

Unser Hausruf: 132

Unsere Auftrags-Nr. u. Zeichen: 42 D 243

Ort: **Erfurt**, 22.2.43.
Straße Hausnummer: Dreysestr. 7/9

Unsere Reichsbetriebs-Nr.		Ihre bestellende Dienststelle	Bedarfsgruppe	Ihre Bestellung Nr. (Tag)		
Reichswaren-Nr.			Zeit der Leistung, Versandtag			

Versandangaben

Nr.	Nr. des Kost.-An.	Gegenstand	Menge	Preis je Einheit	Betrag	Raum f. Vermerke
		über die Lieferung von Be- und Entlüftungsanlagen wie sie im einzelnen in uns. Kostenanschlag vom 4.11.41 beschrieben worden sind und zwar:				
		A. die Entlüftungsanlage für den B-Raum, bestehend aus:				
		1 Gebläse zur Förderung von stündl. 4800 cbm Luft gegen 40 mm WS. Gesamtpressung mit Drehstrommotor für 380 Volt, 50 Per. spritzwassergeschützt, N= 2 PS, Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter ohne Sicherung, 1 Frischluftansaugerohrleitung 450 mm Ø, 1 Druckrohrleitung 450 mm Ø von der Gebläsedrucköffnung bis zum gemauerten Kanal führend lt. Pos.I des gen.K.A.			720.--	
		B. die Entlüftungsanlage für den B-Raum, bestehend aus:				
		1 Gebläse mit Motor und Zubehör wie vorstehend unter A ausgeführt, 1 Abluftrohrleitung 450 mm Ø von gemauerten Abluftkanal bis zur Ansaugeöffnung des Gebläses führend, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube lt. Pos.II d. K.A.			1127.--	
			Übertrag:		1847.--	

11. JUL. 1944

Banken:

Postscheckkonto:

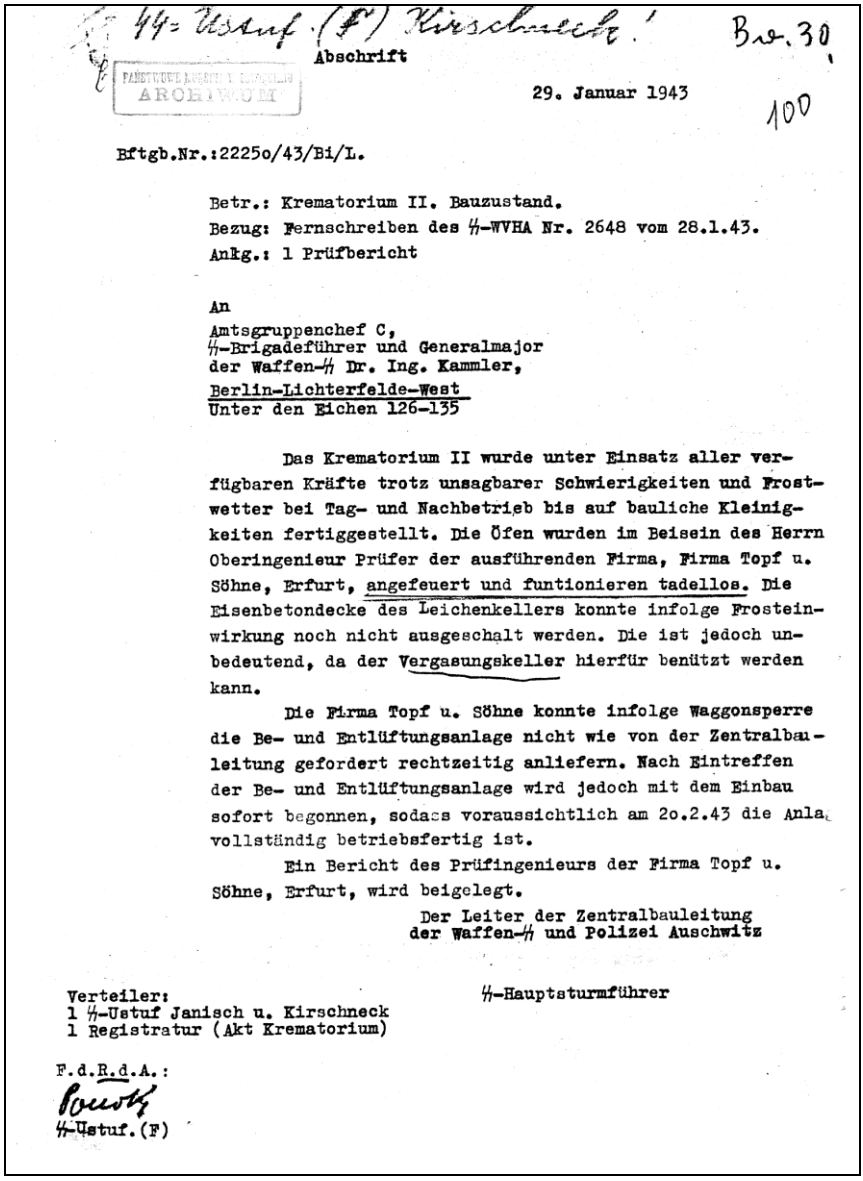
ff-Formblatt – Bau – 13 „Einzel-/Teil-/Schluß-Rechnung". Titelblatt. Bärenreiter-Waisenhaus-Druck, Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe
Formblatt 13a – Anlageblatt.

DIN A 4

Document 2: Topf invoice no. 171 dated February 22, 1943, concerning the ventilation equipment for Crematorium II at Birkenau. RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 25 and 25a.

Nr	Nr. des Kost.-An.	Gegenstand	Menge	Preis je Einheit	Betrag	Raum f. Vermerke
			Übertrag:		1847.--	
		C. die Einrichtungsanlage für den Ofenraum, bestehend aus: 1 Gebläse zur Förderung vonstündl. 10000 cbm Abluft gegen 32 mm WS Gesamtpressung, 1 Drehstrommotor für 380 Volt, 50 Per. spritzwassergeschützt, N= ca. 3,5 PS., mit Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter, 1 Abluftrohrleitung mit einem Ø von 550 bis 250 mm, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube lt. Pos. III d. KIA.			1837.--	
		D. die Entlüftungsanlage für den Sezier-Aufbahrungs-u.Waschraum bestehend aus: 1 Gebläse zur Förderung von stündl. 3000 cbm Abluft gegen 20 mm WS. Gesamtpressung mit spritzwassergeschütztem Drehstrommotor, N = ca. 1 PS, mit Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter, 1 Abluftrohrleitung 375 mm Ø vom Abluftkanal zur Gebläseansaugeöffnung, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube, 4 Abluftgittern mit Jalousie-Klappenverschlüssen lt. Pos. IV d.K.A.			779.--	
		E. die Entlüftungsanlage für den L-Raum, bestehend aus: 1 Gebläse zur Förderung von stündl. 10000 cbm Abluft gegen 55 mm WS. Gesamtpressung mit spritzwassergeschütztem Drehstrommotor N = ca. 5,5 PS, Motorschutzschalter und Sterndreieckschalter, 1 Abluftrohrleitung, 1 Druckrohrleitung mit Wetterhaube lt. Pos. V des K.A.			3332.--	
		Verpackung und Anfuhr			25.--	
					7820.--	
		gem.uns.Schrb.v.10.2.1942.				
		Ihre Zahlungen:				
		7.4.1942 RM 4.000.-- ✓				
		4.2.1944 RM 3.820.-- ✓				
		RM 7.820.-- ✓				

Document 2: continued.



44= Ustuf. (F) Kirschneck! Bw. 30

Abschrift

PAŃSTWOWE MUZEUM W OŚWIĘCIMIU
ARCHIWUM

29. Januar 1943

100

Bftgb.Nr.:2225o/43/Bi/L.

Betr.: Krematorium II. Bauzustand.
Bezug: Fernschreiben des SS-WVHA Nr. 2648 vom 28.1.43.
Anlg.: 1 Prüfbericht

An
Amtsgruppenchef C,
SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor
der Waffen-SS Dr. Ing. Kammler,
Berlin-Lichterfelde-West
Unter den Eichen 126-135

Das Krematorium II wurde unter Einsatz aller verfügbaren Kräfte trotz unsagbarer Schwierigkeiten und Frostwetter bei Tag- und Nachbetrieb bis auf bauliche Kleinigkeiten fertiggestellt. Die Öfen wurden im Beisein des Herrn Oberingenieur Prüfer der ausführenden Firma, Firma Topf u. Söhne, Erfurt, angefeuert und funtionieren tadellos. Die Eisenbetondecke des Leichenkellers konnte infolge Frosteinwirkung noch nicht ausgeschalt werden. Die ist jedoch unbedeutend, da der Vergasungskeller hierfür benützt werden kann.

Die Firma Topf u. Söhne konnte infolge Waggonsperre die Be- und Entlüftungsanlage nicht wie von der Zentralbauleitung gefordert rechtzeitig anliefern. Nach Eintreffen der Be- und Entlüftungsanlage wird jedoch mit dem Einbau sofort begonnen, sodass voraussichtlich am 2o.2.43 die Anla vollständig betriebsfertig ist.

Ein Bericht des Prüfingenieurs der Firma Topf u. Söhne, Erfurt, wird beigelegt.

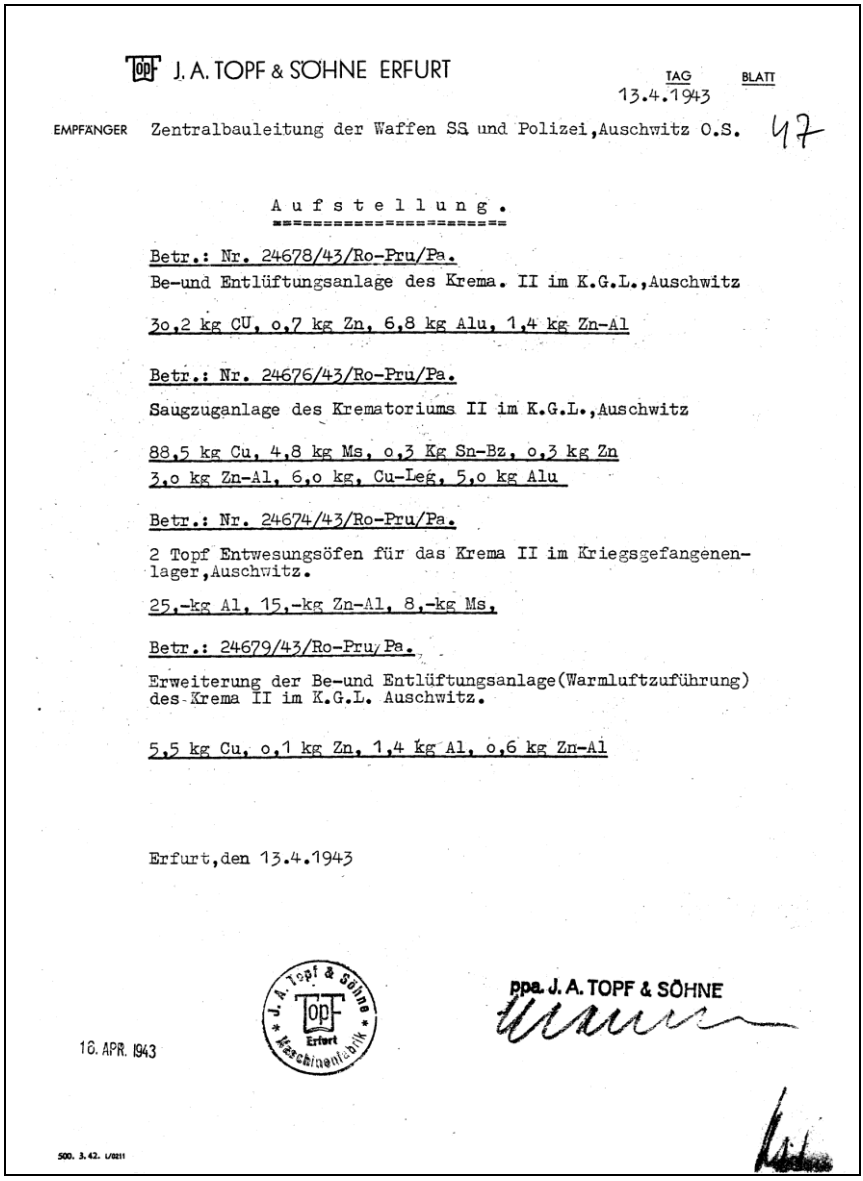
Der Leiter der Zentralbauleitung
der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz

SS-Hauptsturmführer

Verteiler:
1 SS-Ustuf Janisch u. Kirschneck
1 Registratur (Akt Krematorium)

F.d.R.d.A.:
Pouwk
SS-Ustuf.(F)

Document 3: Letter from *Zentralbauleitung* to *SS-Brigadeführer* Kammler dated January 29, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 100.



J. A. TOPF & SÖHNE ERFURT

TAG 13.4.1943 BLATT 47

EMPFÄNGER Zentralbauleitung der Waffen SS und Polizei, Auschwitz O.S.

Aufstellung.

Betr.: Nr. 24678/43/Ro-Pru/Pa.
Be-und Entlüftungsanlage des Krema. II im K.G.L., Auschwitz

30,2 kg CU, 0,7 kg Zn, 6,8 kg Alu, 1,4 kg Zn-Al

Betr.: Nr. 24676/43/Ro-Pru/Pa.

Saugzuganlage des Krematoriums II im K.G.L., Auschwitz

88,5 kg Cu, 4,8 kg Ms, 0,3 Kg Sn-Bz, 0,3 kg Zn
3,0 kg Zn-Al, 6,0 kg, Cu-Leg, 5,0 kg Alu

Betr.: Nr. 24674/43/Ro-Pru/Pa.

2 Topf Entwesungsöfen für das Krema II im Kriegsgefangenenlager, Auschwitz.

25,-kg Al, 15,-kg Zn-Al, 8,-kg Ms,

Betr.: 24679/43/Ro-Pru/Pa.

Erweiterung der Be-und Entlüftungsanlage(Warmluftzuführung) des Krema II im K.G.L. Auschwitz.

5,5 kg Cu, 0,1 kg Zn, 1,4 kg Al, 0,6 kg Zn-Al

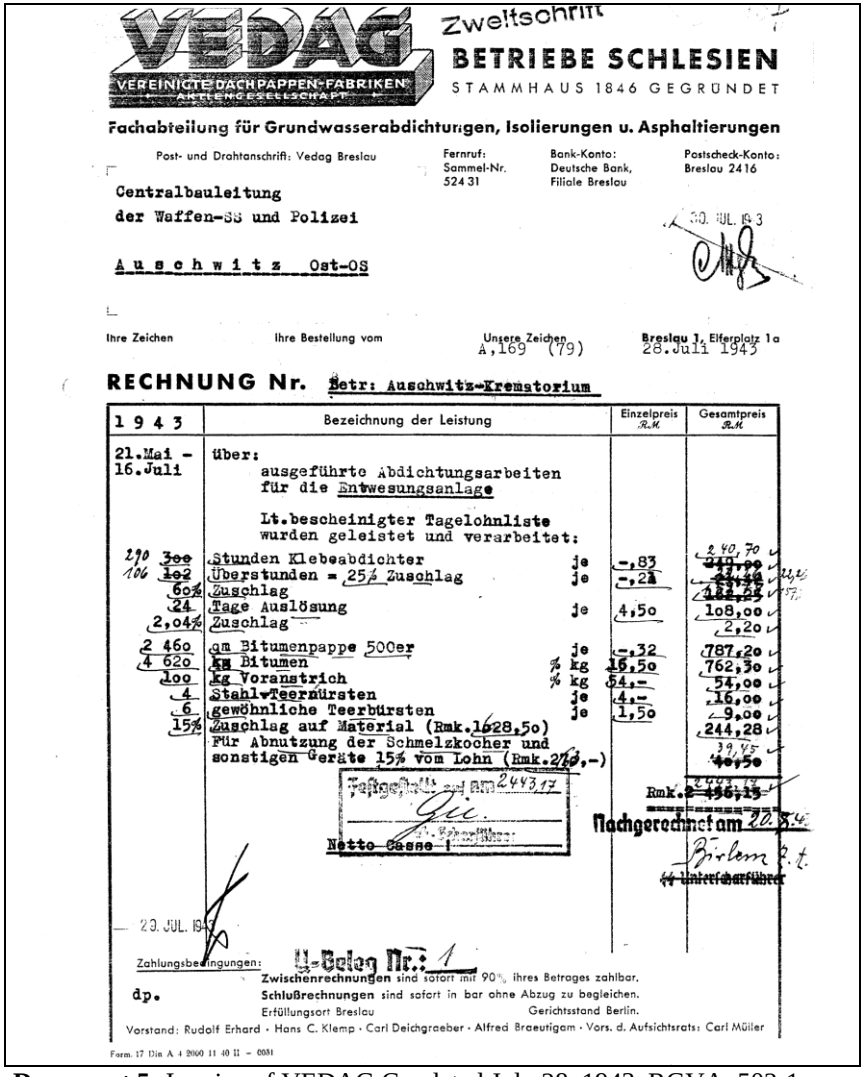
Erfurt, den 13.4.1943

ppa. J. A. TOPF & SÖHNE

16. APR. 1943

500. 3. 42. I/0211

Document 4: *Aufstellung* of Topf dated April 13, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 47



VEDAG
VEREINIGTE DACHPAPPEN-FABRIKEN
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT

Zweitschrift

BETRIEBE SCHLESIEN
STAMMHAUS 1846 GEGRÜNDET

Fachabteilung für Grundwasserabdichtungen, Isolierungen u. Asphaltierungen

Post- und Drahtanschrift: Vedag Breslau | Fernruf: Sammel-Nr. 524 31 | Bank-Konto: Deutsche Bank, Filiale Breslau | Postscheck-Konto: Breslau 2416

Centralbauleitung
der Waffen-SS und Polizei

A u s c h w i t z Ost-OS

30. JUL. 1943

Ihre Zeichen | Ihre Bestellung vom | Unsere Zeichen A,169 (79) | Breslau 1, Elferplatz 1a 28. Juli 1943

RECHNUNG Nr. Betr: Auschwitz-Krematorium

1943	Bezeichnung der Leistung		Einzelpreis RM	Gesamtpreis RM
21.Mai – 16.Juli	über: ausgeführte Abdichtungsarbeiten für die Entwesungsanlage lt.bescheinigter Tagelohnliste wurden geleistet und verarbeitet:			
290 ~~300~~	Stunden Klebeabdichter	je	-,83	240,70
106 ~~102~~	Überstunden = 25% Zuschlag	je	-,21	22,26
~~60%~~	Zuschlag			~~48,96~~ 262,96
~~24~~	Tage Auslösung	je	4,50	108,00
2,04%	Zuschlag			2,20
2 460	qm Bitumenpappe 500er	je	-,32	787,20
4 620	~~kg~~ Bitumen	% kg	16,50	762,30
100	kg Voranstrich	% kg	54,-	54,00
4	Stahl-Teerbürsten	je	4,-	16,00
6	gewöhnliche Teerbürsten	je	1,50	9,00
15%	Zuschlag auf Material (Rmk.1628,50) Für Abnutzung der Schmelzkocher und sonstigen Geräte 15% vom Lohn (Rmk.2~~7~~0,-)			244,28 39,45 ~~46,50~~

Fassgehalt 2443,17
Netto Casse

Rmk. ~~2 496,13~~

Nachgerechnet am 20.8.43
Birlem
~~Unterführer~~

29. JUL. 1943

Zahlungsbedingungen: U-Beleg Nr.: 1
Zwischenrechnungen sind sofort mit 90% ihres Betrages zahlbar.
Schlußrechnungen sind sofort in bar ohne Abzug zu begleichen.
dp. Erfüllungsort Breslau Gerichtsstand Berlin.

Vorstand: Rudolf Erhard · Hans C. Klemp · Carl Deichgraeber · Alfred Braeutigam · Vors. d. Aufsichtsrats: Carl Müller

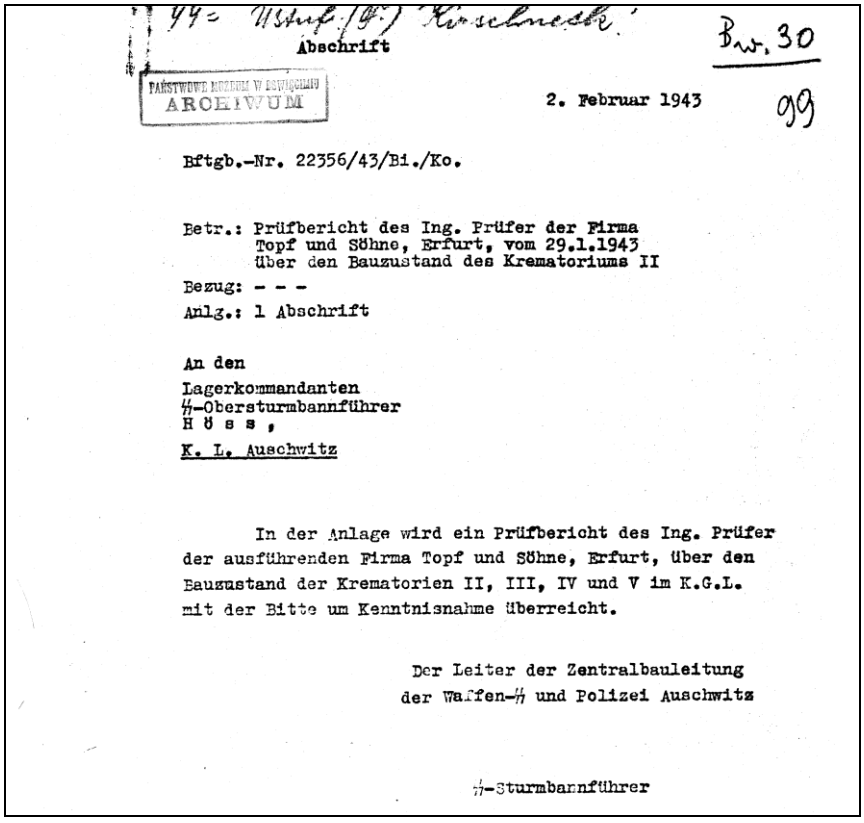
Form. 17 Din A 4 2000 11 40 II – 0081

Document 5: Invoice of VEDAG Co. dated July 28, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 137.

RECHNUNG Nr. Betr: Auschwitz-Krematorium

1943	Bezeichnung der Leistung
21.Mai – 16.Juli	über: ausgeführte Abdichtungsarbeiten für die Entwesungsanlage

Document 5: section enlargement



99= Ustuf. (Ø.) Kirschneck

Bw. 30

Abschrift

PAŃSTWOWE MUZEUM W OŚWIĘCIMIU ARCHIWUM

2. Februar 1943

99

Bftgb.-Nr. 22356/43/Bi./Ko.

Betr.: Prüfbericht des Ing. Prüfer der Firma Topf und Söhne, Erfurt, vom 29.1.1943 über den Bauzustand des Krematoriums II

Bezug: - - -

Anlg.: 1 Abschrift

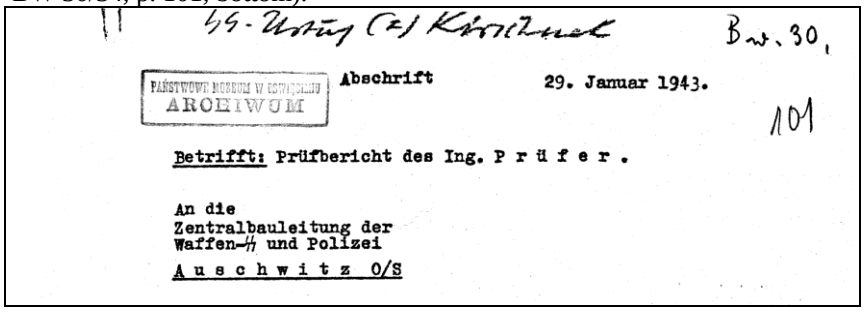
An den
Lagerkommandanten
H-Obersturmbannführer
H ö s s ,
K. L. Auschwitz

In der Anlage wird ein Prüfbericht des Ing. Prüfer der ausführenden Firma Topf und Söhne, Erfurt, über den Bauzustand der Krematorien II, III, IV und V im K.G.L. mit der Bitte um Kenntnisnahme überreicht.

Der Leiter der Zentralbauleitung
der Waffen-H und Polizei Auschwitz

H-Sturmbannführer

Document 6: Letter from Bischoff to Höss dated February 2, 1943 (APMO, BW 30/34, p. 99, top) and Prüfer's report dated January 29, 1943 (APMO, BW 30/34, p. 101, bottom).



11 SS-Ustuf (Ø) Kirschneck

Bw. 30,

PAŃSTWOWE MUZEUM W OŚWIĘCIMIU ARCHIWUM

Abschrift

29. Januar 1943.

101

Betrifft: Prüfbericht des Ing. P r ü f e r .

An die
Zentralbauleitung der
Waffen-H und Polizei
A u s c h w i t z O/S

— 54 —

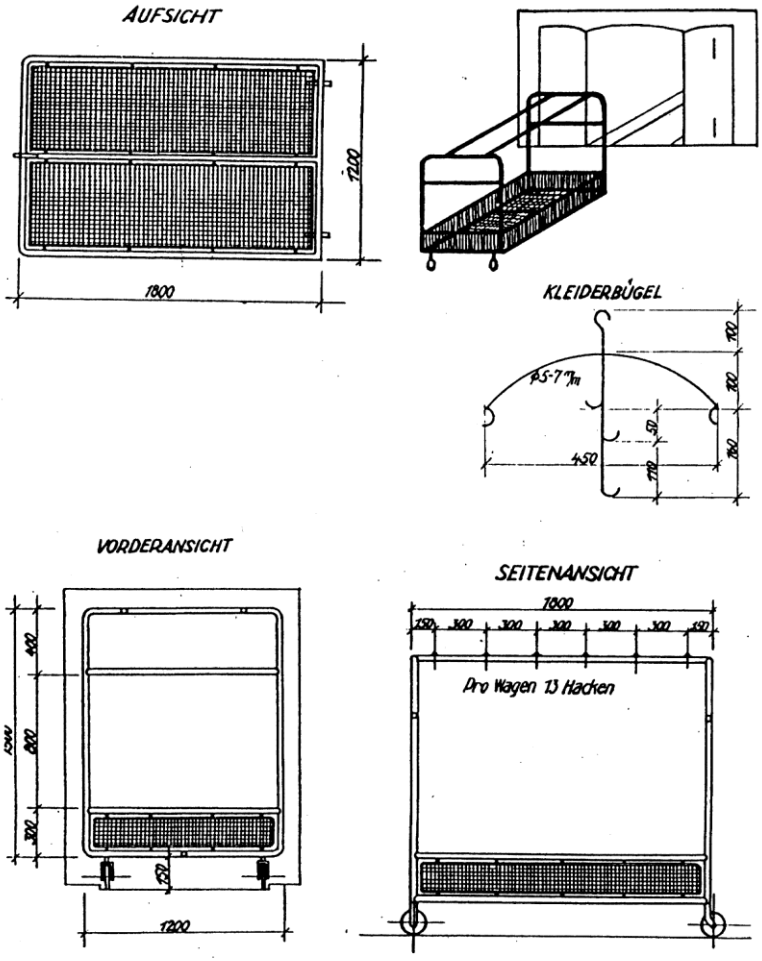
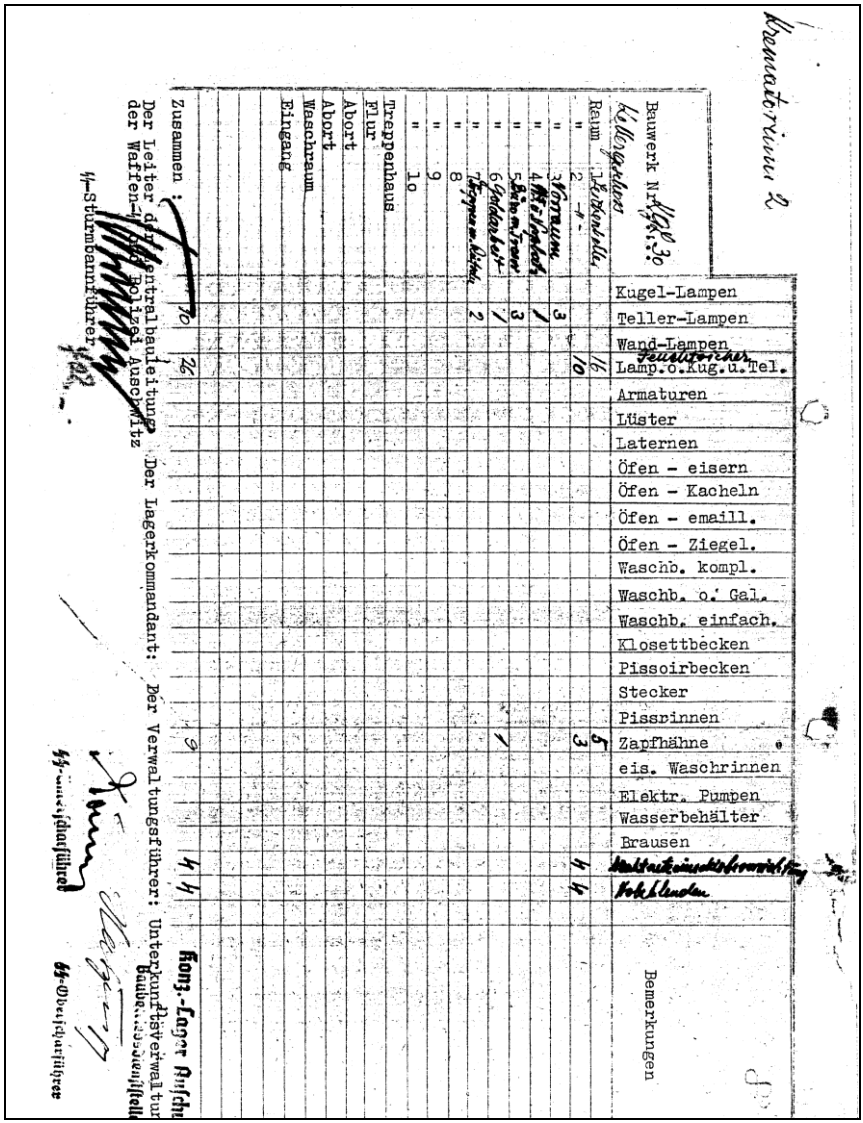


Abb. 18, Transportwagen (Hochbauabteilung Reichsstatthalter in Niederdonau).

Document 7: Mobile frames for hanging garments in disinfestation chambers using hydrogen cyanide. From: Puntigam et al., p. 54.



Krematorium II

Bauwerk Nr. 30

Kellergeschoss

Raum	Kugel-Lampen	Teller-Lampen	Wand-Lampen	Lamp.o.Kug.u.Tel.	Armaturen	Lüster	Laternen	Öfen - eisern	Öfen - Kacheln	Öfen - emaill.	Öfen - Ziegel.	Waschb. kompl.	Waschb. o. Gal.	Waschb. einfach.	Klosettbecken	Pissoirbecken	Stecker	Pissrinnen	Zapfhähne	eis. Waschrinnen	Elektr. Pumpen	Wasserbehälter	Brausen	Bemerkungen
" 2																								
" 3 Vorraum				10																				
" 4 Kellergang		3																						
" 5 Heizraum		1																						
" 6 Gaskammer		3																						
" 7 Treppenhaus		1																						
" 8		2																						
" 9																								
" 10																								
Treppenhaus																								
Flur																								
Abort																								
Waschraum																								
Eingang																								
Zusammen :	70	26																	9				4	4

Der Leiter der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz

SS-Sturmbannführer

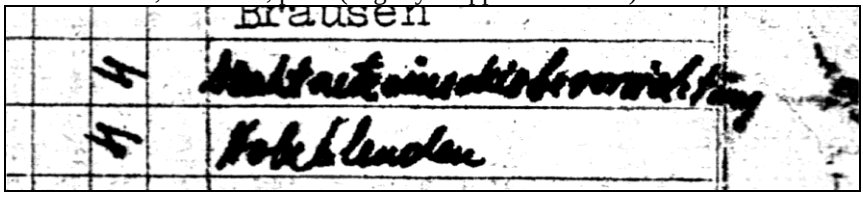
Der Lagerkommandant:

SS-Hauptsturmführer

Der Verwaltungsführer: Unterschrift des Verwaltungsführers

SS-Obersturmführer

Document 8: Inventory of *Kellergeschoss* attached to handover transaction (*Übergabeverhandlung*) of Crematorium II at Birkenau dated March 31, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-54, p. 79 (slightly cropped at bottom).

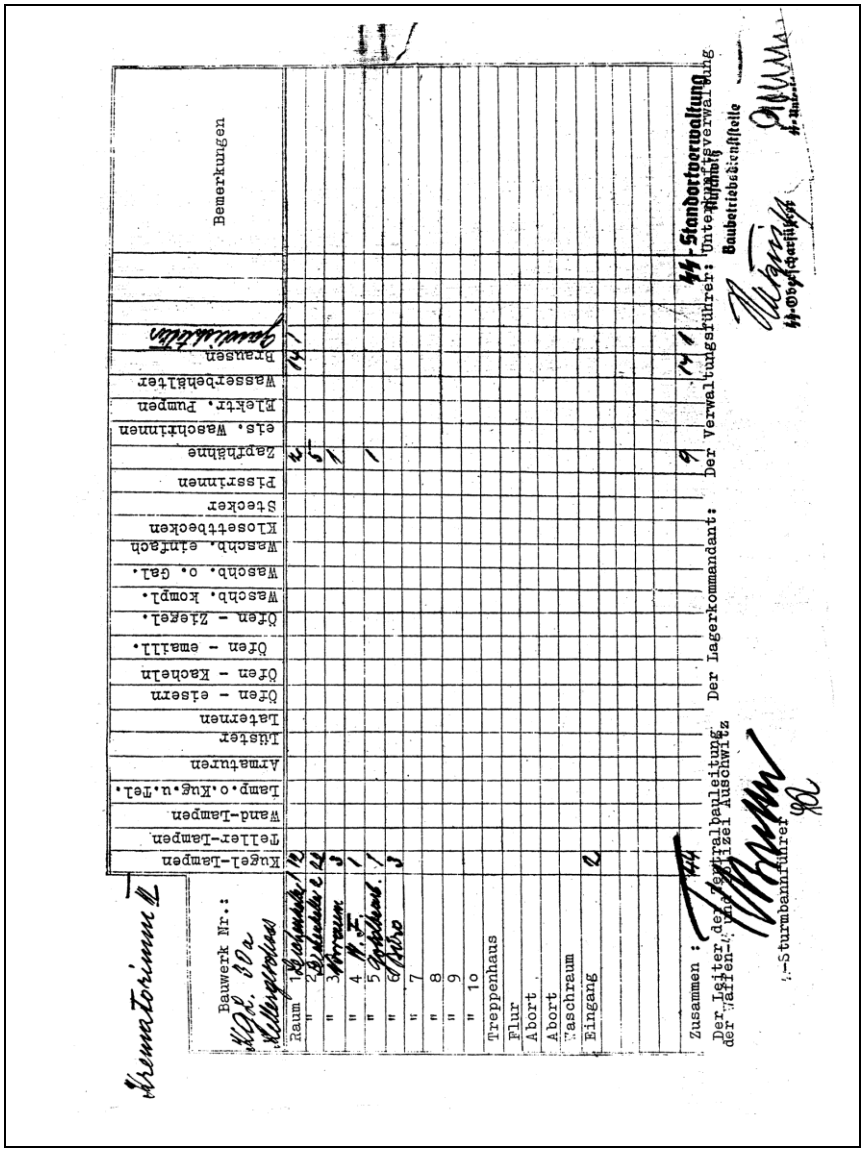


Brausen

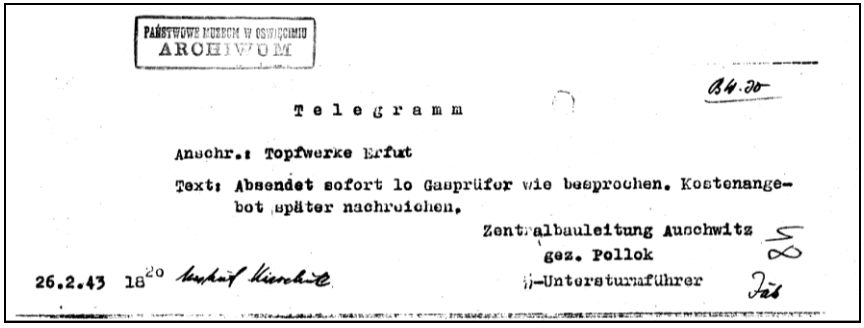
4

4

Document 9: Detail enlargement of Document 8.



Document 10: Inventory attached to handover transaction of Crematorium III of Birkenau dated June 24, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-54, pp. 77f.



PAŃSTWOWE MUZEUM W OŚWIĘCIMIU
ARCHIWUM

Telegramm

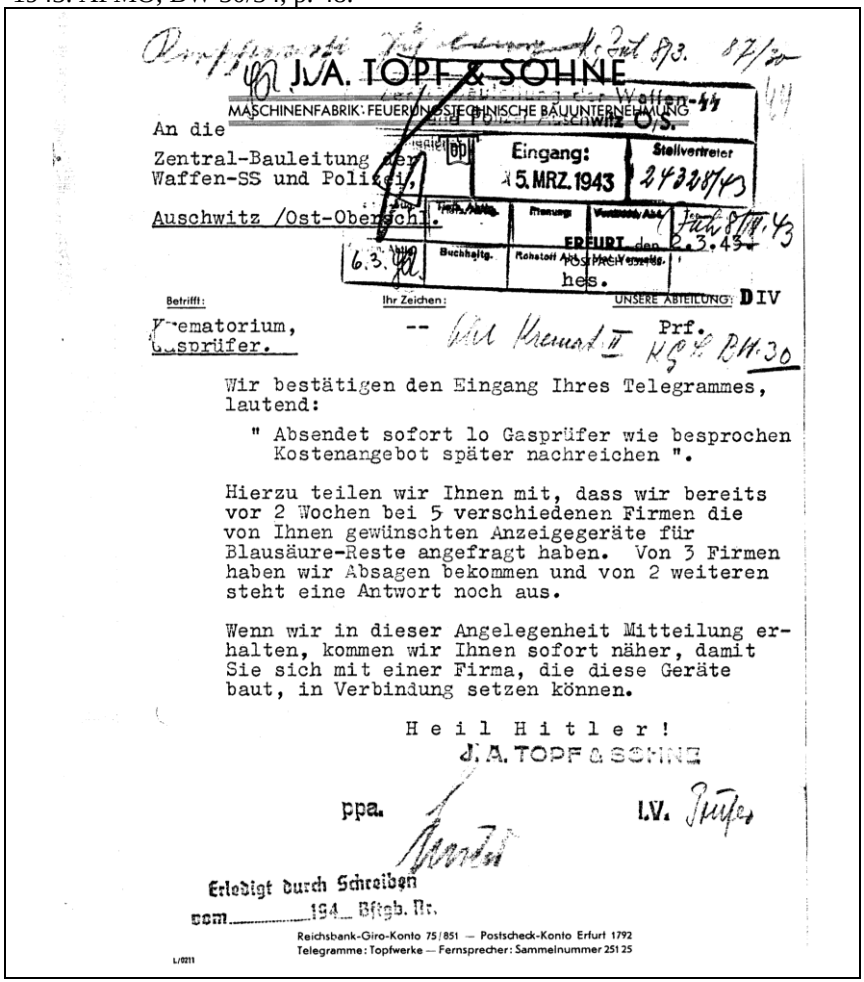
Anschr.: Topfwerke Erfut

Text: Absendet sofort lo Gasprüfer wie besprochen. Kostenangebot später nachreichen.

Zentralbauleitung Auschwitz
gez. Pollok
SS-Untersturmführer

26.2.43 18[20]

Document 11: Telegram from *Zentralbauleitug* to Topf dated February 26, 1943. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 48.



J.A. TOPF & SÖHNE
MASCHINENFABRIK · FEUERUNGSTECHNISCHE BAUUNTERNEHMUNG
ERFURT

An die
Zentral-Bauleitung der
Waffen-SS und Polizei,
Auschwitz /Ost-Oberschl.

Eingang: 5. MRZ. 1943
Stellvertreter

ERFURT, den 2.3.43

Betrifft: Krematorium, Gasprüfer.

Ihr Zeichen: -- Bl. Kremat. II Prf. HS/Ke BM.30

UNSERE ABTEILUNG: D IV

Wir bestätigen den Eingang Ihres Telegrammes, lautend:

" Absendet sofort lo Gasprüfer wie besprochen Kostenangebot später nachreichen ".

Hierzu teilen wir Ihnen mit, dass wir bereits vor 2 Wochen bei 5 verschiedenen Firmen die von Ihnen gewünschten Anzeigegeräte für Blausäure-Reste angefragt haben. Von 3 Firmen haben wir Absagen bekommen und von 2 weiteren steht eine Antwort noch aus.

Wenn wir in dieser Angelegenheit Mitteilung erhalten, kommen wir Ihnen sofort näher, damit Sie sich mit einer Firma, die diese Geräte baut, in Verbindung setzen können.

Heil Hitler!
J.A. TOPF & SÖHNE

ppa. i.V.

Erledigt durch Schreiben vom ..... 194_ Bftgb. Nr.

Reichsbank-Giro-Konto 75/851 — Postscheck-Konto Erfurt 1792
Telegramme: Topfwerke — Fernsprecher: Sammelnummer 25125

L/0211

Document 12: Letter from Topf to *Zentralbauleitug* dated March 2, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 44.

Document 13: Photograph of metallic recirculation device of a disinfestation chamber using HCN gas (Zyklon B) with the *Degesch-Kreislauf* system at the Dachau camp. © Carlo Mattogno 1990.

Document 14: Photograph of the ruins of Crematorium II at Birkenau, 1992. © Carlo Mattogno.

K.g. Fäberling 21/7.42.

66 86

HEERDT-LINGLER G.M.B.H.

POSTANSCHRIFT: HEERDT-LINGLER G. M. B. H. FRANKFURT (MAIN) 1 HERMANN GÖRING-UFER 3

TELEGRAMME: ZYKLON FRANKFURTMAIN (ALLE GEBRÄUCHLICHEN CODES)

FERNSPRECHER: ~~28370~~ 21854

POSTSCHECKKONTO: FFM. 51740

BANKKONTEN: GEBR. BETHMANN DRESDNER BANK FRANKFURT (MAIN)

HAUPTVERTRETUNG FÜR: DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR SCHÄDLINGSBEKÄMPFUNG M.B.H. ABTEILUNG: ZYKLON

An den Herrn Reichsführer SS
Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten
SS-Neubauleitung K.L.Auschwitz-Oswiecim

A u s c h w i t z

O/S Reg.Bez.Kattowitz

IHRE ZEICHEN:	IHRE NACHRICHT VOM:	BITTE IN IHRER ANTWORT ANZUFÜHREN:	FRANKFURT (MAIN):
		799 En	1.Juli 1941

BETRIFFT: Entlausungsanlage

Auf Veranlassung der Firma Friedrich B o o s, Köln-Rhein-Bickendorf übersenden wir hiermit

Sonderdruck aus "Zeitschrift für hygien.Zoologie und Schädlingsbekämpfung" Dr.G.Peters und E.Wüstinger : "Sachentlausung in Blausäure-Kammern"

und

Sonderabdruck aus "Wiener klinische Wochenschrift" M.Kaiser : Zweck und Ziele der gesundheitlichen Ueber=wachung größerer Menschenmengen aus seuchenverdächtigen Gegenden (Fleckfieberverhütung durch das Zyklonverfahren).

Weitere Stücke stehen auf Anforderung jederzeit zur Verfügung.

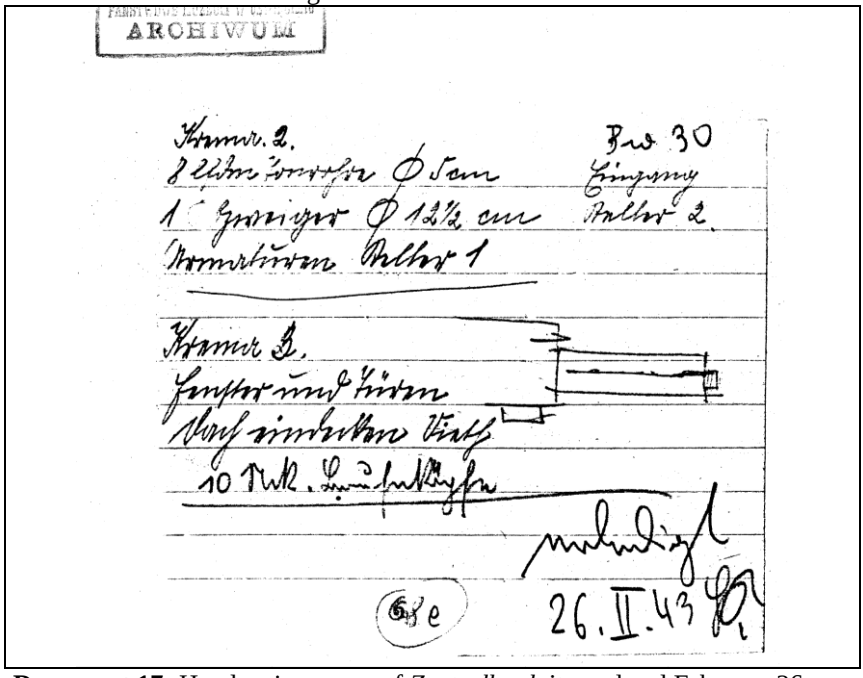
HEERDT-LINGLER G.m.b.H.

SS-Neubauleitung Auschwitz
Eingang: -3.JUL 1941
Rechnungs-Legung-A | Hochbau Abtlg. | Tiefbau Abtlg. | Landwesen Abtlg.

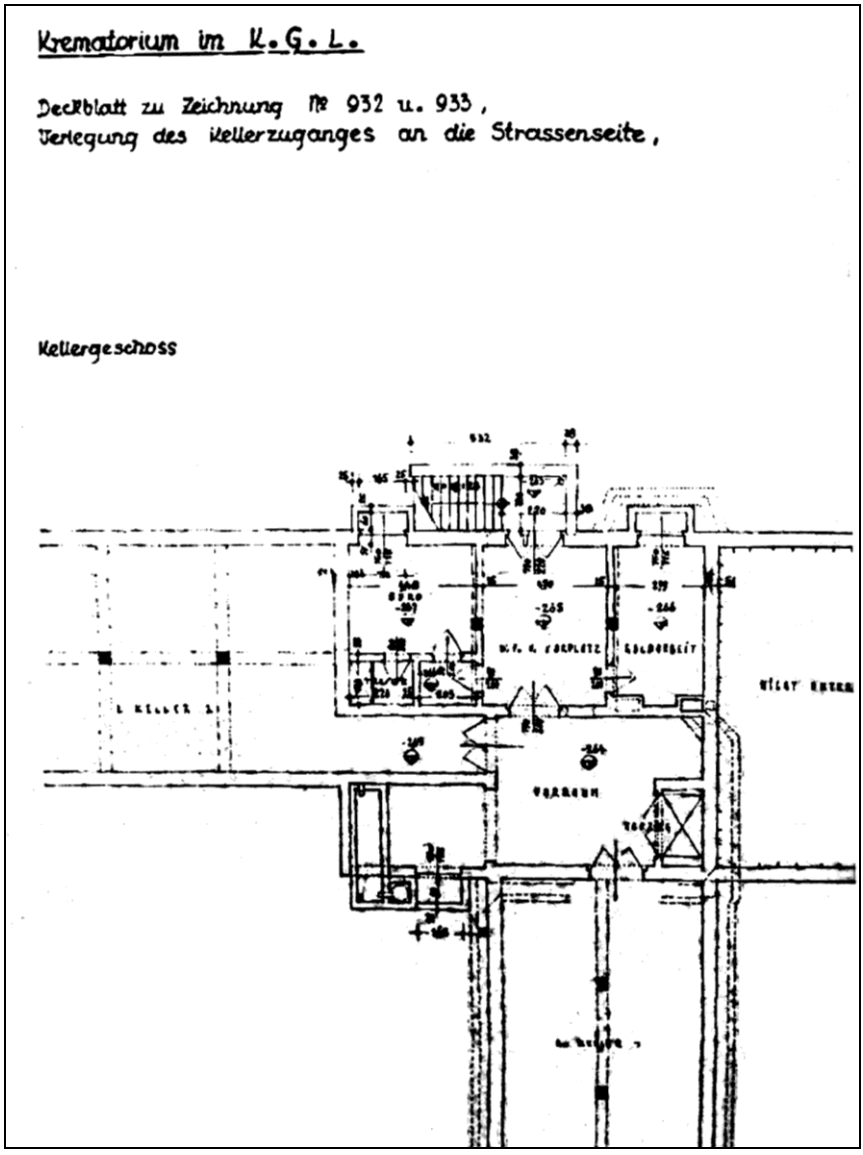
Sonderabdruck aus „Wiener klinische Wochenschrift" leihweise an SS Stubaf. Dr. Popiersch abgegeben.
[illegible] SS-Hpf.

Document 15: Letter from Heerdt-Lingler Co. to *SS-Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz dated July 1, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 86

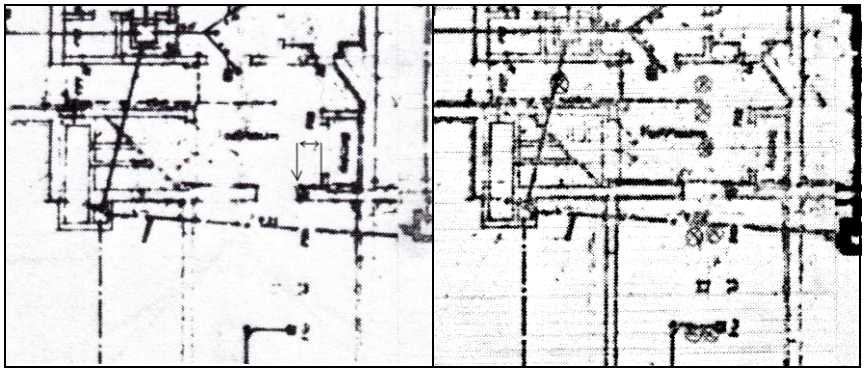
Document 16: Water run-off in floor of gas disinfestation chamber in BW 5a at Birkenau. © Carlo Mattogno.



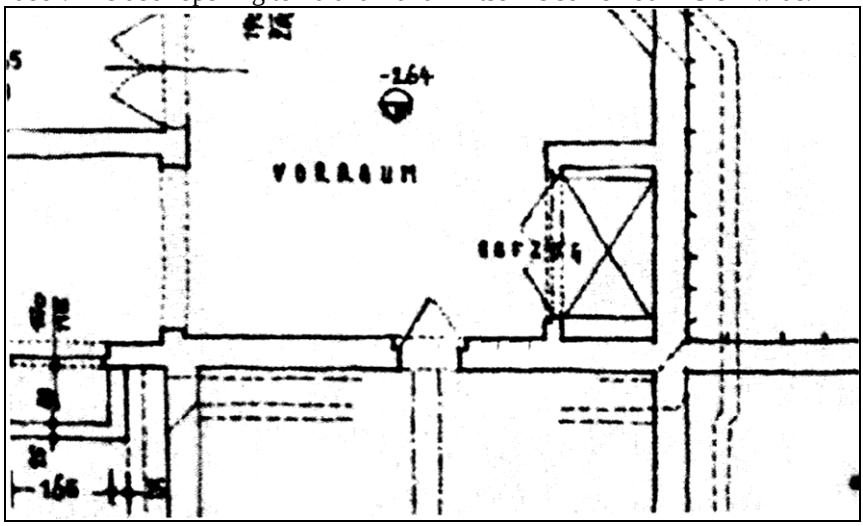
Document 17: Hand-written note of *Zentralbauleitung* dated February 26, 1943, concerning new access to *Leichenkeller* 2. APMO, BW 30/34, p. 68e.



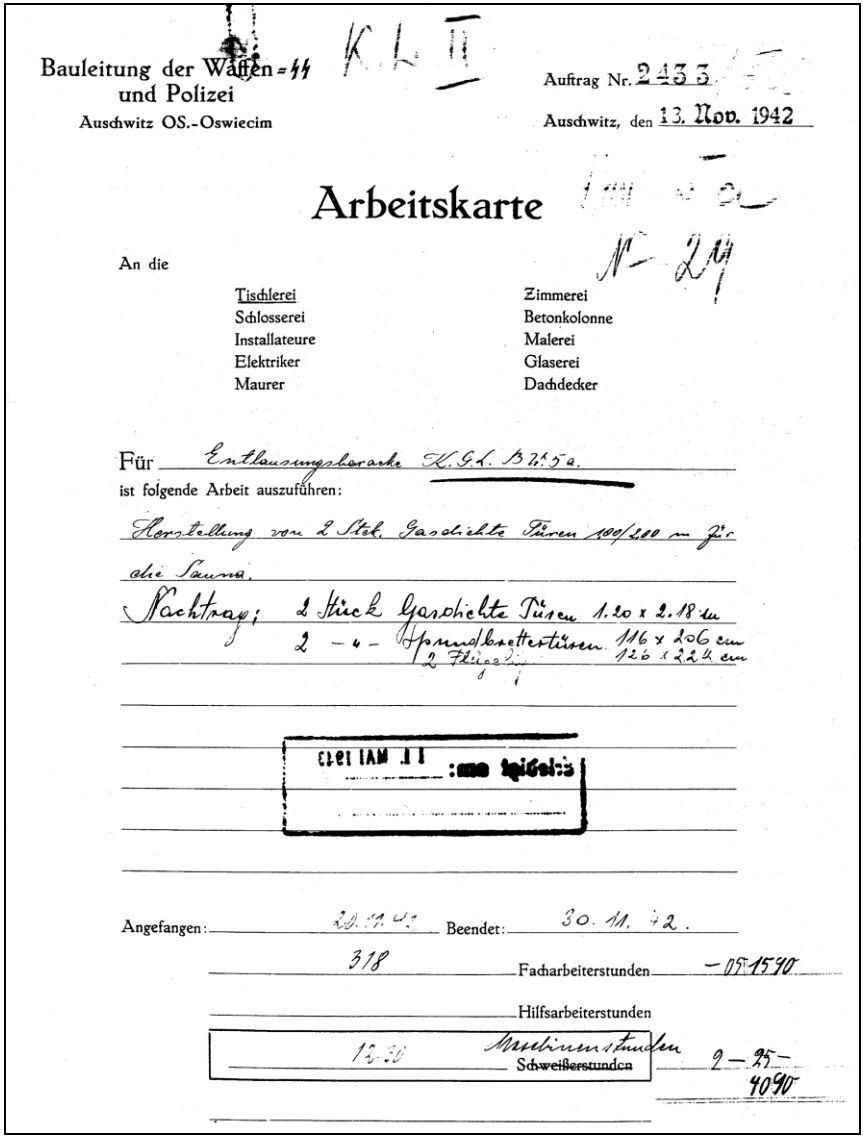
Document 18: Plan 2003 of Crematorium II of Birkenau dated December 19, 1942. **"**Deckblatt zu n° 932 u. 933, Verlegung des Kellerzuganges an die Strassenseite." Basement. From: Pressac 1989, pp. 63-64.



Document 19a & b: Final blueprint 2197 of Crematorium II of Birkenau dated March 19, 1943; low quality of Pressac's reproduction (1989, pp. 311f.). Arrows (added by author): The wall has been extended by some 30-40 cm, probably in order to move the door of *Leichenkeller* 1 away from the elevator door. The door opening to *Leichenkeller* 1 itself is some 160-175 cm wide.



Document 19 c: Author's reconstruction of the hypothetical door position to *Leichenkeller* 1 of Crematorium II, if the door width had been adjusted to some 100 cm to accommodate the "gas-tight" door of 100 cm width; based on blueprint 2003 of December 19, 1942 (Pressac 1989, p. 302).



Bauleitung der Waffen-SS
und Polizei
Auschwitz OS.-Oswiecim

K.L. II

Auftrag Nr. 2433

Auschwitz, den 13. Nov. 1942

Arbeitskarte

N° 24

An die

Tischlerei	Zimmerei
Schlosserei	Betonkolonne
Installateure	Malerei
Elektriker	Glaserei
Maurer	Dachdecker

Für Entlausungsbaracke K.G.L. BW 5a.
ist folgende Arbeit auszuführen:

Herstellung von 2 Stck. Gasdichte Türen 100/200 m für die Sauna.

Nachtrag: 2 Stück Gasdichte Türen 1.20 x 2.18 m
2 – " – Spundbrettertüren 116 x 206 cm
2 Flügelig 126 x 224 cm

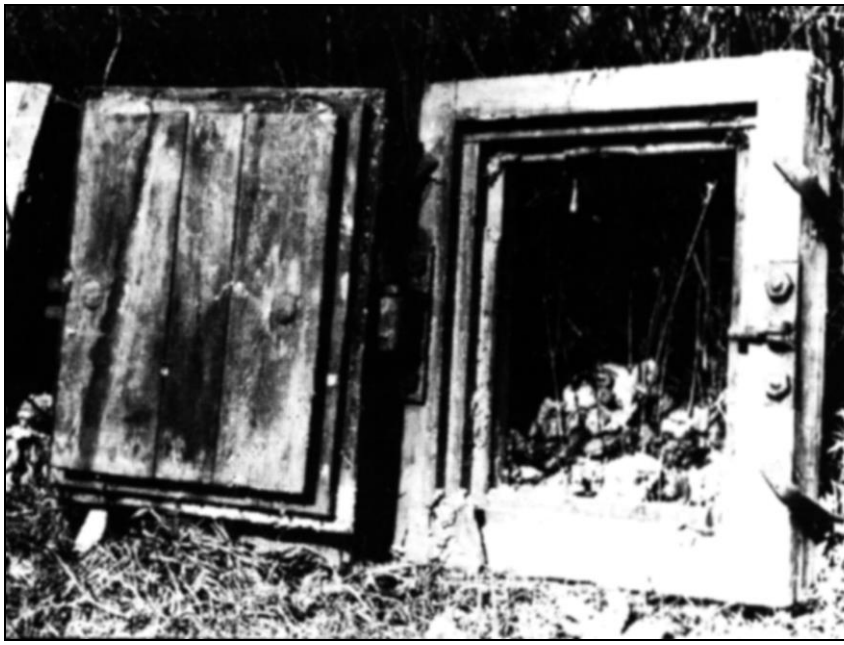
Angefangen: 20.11.42 Beendet: 30.11.42.

318 Facharbeiterstunden –05 1590

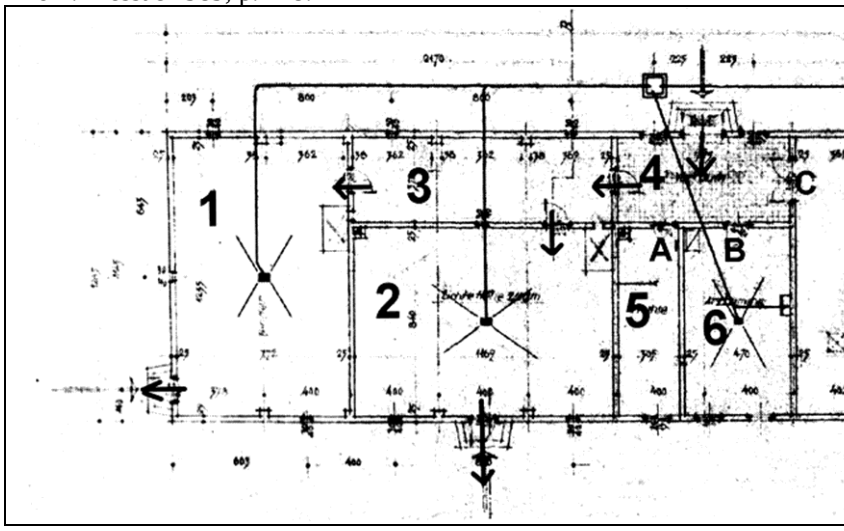
Hilfsarbeiterstunden

12.30 Maschinenstunden ~~Schweißerstunden~~ 9 – 25 –
4090

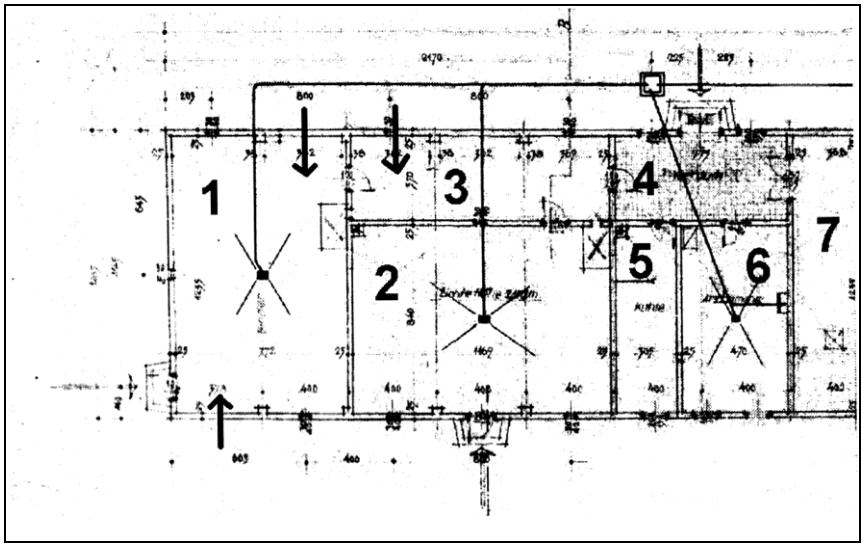
Document 20: *Arbeitskarte* of *Tischlerei* at *Zentralbauleitung* dated November 13, 1942, for the "*Entlausungsbaracke KGL BW 5a*." RGVA, 502-1-328, p. 70.



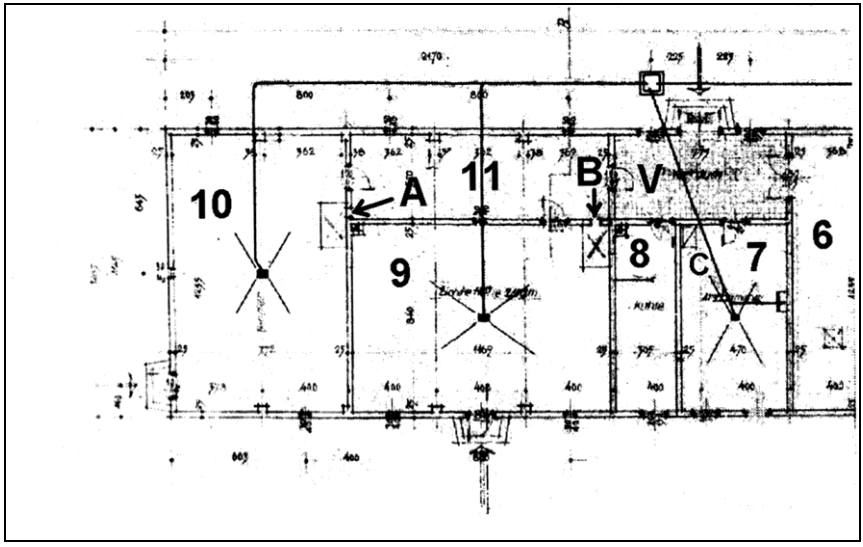
Document 21: Gas-tight shutter from Crematorium IV or V of Birkenau. From: Pressac 1989, p. 428.



Document 22: Plan 2036 of Crematorium IV of Birkenau dated January 11, 1943. From: Pressac 1989, p. 399. Western portion. The arrows show the direction of natural ventilation in case of winds from the north.



Document 23: Plan 2036 of Crematorium IV of Birkenau dated January 11, 1943. From: Pressac 1989, p. 399. Western portion. The arrows show the doors claimed to have been placed into the alleged homicidal gas chambers in order to obtain a more effective natural ventilation.



Document 24: Ditto. Openings for linking of stoves between rooms 9-11 ("A") and 10-11 ("B").

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J. A. TOPF & SÖHNE

MASCHINENFABRIK

CODES
RUD. MOSSE-CODE
A.B.C. CODE
STAUDT & HUNDIUS

GEGR. TOPF 1878

DRAHTWORT
TOPFWERKE ERFURT
FERNRUF
25125 25126 25127 25128 25129
GELDVERKEHR
REICHSBANK-
GIROKONTO
POSTSCHECKKONTO
ERFURT 1792

An die
Zentralbauleitung der
waffen-SS und Polizei,

Auschwitz /Ost-Oberschl.

ERFURT, 9.6.43.
POSTFACH 300/8
FABRIK UND VERWALTUNG
DREYSESTRASSE 7/9

BETRIFFT: Krematorium IV und V.

IHR ZEICHEN

UNSERE ABTEILUNG: B/Schu.

hes.

K o s t e n a n s c h l a g

über

Entlüftungs-Anlage.

32 g. 10 000. 8. 40. I. 0294 (2291)

Document 25: Topf *Kostenanschlag über Entlüftungs-Anlage* for Crematoria IV and V of Birkenau dated June 9, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-26, pp. 222-223.

J. A. TOPF & SÖHNE
ERFURT

2. Blatt des Kostenanschlages vom 9.6.43.

für Auschwitz.

Lfd. Nr.	Anzahl	Gegenstand der Veranschlagung		
	2	Gebläse Nr. 45o, zur Förderung von stündlich je 8 ooo m^3 Abluft gegen eine Gesamtpressung von 4o mm WS bei einer Umdrehungszahl des Schaufelrades von 925/Min. und einem Kraftbedarf, an der Welle gemessen, von 2,9 PS. Zu jedem Gebläse gehören: das schmiedeeiserne Gehäuse, das Schaufelrad, welches fliegend auf Motorwellenstumpf aufgebaut wird, und ein Motorbock.		
	2	Drehstrom-Motoren für 38o Volt, 5o Perioden, mit Doppelnutanker, in spritzwassergeschützter Ausführung, für eine Leistung von je ca. 3,5 PS bei n = 925/Min., mit freiem Wellenende.		
	2	Motorschutzschalter, gussgekapselt, mit eingebauter thermischer Überstrom-Auslösung.		
	2	Sterndreieckschalter, gussgekapselt.		
	2	schmiedeeiserne Konsolen für die erhöhte Aufstellung der Gebläse.		
	2	Saugrohrleitungen mit Absaugestutzen und eingebauten Drehklappen und angebautem Übergangsstutzen.		
	2	Druckrohrleitungen mit aufgebauter Wetterhaube und Übergangsstutzen.		
		Gesamtpreis:	RM	2 51o.--

Der Preis gilt ab Werk Erfurt, ausschließlich Verpackung.
Die Montage erfolgt im Z e i t l o h n zu den Ihnen bekannten Sätzen.

Fachtechnisch richtig!
Auschwitz, d. 25/6.43.
Fabrikin Z.A.

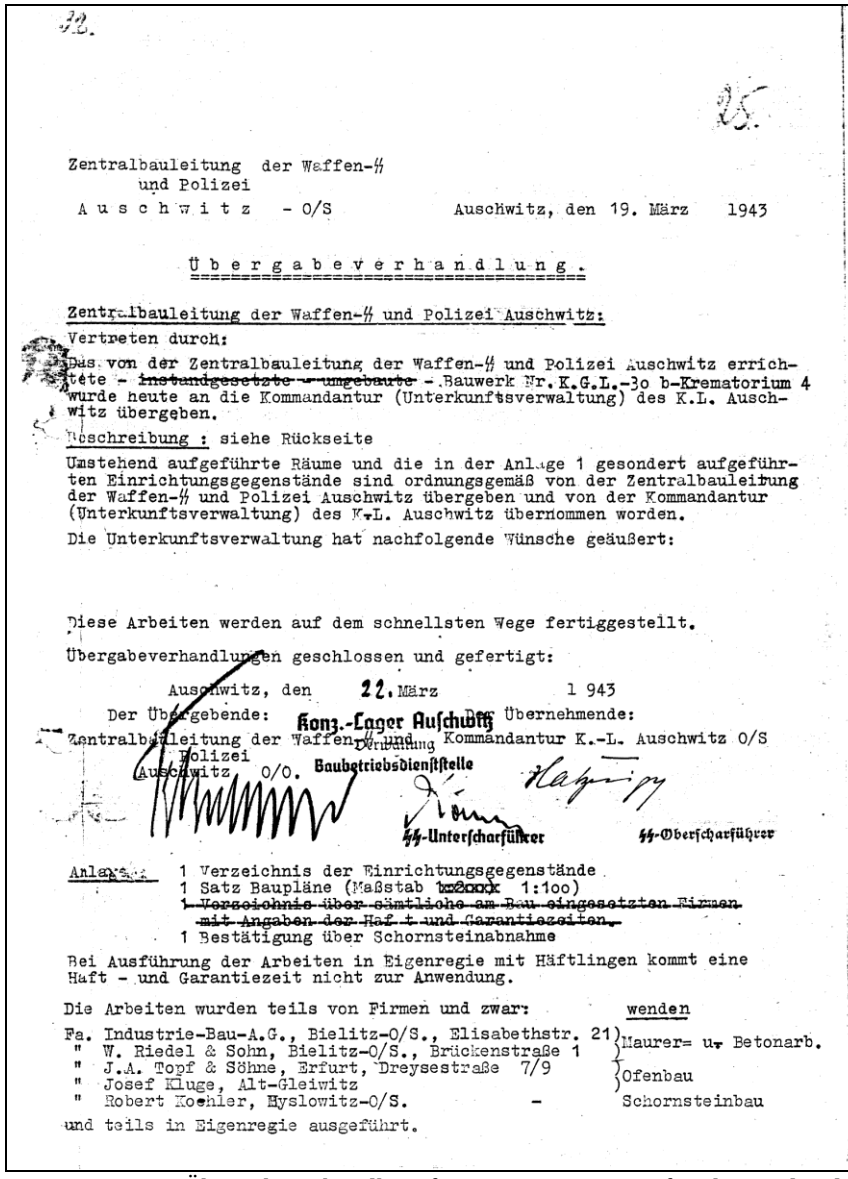
am 25/6.43 [illegible]

Lief.Bed.A. 6o.1.42. 5 ooo. L/o211.

- 3 -

68. 9. 40. 10000. L 0204 (3328)

Document 25:continued



Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS
und Polizei
Auschwitz - O/S

Auschwitz, den 19. März 1943

Übergabeverhandlung.

Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz:
Vertreten durch:

Das von der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz errichtete - ~~instandgesetzte - umgebaute~~ - Bauwerk Nr. K.G.L.-3o b-Krematorium 4 wurde heute an die Kommandantur (Unterkunftsverwaltung) des K.L. Auschwitz übergeben.

Beschreibung : siehe Rückseite

Umstehend aufgeführte Räume und die in der Anlage 1 gesondert aufgeführten Einrichtungsgegenstände sind ordnungsgemäß von der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz übergeben und von der Kommandantur (Unterkunftsverwaltung) des K.L. Auschwitz übernommen worden.

Die Unterkunftsverwaltung hat nachfolgende Wünsche geäußert:

Diese Arbeiten werden auf dem schnellsten Wege fertiggestellt.

Übergabeverhandlungen geschlossen und gefertigt:

Auschwitz, den 22. März 1 943

Der Übergebende: Der Übernehmende:
Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz O/S — Kommandantur K.-L. Auschwitz O/S

Konz.-Lager Auschwitz
Verwaltung
Baubetriebsdienststelle

SS-Untersturmführer — SS-Obersturmführer

Anlagen: 1 Verzeichnis der Einrichtungsgegenstände
1 Satz Baupläne (Maßstab ~~xxxxx~~ 1:1oo)
~~1 Verzeichnis über sämtliche am Bau eingesetzten Firmen mit Angaben der Haft- und Garantiezeiten.~~
1 Bestätigung über Schornsteinabnahme

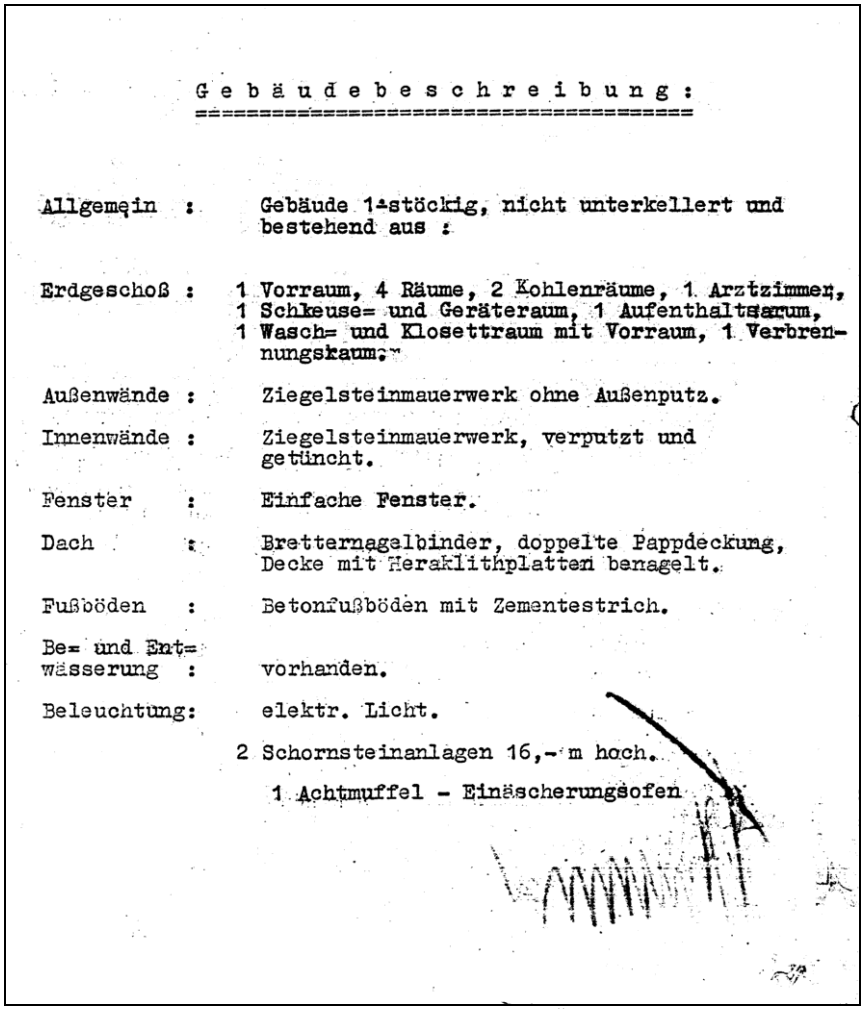
Bei Ausführung der Arbeiten in Eigenregie mit Häftlingen kommt eine Haft - und Garantiezeit nicht zur Anwendung.

Die Arbeiten wurden teils von Firmen und zwar: wenden

Fa. Industrie-Bau-A.G., Bielitz-O/S., Elisabethstr. 21) Maurer= u. Betonarb.
" W. Riedel & Sohn, Bielitz-O/S., Brückenstraße 1
" J.A. Topf & Söhne, Erfurt, Dreysestraße 7/9 } Ofenbau
" Josef Kluge, Alt-Gleiwitz
" Robert Koehler, Myslowitz-O/S. - Schornsteinbau

und teils in Eigenregie ausgeführt.

Document 26: *Übergabeverhandlung* for Crematorium IV of Birkenau dated March 19, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-54, p. 25.



Gebäudebeschreibung:

Allgemein : Gebäude 1-stöckig, nicht unterkellert und bestehend aus :

Erdgeschoß : 1 Vorraum, 4 Räume, 2 Kohlenräume, 1 Arztzimmer, 1 Schkeuse= und Geräteraum, 1 Aufenthaltsraum, 1 Wasch= und Klosettraum mit Vorraum, 1 Verbrennungsraum.

Außenwände : Ziegelsteinmauerwerk ohne Außenputz.

Innenwände : Ziegelsteinmauerwerk, verputzt und getüncht.

Fenster : Einfache Fenster.

Dach : Bretternagelbinder, doppelte Pappdeckung, Decke mit Heraklithplatten benagelt.

Fußböden : Betonfußböden mit Zementestrich.

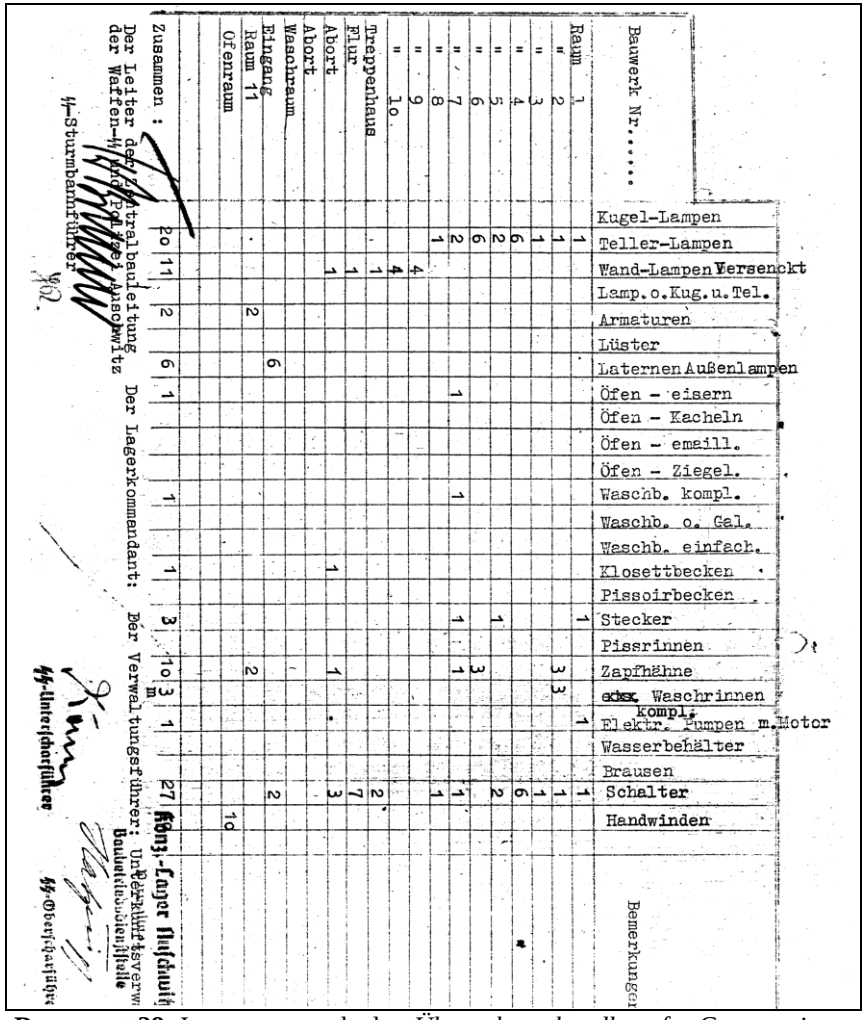
Be= und Entwässerung : vorhanden.

Beleuchtung: elektr. Licht.

2 Schornsteinanlagen 16,- m hoch.

1 Achtmuffel - Einäscherungsofen

Document 27: *Gebäudebeschreibung* attached to *Übergabeverhandlung* for Crematorium IV of Birkenau dated March 19, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-54, p. 26.



Bauwerk Nr.....	Kugel-Lampen	Teller-Lampen	Wand-Lampen Versenckt	Lamp. o. Kug. u. Tel.	Armaturen	Lüster	Laternen Außenlampen	Öfen - eisern	Öfen - Kacheln	Öfen - emaill.	Öfen - Ziegel.	Waschb. kompl.	Waschb. o. Gal.	Waschb. einfach.	Klosettbecken	Pissoirbecken	Stecker	Pissrinnen	Zapfhähne	~~xxx~~ Waschrinnen kompl.	Elektr. Pumpen m. Motor	Wasserbehälter	Brausen	Schalter	Handwinden	Bemerkungen
Raum 1	1	1	1	6	2	6	2	1									1				1			1		
" 2	1	1	1	6	2	6	2	1											3	3				1		
" 3	1	1	1	6	2	6	2	1																1		
" 4	6	2	6	2	6	2	1										1							6		
" 5	2	6	2	6	2	6	2	1											3					2		
" 6	6	2	6	2	6	2	1												1					1		
" 7	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1											1					1		
" 8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																1		
" 9	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	1																2		
" 10	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																7		
Treppenhaus	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																3		
Flur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																2		
Abort	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																7		
Abort	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																3		
Waschraum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																2		
Eingang	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																2		
Raum 11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																2		
Ofenraum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																1o		
Zusammen :	2o	11	2	6	1	1	1	3	1o	3 m	1	27	6	1												

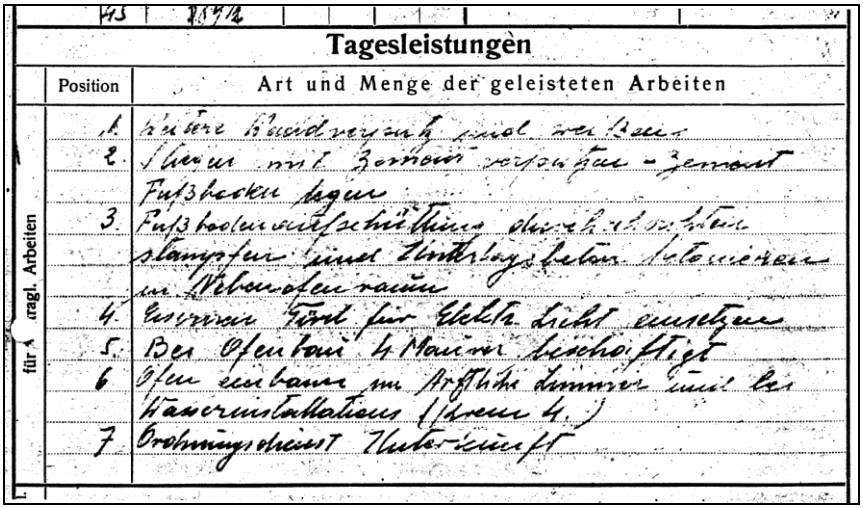
Der Leiter der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz
SS-Sturmbannführer

Der Lagerkommandant:

Der Verwaltungsführer: Unterkunftsverw
Bauwerksbesichtigungsstelle
SS-Unterscharführer

Konz.-Lager Auschwitz
SS-Oberscharführer

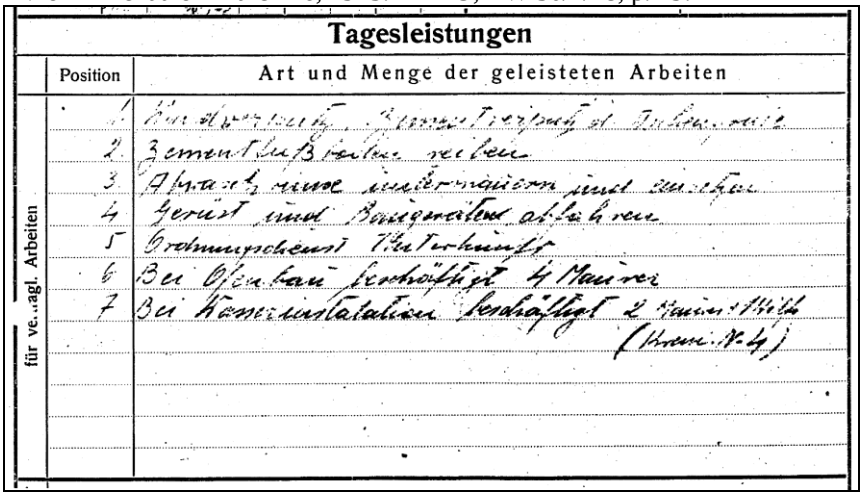
Document 28: Inventory attached to *Übergabeverhandlung* for Crematorium IV of Birkenau dated March 19, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-54, p. 26a.



Tagesleistungen

	Position	Art und Menge der geleisteten Arbeiten
für [illegible]ragl. Arbeiten	1.	Weitere Randverputz und weißen
	2.	Stiegen mit Zement verputzen – Zement Fußboden legen
	3.	Fußbodenaufschüttung durchschnitten stampfen und Unterlagsbeton betonieren in Nebenofenraum
	4.	Eisernen Tür für Elektr. Licht einsetzen
	5.	Bei Ofenbau 4 Maurer beschäftigt
	6	Ofen einbauen im Ärztliche Zimmer und bei Wasserinstallations (Krem 4.)
	7	Ordnungsdienst Unterkunft

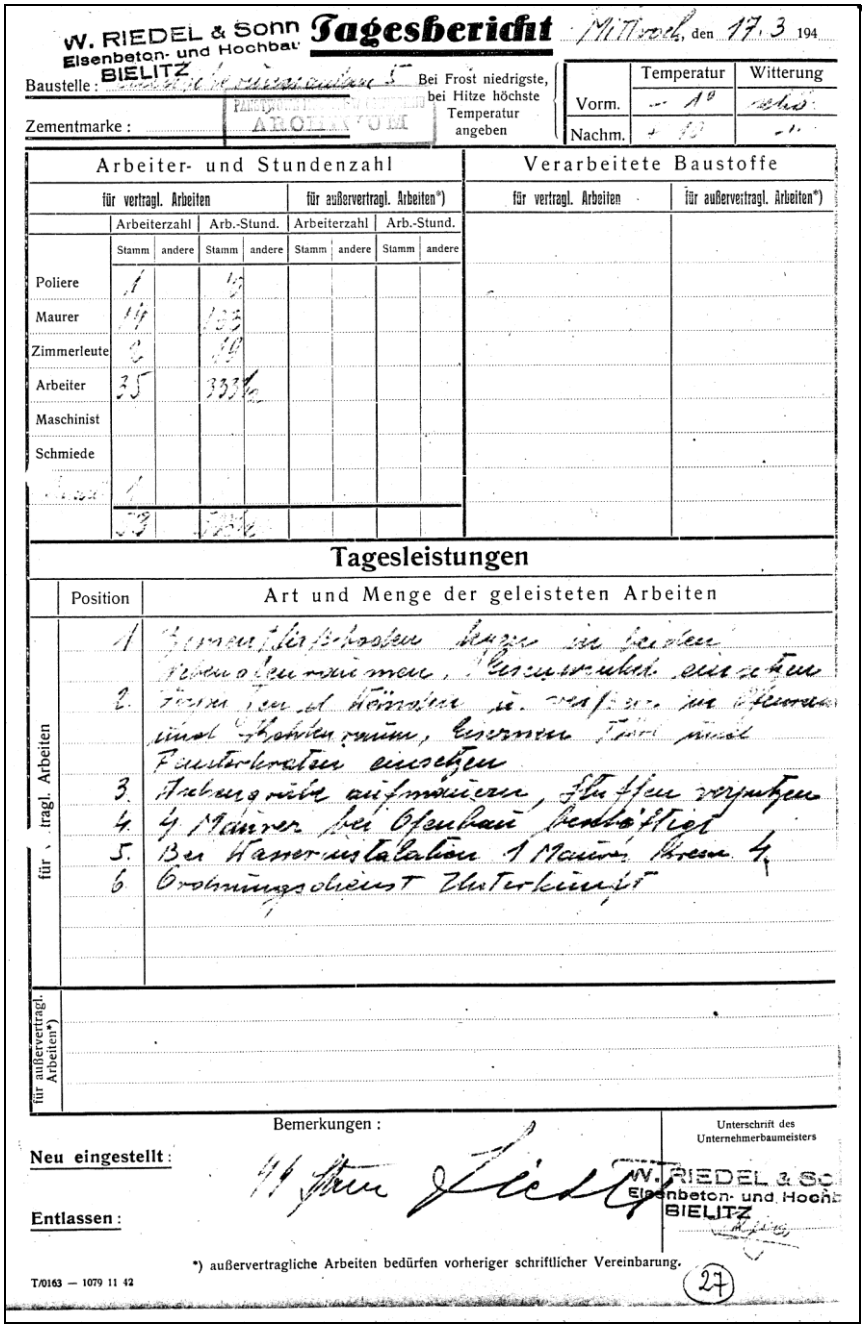
Document 29: Report from Riedel & Sohn Co. about work in Crematorium IV of Birkenau on March 16, 1943. APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 29.



Tagesleistungen

	Position	Art und Menge der geleisteten Arbeiten
für ve[illegible]agl. Arbeiten	1.	Randverputz, Zementverputz d. Ankenraum
	2.	Zementfußboden reiben
	3.	Abwasserrinne untermauern und einsetzen
	4	Gerüst und Baugeräten abfahren
	5	Ordnungsdienst Unterkunft
	6	Bei Ofenbau beschäftigt 4 Maurer
	7	Bei Wasserinstalation beschäftigt 2 Maurer Hilfe (Krem. N. 4)

Document 30: Report from Riedel & Sohn Co. about work done in Crematorium IV of Birkenau on March 18, 1943. APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 25.



W. RIEDEL & Sohn
Eisenbeton- und Hochbau
BIELITZ

Tagesbericht Mittwoch, den 17.3 194

Baustelle: Krematorium V

Zementmarke: ARO

Bei Frost niedrigste, bei Hitze höchste Temperatur angeben

	Temperatur	Witterung
Vorm.	-- 1°	schön
Nachm.	+ 0	-1°

Arbeiter- und Stundenzahl

	für vertragl. Arbeiten				für außervertragl. Arbeiten*)			
	Arbeiterzahl		Arb.-Stund.		Arbeiterzahl		Arb.-Stund.	
	Stamm	andere	Stamm	andere	Stamm	andere	Stamm	andere
Poliere	1		10					
Maurer	4		32					
Zimmerleute	2		16					
Arbeiter	35		332					
Maschinist								
Schmiede								
Lehrl.	1							
	43		390					

Verarbeitete Baustoffe

für vertragl. Arbeiten	für außervertragl. Arbeiten*)

Tagesleistungen

	Position	Art und Menge der geleisteten Arbeiten
für vertragl. Arbeiten	1	Sonntagsarbeiten heute in beiden Krematorien, Fensterbretter ausgebessert
	2.	Türen, Fenster, Dächer usw. in Krematorium und Kohlenraum, Eisernen Türrahmen Fensterbretter einsetzen
	3.	Arbeitsräume aufmauern, Stufen vorputzen
	4.	4 Maurer bei Ofenbau beschäftigt
	5.	Bei Kanalisation 1 Maurer 4
	6	Ordnungsdienst Unterkunft
für außervertragl. Arbeiten*)		

Bemerkungen:

Neu eingestellt:

Entlassen:

Unterschrift des Unternehmerbaumeisters

W. RIEDEL & Sohn
Eisenbeton- und Hochbau
BIELITZ

*) außervertragliche Arbeiten bedürfen vorheriger schriftlicher Vereinbarung.

T/0163 — 1079 11 42

27

Document 31: Report from Riedel & Sohn Co. about work done in Crematorium IV of Birkenau on March 17, 1943. APMO, BW 30/4/28, p. 27.

RGVA. 1041. 206 447

Bauleitung der Waffen-SS
und Polizei
Auschwitz OS.-Oswiecim

Auftrag Nr. 286/3

Auschwitz, den 2. März 1943

Arbeitskarte

An die

Tischlerei	Zimmerei
Schlosserei	Betonkolonne
Installateure	Malerei
Elektriker	Glaserei
Maurer	Dachdecker

Für Krematorium 4 u. 5 im K.G.L. BW 30 b u. c

ist folgende Arbeit auszuführen:

Ausführung der sanitären Installation

Angefangen: 15. III. 1943. Beendet: 23. IV. 1943.

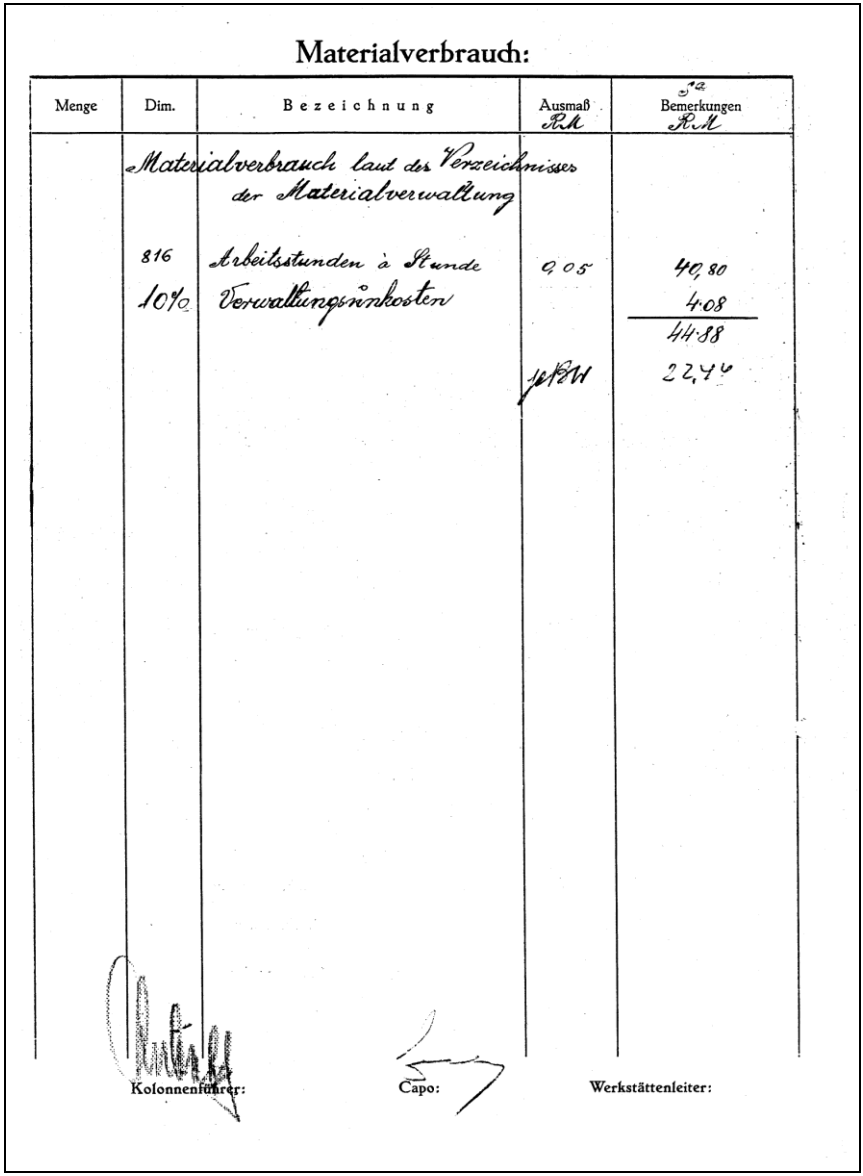
653 Facharbeiterstunden

163 Hilfsarbeiterstunden

/ Schweißerstunden

B/0011

Document 32: *Arbeitskarte* of *Zentralbauleitung* concerning order no. 286 of March 20, 1943. RGVA, 502-2-54, pp. 38-38a.

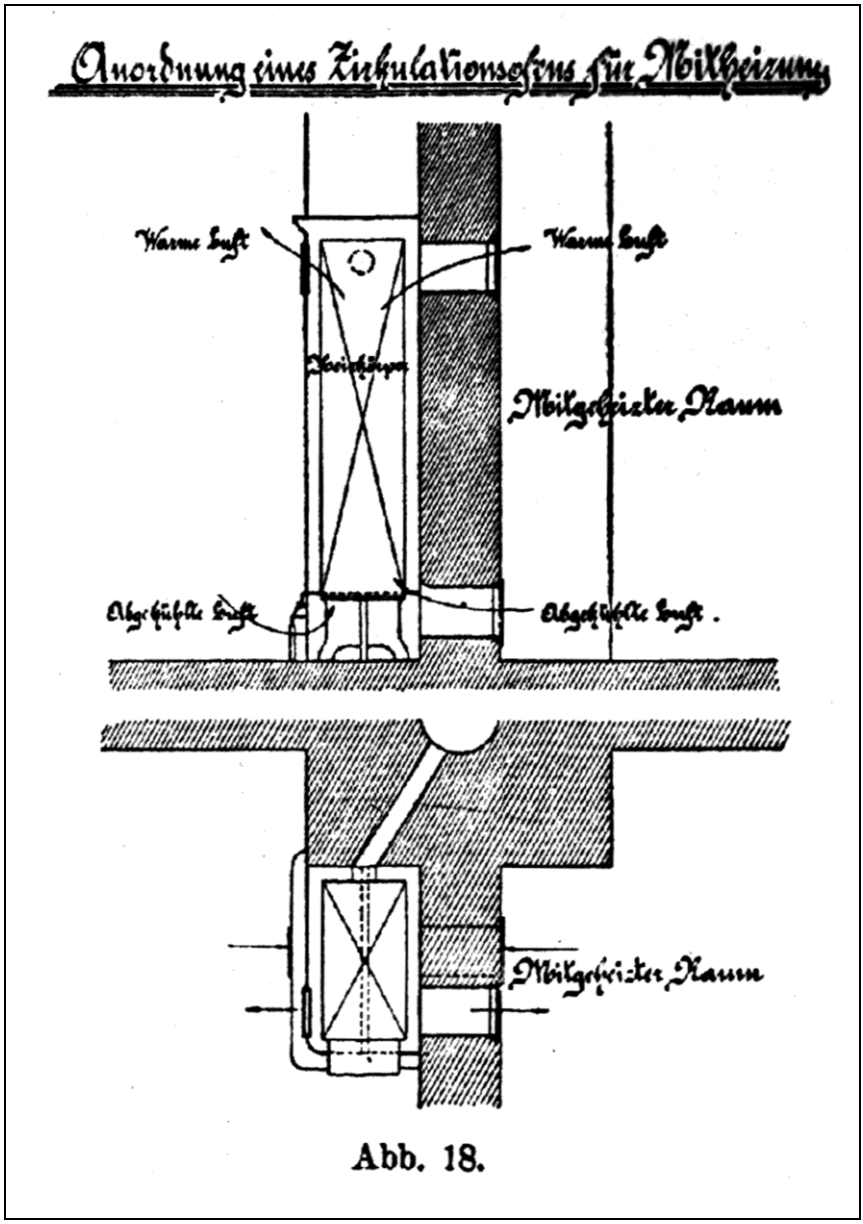


Materialverbrauch:

Menge	Dim.	Bezeichnung	Ausmaß RM	Bemerkungen RM
		Materialverbrauch laut des Verzeichnisses der Materialverwaltung		
	816	Arbeitsstunden à Stunde	0,05	40,80
	10%	Verwaltungsunkosten		4.08
				44.88
				22,44

Kolonnenführer: Capo: Werkstättenleiter:

Document 32:continued



Document 33: Principle of a stove with air recirculation. From: Heepke 1905b, p. 91.

8.Juni 1944.

51358 /44/Jähn/Cl. EINSCHREIBEN!

Betr.: K.L.Auschwitz, Blausäureentwesungsanlage (11 Zellen)
Bezg.: hies.Telegramm betr.Zeichng.-Anforderung an Fa.Boos vom 3.5.44 u.dort.Gehrb.vom 12.5.44 an Fa.Boos,Köln a/Rh.
Anlg.: - - -

Firma
Tesch und Stabenow
Hamburg 1
Meßberghof

Am 12.Mai 44 schrieben Sie an Fa. Boos, daß Sie bei Ihrem Lieferwerk genaue Zeichnung über eine "Normalgaskammer" angefordert hätten. Diese Zeichnung, welche in größerem Maßstab ausgeführt sein muß und in der alle Maße in Grundriß und im Aufriß eingetragen sein müssen wird nunmehr hier ganz dringend benötigt. Desgleichen muß in der Zeichnung angegeben sein, nach welcher Richtung die Türen aufschlagen, da die letzteren von hier aus in Auftrag gegeben werden müssen..

Nach Mitteilung des hiesigen Standortarztes sollen die Zyklon-B-Begasungskammern neuerdings auf "Originalvergasung" umgestellt werden. Der Standortarzt wollte sich wegen der zu treffenden Umänderungen direkt mit Ihnen in Verbindung setzen. Ist dies geschehen und sind die notwendigen Umänderungen in der Zeichnung berücksichtigt?

Über die Bedienung der Apparate ist eine gut erläuternde Bedienungsanweisung in 3-facher Ausfertigung beizufügen. Desgleichen wollen Sie die Zeichnung in 3-facher Ausführung einsenden.

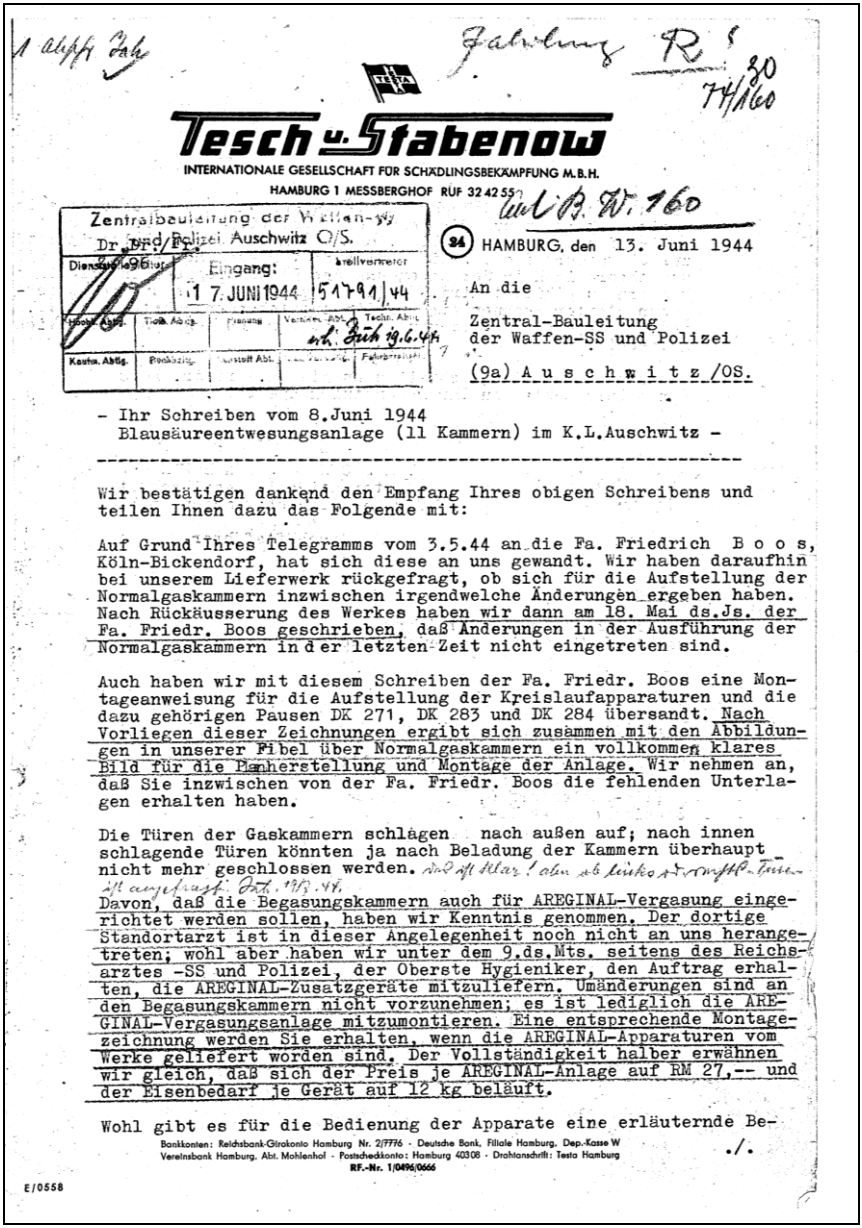
Die Angelegenheit muß der großen Eile wegen bevorzugt behandelt werden. Um postwendenden Bescheid wird gebeten.

Verteiler:
1.Bltg.KL I
2.Heiztechn-Abtlg.
3.Registr.-BW 16o
4.Fa.Fr.Boos,Köln a/Rh. (mit Anschrb.)

Der Leiter der Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz

SS-Obersturmführer (Jähn)

Document 34: Letter from *Zentralbauleitung* to Tesch & Stabenow Co. dated June 8, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-333, p. 35.



Zahlung R[illegible] 30
74/160

Tesch u. Stabenow

INTERNATIONALE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR SCHÄDLINGSBEKÄMPFUNG M.B.H.
HAMBURG 1 MESSBERGHOF RUF 32 42 55

Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS
Dr. Bhd/Pol. Auschwitz O/S.

Eingang: 17. JUNI 1944 | 51791/44

Hoch. Abtlg. | Tiefb. Abtlg. | Projekte | Verkehrs. Abt. | Techn. Abt.
Kaufm. Abtlg. | Planbüro | Baustoff Abt. | Fahrzeugpark

Luft B. W. 160

(24) HAMBURG, den 13. Juni 1944

An die

Zentral-Bauleitung
der Waffen-SS und Polizei

(9a) A u s c h w i t z /OS.

- Ihr Schreiben vom 8.Juni 1944
Blausäureentwesungsanlage (11 Kammern) im K.L.Auschwitz -

Wir bestätigen dankend den Empfang Ihres obigen Schreibens und teilen Ihnen dazu das Folgende mit:

Auf Grund Ihres Telegramms vom 3.5.44 an die Fa. Friedrich B o o s, Köln-Bickendorf, hat sich diese an uns gewandt. Wir haben daraufhin bei unserem Lieferwerk rückgefragt, ob sich für die Aufstellung der Normalgaskammern inzwischen irgendwelche Änderungen ergeben haben. Nach Rückäusserung des Werkes haben wir dann am 18. Mai ds.Js. der Fa. Friedr. Boos geschrieben, daß Änderungen in der Ausführung der Normalgaskammern in der letzten Zeit nicht eingetreten sind.

Auch haben wir mit diesem Schreiben der Fa. Friedr. Boos eine Montageanweisung für die Aufstellung der Kreislaufapparaturen und die dazu gehörigen Pausen DK 271, DK 283 und DK 284 übersandt. Nach Vorliegen dieser Zeichnungen ergibt sich zusammen mit den Abbildungen in unserer Fibel über Normalgaskammern ein vollkommen klares Bild für die Fertigherstellung und Montage der Anlage. Wir nehmen an, daß Sie inzwischen von der Fa. Friedr. Boos die fehlenden Unterlagen erhalten haben.

Die Türen der Gaskammern schlagen nach außen auf; nach innen schlagende Türen könnten ja nach Beladung der Kammern überhaupt nicht mehr geschlossen werden. Ist ja klar! aber ob Leute Stromschl. Türen ist angefragt. Okt. 1943. 44.
Davon, daß die Begasungskammern auch für AREGINAL-Vergasung eingerichtet werden sollen, haben wir Kenntnis genommen. Der dortige Standortarzt ist in dieser Angelegenheit noch nicht an uns herangetreten; wohl aber haben wir unter dem 9.ds.Mts. seitens des Reichsarztes -SS und Polizei, der Oberste Hygieniker, den Auftrag erhalten, die AREGINAL-Zusatzgeräte mitzuliefern. Umänderungen sind an den Begasungskammern nicht vorzunehmen; es ist lediglich die AREGINAL-Vergasungsanlage mitzumontieren. Eine entsprechende Montagezeichnung werden Sie erhalten, wenn die AREGINAL-Apparaturen vom Werke geliefert worden sind. Der Vollständigkeit halber erwähnen wir gleich, daß sich der Preis je AREGINAL-Anlage auf RM 27,-- und der Eisenbedarf je Gerät auf 12 kg beläuft.

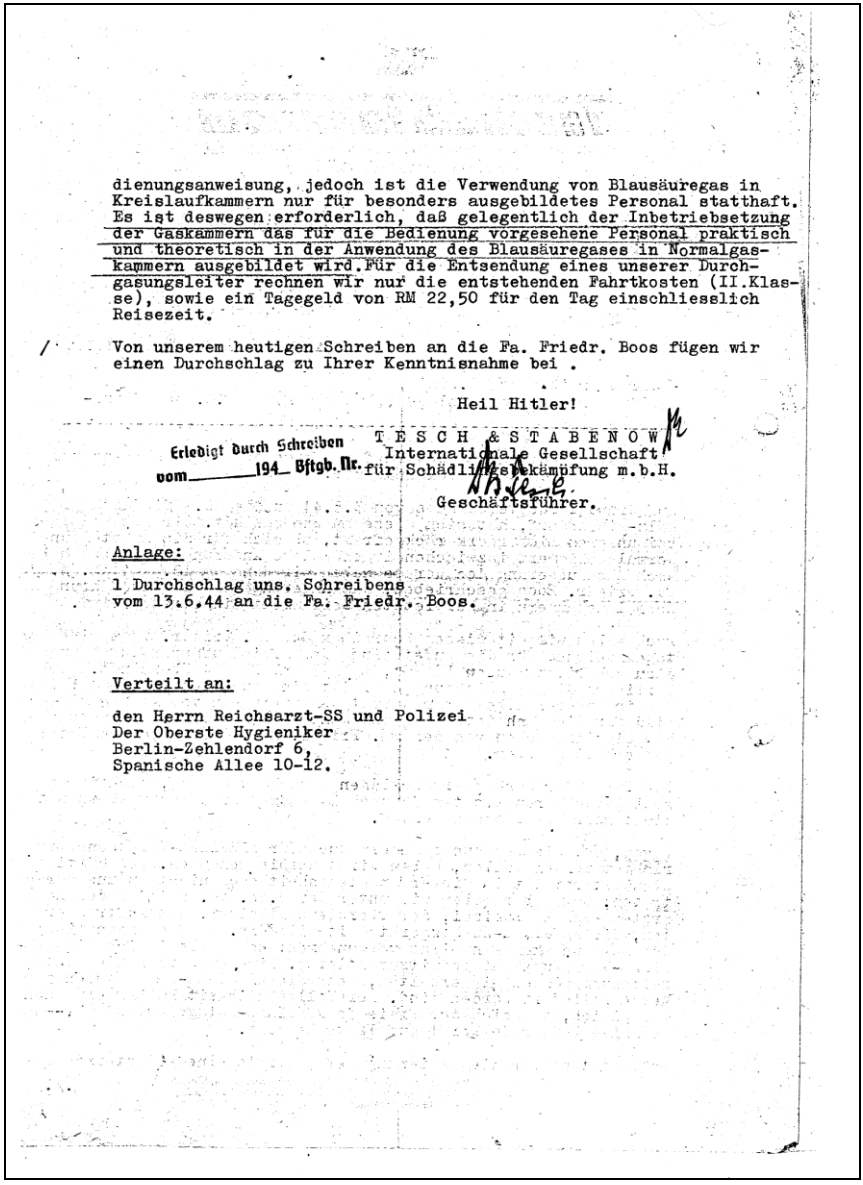
Wohl gibt es für die Bedienung der Apparate eine erläuternde Be-

./.

Bankkonten: Reichsbank-Girokonto Hamburg Nr. 2/7776 · Deutsche Bank, Filiale Hamburg, Dep.-Kasse W
Vereinsbank Hamburg, Abt. Mohlenhof · Postscheckkonto: Hamburg 40308 · Drahtanschrift: Testa Hamburg
RF.-Nr. 1/0496/0666

E/0558

Document 35: Letter from Tesch & Stabenow Co. to *Zentralbauleitung* dated June 13, 1944. RGVA, 502-1-333, pp. 30-30a.



dienungsanweisung, jedoch ist die Verwendung von Blausäuregas in Kreislaufkammern nur für besonders ausgebildetes Personal statthaft. Es ist deswegen erforderlich, daß gelegentlich der Inbetriebsetzung der Gaskammern das für die Bedienung vorgesehene Personal praktisch und theoretisch in der Anwendung des Blausäuregases in Normalgaskammern ausgebildet wird. Für die Entsendung eines unserer Durchgasungsleiter rechnen wir nur die entstehenden Fahrtkosten (II. Klasse), sowie ein Tagegeld von RM 22,50 für den Tag einschliesslich Reisezeit.

Von unserem heutigen Schreiben an die Fa. Friedr. Boos fügen wir einen Durchschlag zu Ihrer Kenntnisnahme bei .

Heil Hitler!

Erledigt durch Schreiben vom ____ 194_ Bftgb. Nr.

TESCH & STABENOW
Internationale Gesellschaft für Schädlingsbekämpfung m.b.H.
Geschäftsführer.

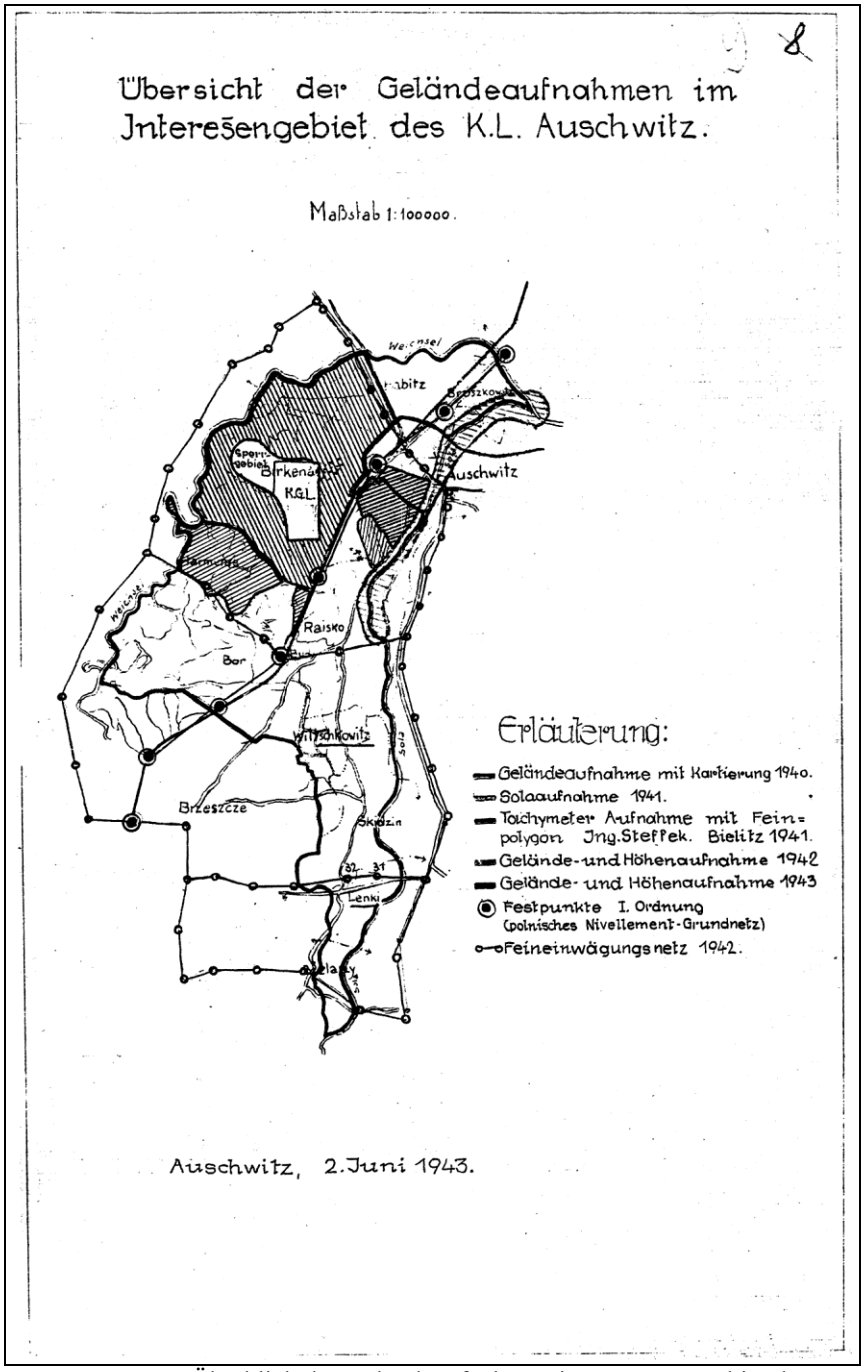
Anlage:

1 Durchschlag uns. Schreibens vom 13.6.44 an die Fa. Friedr. Boos.

Verteilt an:

den Herrn Reichsarzt-SS und Polizei
Der Oberste Hygieniker
Berlin-Zehlendorf 6,
Spanische Allee 10-12.

Document 35: continued



Document 36: "Überblick der Geländeaufnahmen im Interessengebiet des K.L. Auschwitz" dated June 2, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-88, p. 8.

— 81 —

Ausgabe B
ohne
Öffentlichen Anzeiger

Amtsblatt
der Regierung in Kattowitz

10

Stück 25 | Herausgegeben in Kattowitz, am 18. Juni 1943. | **1943**

Bekanntmachungen für die nächste Nummer sind spätestens bis Dienstag, früh 9 Uhr, der Amtsblattstelle einzusenden.

Inhaltsverzeichnis:

31. 5. 43. Beschluß über die Bildung von Amtsbezirken im Kreise Bielitz . . . . . Nr. 105
11. 6. 43. Anordnung über die Ausdehnung des Geltungsbereichs der Anordnung zur Regelung der Preise im Kürschnerhandwerk vom 17. 2. 1942 für die Preisbildung auf die eingegl. Ostgebiete der Provinz Oberschlesien . . Nr. 106
11. 6. 43. Enteignung von Grundeigentum . . Nr. 107
15. 6. 43. Änderung der Bezeichnung „Staatl. Regierungskasse" in „Preußische Regierungskasse" . . . . . Nr. 108
7. 6. 43. Niederlassungserlaubnis an Hebammen Nr. 109
2. 6. 43. Ungültigkeitserklärung eines Kraftfahrzeugscheines . . . . . Nr. 110
10. 6. 43. Verlorener Dienstausweis . . . . . Nr. 111

Verordnungen und Bekanntmachungen des Oberpräsidenten.

105. Beschluß.

Auf Grund des Artikels III § 2 der Verordnung über die Einführung der Deutschen Gemeindeordnung in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten vom 31. 12. 1939 (RGBl. I S. 2467) bestimme ich in Abänderung der Entscheidung des Herrn Oberpräsidenten in Breslau vom 7. 11. 1940 — O. K. I K 7/151 a — über die Bildung von Amtsbezirken im Kreise Bielitz folgendes:

Mit Wirkung vom 1. Juni 1943 wird aus den Gemeinden Broschkowitz, Babitz, Birkenau, Plawy, Harmense und Rajsko bezw. aus Teilen dieser Gemeinden der Amtsbezirk Auschwitz gebildet. Mit dem gleichen Tage scheiden die genannten Gemeinden bezw. Gemeindeteile aus dem Bereich ihres bisherigen Amtsbezirks aus. Die früher zur Gemeinde Auschwitz gehörenden Gebietsteile westlich der Sola in Größe von rd. 203 bezw. 25 ha werden der Gemeinde Brkenau bezw. Babitz, der bisher zur Gemeinde Brzeszcze gehörende Gebietsteil der Gemeinde Harmense der Restteil der Gemeinde Rajsko der Gemeinde Witschkowitz zugeschlagen. Der östlich der Sola am Schnittpunkt der Grenze Stadt Auschwitz — Amtsbezirk Osiek und Auschwitz gelegene, bisher zur Gemeinde Rajsko gehörende Gebietsteil wird der Gemeinde Grojetz, Amtsbezirk Osiek, zugeschlagen.

Das Gebiet des Amtsbezirks Auschwitz ergibt sich aus der nachstehenden Grenzbeschreibung und der diesem Beschluß beigefügten Karten A und B. §§. 851

Grenzbeschreibung.

Punkt 1. Vom Schnittpunkt des westlichen Solaufers mit der Gemarkungsgrenze Rajsko, verläuft in allgemein westlicher Richtung die Grenze entlang der Gemarkungsgrenze zwischen Rajsko, und Skidzin bezw. Wilschkowitz bis zu dem nach Norden zur Dorflage Rajsko führenden Feldweg.

Punkt 2. Von hier ab verläuft die Grenze in nördlicher Rchtung, östlich längs dieses Feldweges, der stellenweise nur Rain ist.

Punkt 3. Am Schnittpunkt zweier Gräben — sogen. Rosengraben — wendet sich die Grenze in ungefähr nord-westlicher Richtung durch die bebaute Ortslage von Rajsko zur Reichsstraße Auschwitz—Brzeszcze und kreuzt diese.

Punkt 4. Nach Überquerung dieser Reichsstraße verläuft sie an der Nordgrenze des Gutes Rajsko in allgemein westlicher Richtung entlang nördlich des vorhandenen Feldweges bis zur Bahnstrecke Dzieditz—Auschwitz.

Punkt 5. Von hier ab verläuft die Grenze dann östlich dieser Bahnstrecke in etwa nördlicher Richtung bis zum Durchlaß bei Reichsbahn — Km 344,7.

Punkt 6. Überschreitet die Bahnstrecke Dzieditz—Auschwitz im Zuge des Durchlasses bei km 344,7 und verläuft dann in nordwestlicher Richtung bis zu dem sogen. Königsgraben.

Punkt 7. Die Grenze verläuft dann längs des Königsgrabens bis zum Schnittpunkt mit der Gemarkungsgrenze Plawy.

Punkt 8. Von diesem Schnittpunkt verläuft die Grenze erst in westlicher dann in süd-westlicher Richtung am Nordrand der Fischteiche entlang und bildet gleichzeitig die Gemarkungsgrenze Plawy bezw. Harmense, bis sie den Harmensegraben schneidet.

Punkt 9. Folgt dann den Lauf des Harmensegrabens auf der Westseite in allgemein süd-östlicher Richtung, bis zur Reichsbahnstrecke Dzieditz—Auschwitz.

Document 37: *Amtsblatt der Regierung in Kattowitz* dated July 18, 1943. APK, Land 81 Go/S-467.

Der Standortälteste. Auschwitz, den 14. Febr. 1943.

Konzentrationslager Auschwitz
Verwaltung
15 FEB. 1943

Standortbefehl Nr. 3./43.

Unter Bezug auf den in Standortbefehl 25/42 genannten Standortbefehl 2/43 wird dieser dahingehend geändert, dass als Sperrgebiet für die Lagersperre gemäss Einzeichnungen im Plan vom Interessengebiet des K.L. Auschwitz folgendes Gebiet bestimmt wird :

Das Sperrgebiet wird dargestellt vom Interessengebiet des K.L. Au und zwar im Norden, Westen und Osten begrenzt von der Weichsel, bezw. der Sola.
Die östliche Grenze wird unterbrochen durch das Gebiet der Stadt Auschwitz, verringert durch einen Zipfel, der dargestellt wird von der Strasse, die unmittelbar gegenüber dem Bahnhof in das Interessengebiet einmündet und hinter das Haus SS-Stubaf. Cäsar nach links (Osten) abbiegt, in Richtung auf die Strasse Auschwitz - Raisko mit Treffpunkt Lederfabrik.
Das Bahnhofsgelände, das Haus der Waffen-SS, sowie die Bahnhofsstrasse in Richtung Auschwitz dürfen ohne Passierschein nicht betreten werden. Der Aufenthalt im Bahnhof und im Haus der Waffen SS ist verboten.
Im Süden wird die Grenze gebildet von der Strasse, die südlich Bor und Budy führt und einer Linie, die westwärts zur Weichsel und Im Osten eine Verbindung zur Sola herstellt.

Als An-und Abmarschstrasse innerhalb der beschriebenen Grenzen sind für die Truppe, bezw. Zivilarbeiter, sowie im Lager verkehrende Familienmitglieder von SS-Angehörigen folgende Strassen zu benutzen.
1.) An-und Abmarschstrasse der Truppe zum Schutzhaftlager siehe Skizze. Also: Strasse Saune - Eingang Schutzhaftlager Birkenau - Strasse Verladerampe - Bahnübergang - Lagerstrasse - Industriehof - Schutzhaftlager.
2.) An-und Abmarschstrasse der Zivilarbeiter siehe Skizze. Also Weg I.: Gemeinschaftslager - Lagerstrasse bis zur Kreuzung Strasse KGL - KGL-Strasse bis zum Schutzhaftlager Birkenau.
Weg II.: Haus Record bis Haus SS-Stubaf. Cäsar - Lederfabrik - Strasse Auschwitz-Raisko bis zur Hauptwache.
3.) Weg der Zivilarbeiter zum Arzt : Haus Record - Bahnhof - Lagerstrasse - Gemeinschaftslager - Strassenkreuzung - Lagerstrasse - KGL-Strasse - KGL-Strasse-Kreuzung DAW - Strasse DAW - Landstrasse Raisko-Auschwitz - Hauptwache - Revier.
4.) SS-Familien zum Haus 7 und zur Arztsprechstunde im Haus 45 auf direktem Weg ohne Umwege.

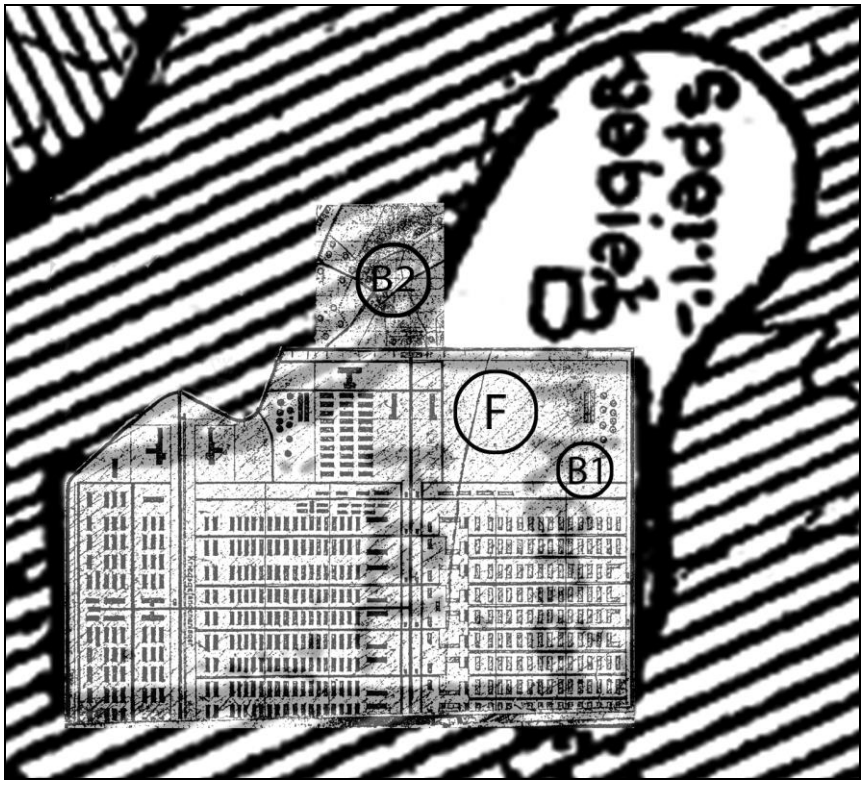
Sämtliche SS-Führer, SS-Unterführer und SS-Männer, die ausserhalb der Sperrlinie wohnen, haben für Beschaffung eines Passierscheines Sorge zu tragen. Das Betreten des Hauses der Waffen-SS und des Bahnhofes ist verboten.

Anweisung für den Streifendienst erfolgt durch den SS-T.-Sturmbann.

Die ständigen Aussenkommandos nach ausserhalb müssen mit Passierscheinen versehen sein.

Die Ordonnanzen der Wachkompanie Buna müssen beim Betreten des

Document 38: *Standortbefehl* no. 3/43 dated February 14, 1943. APMO, *Standortbefehl*, t. I, D-AuI-1, p. 48.



Document 39: Superimposition of the map of the Birkenau camp ("Interessengebiet des KL Auschwitz, Lageplan." map no. 2501, June 1943. GARF, 7021-108-25, p. 25) on the map of June 2, 1943 (document 36), showing that the areas where the alleged "bunkers" are claimed to have been located were not encompassed in the part of the "off-limits zone" outside the camp perimeter:

B1: area of the alleged "bunker" 1 and its mass graves

B2: area of the alleged "bunker" 2

F: mass graves allegedly belonging to "bunker" 1, actually graves of registered detainees who died in 1942 which crema I of the main camp could not cremate.

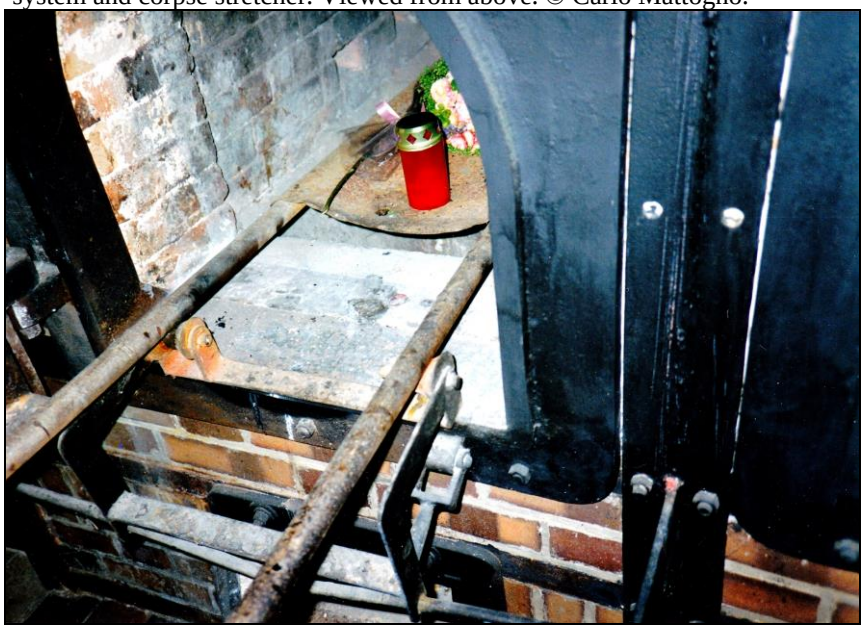
Document 40: Crematorium of Buchenwald. Topf triple-muffle coke-fired oven. Central muffle. Roller-device for coffin introduction cart (*Sargeinführungswagen*) in position for operation. © Carlo Mattogno.

Document 41: Crematorium of Buchenwald. Topf triple-muffle coke-fired oven. Central muffle. Corpse introduction cart with loading stretcher inside the muffle. © Carlo Mattogno.

Document 42: Crematorium of Buchenwald. Topf triple-muffle coke-fired oven. Central muffle. Corpse introduction cart. Lower side. Rims of the stretcher running on the rollers. © Carlo Mattogno.

Document 43: Crematorium of Mauthausen. Topf coke-fired double-muffle oven, Auschwitz type. Loading system of oven: fixation shaft, mobile roller system, and corpse stretcher. Front view. © Carlo Mattogno.

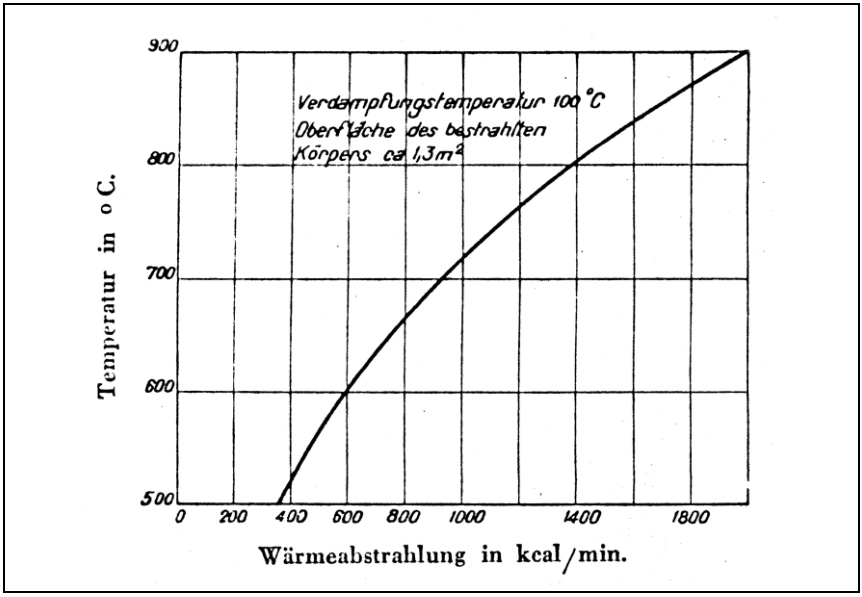
Document 44: Crematorium of Mauthausen. Topf coke-fired double-muffle oven, Auschwitz type. Loading system of oven: fixation shaft, mobile roller system and corpse stretcher. Viewed from above. © Carlo Mattogno.



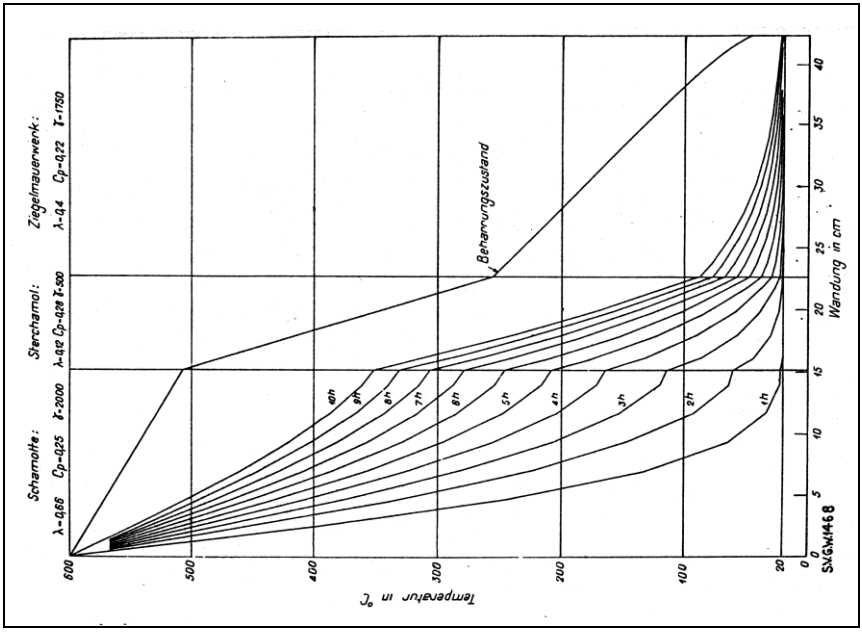
Document 45: Crematorium of Mauthausen. Topf coke-fired double-muffle, oven Auschwitz type. Loading system of oven: fixation shaft, mobile roller device supporting the bars of the corpse stretcher. © Carlo Mattogno.

Document 46: Crematorium of Mauthausen. Topf coke-fired double-muffle oven Auschwitz type. (Cf. document 43). The two horizontal lines represent the height of two superimposed normal corpses on the muffle grid.

Document 46a: Crematorium of Mauthausen. Topf coke-fired double-muffle oven Auschwitz type. (Cf. document 43). Photo composition showing how high the stretcher would have had to be raised for it to be introduced into the chamber above the first two superimposed corpses.

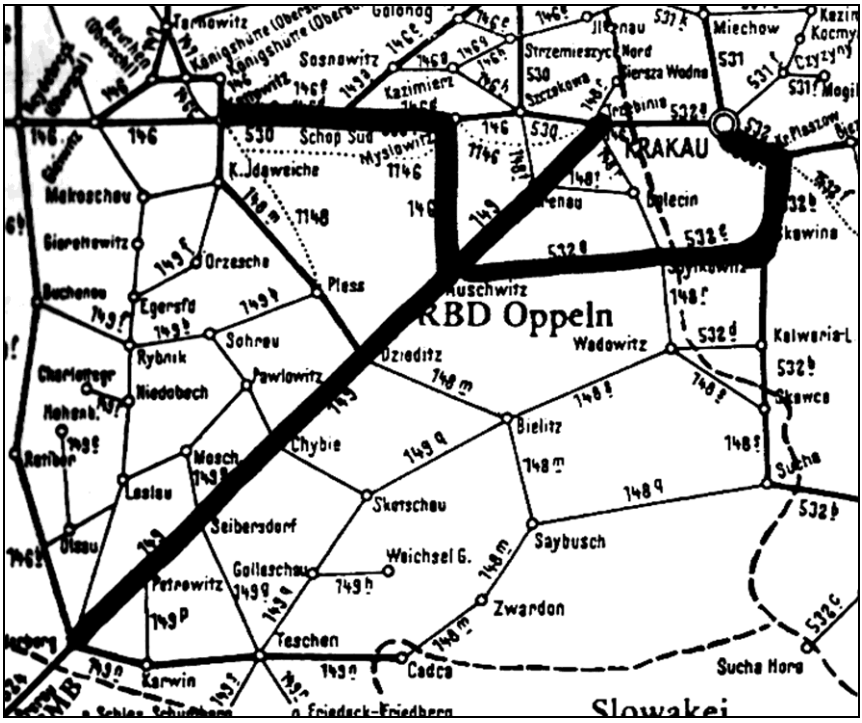


Document 47: Diagram of radiation from the walls of a muffle onto a body in a crematorium oven as a function of temperature. From: Schläpfer 1938, p. 153.

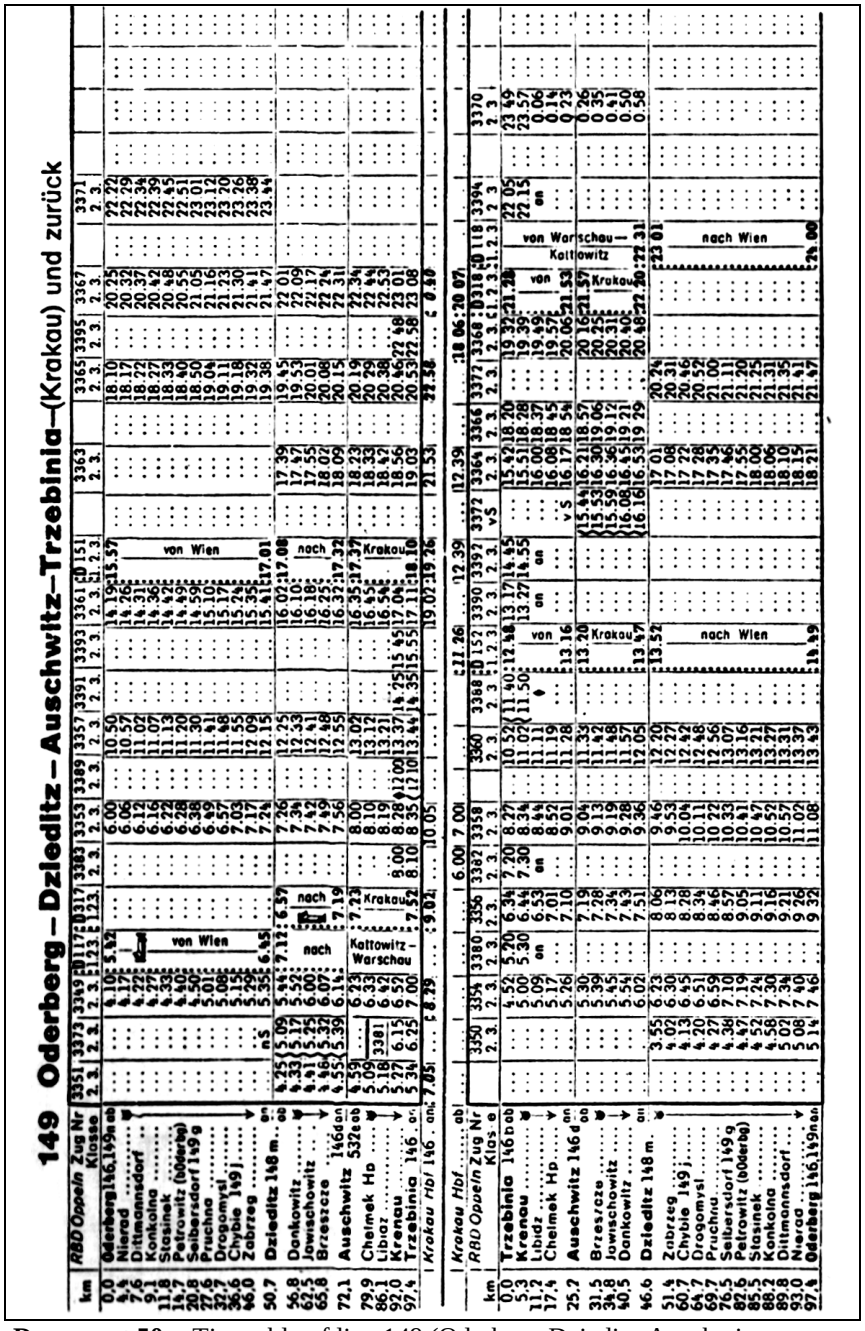


Document 48: Diagram showing the diffusion of heat in the muffle wall of a crematorium oven constantly heated to 600°C. From: Schläpfer 1938, p. 154.

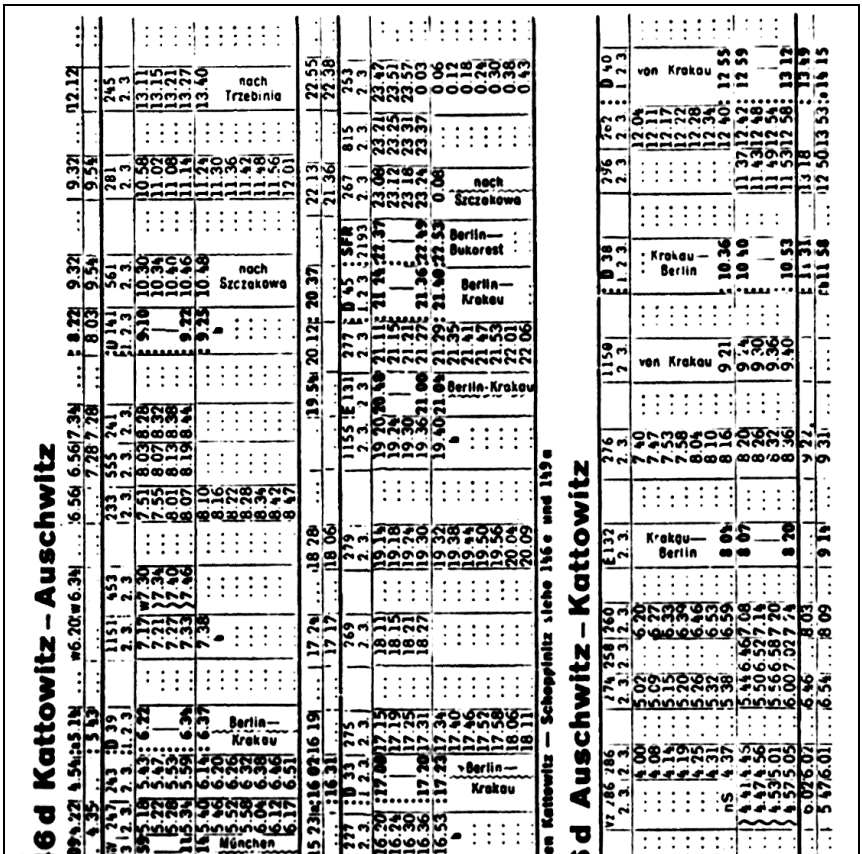
Document 49: "The ogre of Birkenau." Painting by D. Olère 131×162. From: Klarsfeld 1989, p. 97.



Document 50: "Map for the pocket timetable of the Ostbahn directorate general (Übersichtkarte zum Taschenfahrplan der Generaldirektion der Ostbahn), detail. From: Generaldirektion, p. 8.



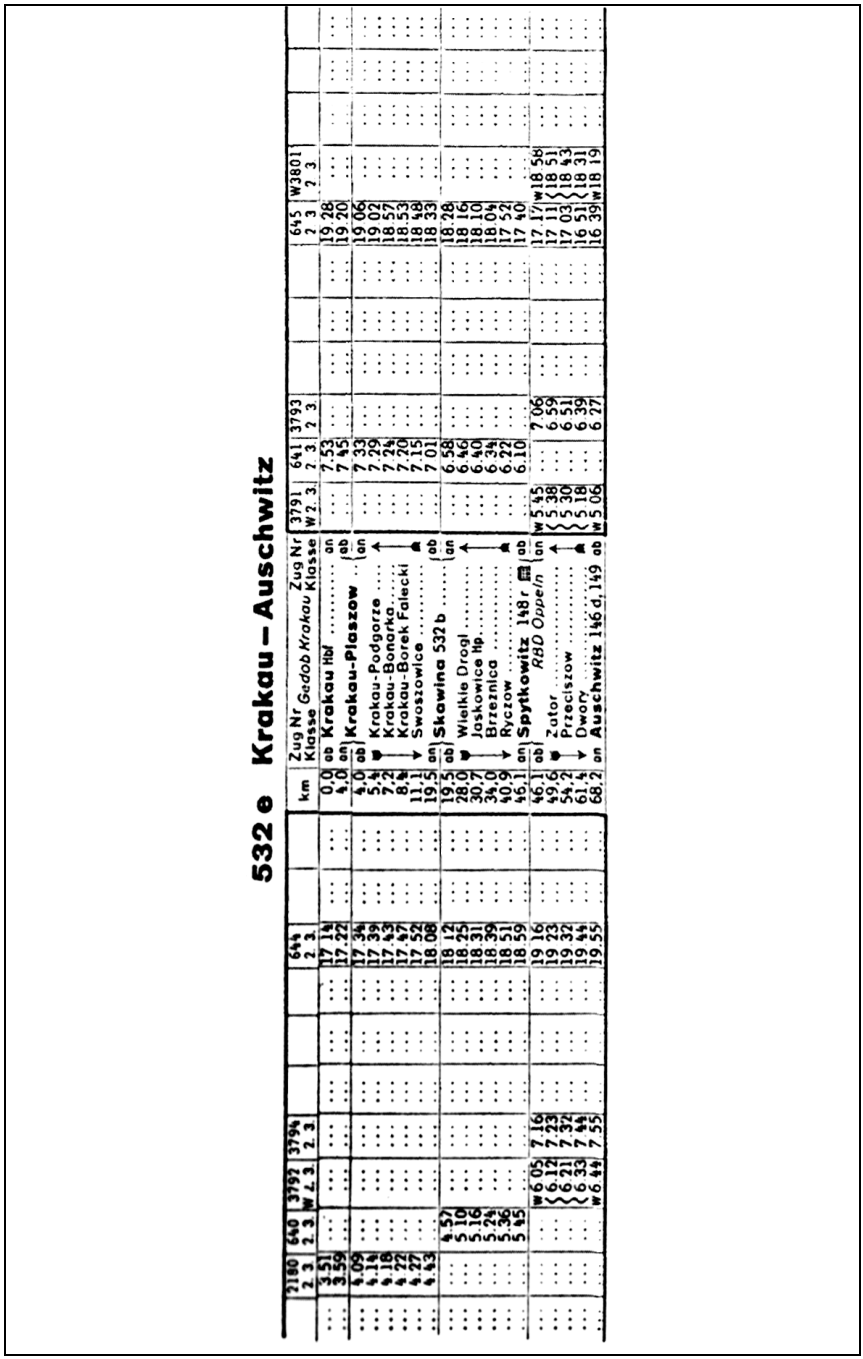
Document 50a: Timetable of line 149 (Oderberg-Dzieditz-Auschwitz-Trzebinia- Cracow and return) valid from November 1942. From: Generaldirektion, p. 68.



146 d Kattowitz – Auschwitz

146 d Auschwitz – Kattowitz

Document 50b: Timetable for line 146d (Kattowitz-Auschwitz and return) valid from November 1942. From: Generaldirektion, p. 54.



532 e Krakau – Auschwitz

	2180	640	3793	3794				644					641	3793			645	W3801		
	2 3	2 3	W 2. 3	2 3				2 3					2 3	2 3			2 3	2 3		
	3.51	...	...	...				17 14					7.53	...			19 28	...		
	3.59	...	...	...				17 22					7.45	...			19 20	...		
	4.09	...	...	...				17 34					7.33	...			19 06	...		
	4.14	...	...	...				17 39					7.29	...			19 01	...		
	4.18	...	...	...				17 43					7.24	...			18 57	...		
	4.22	...	...	...				17 47					7.20	...			18 53	...		
	4.27	...	...	...				17 52					7.15	...			18 48	...		
	4.43	...	...	...				18 08					7.01	...			18 39	...		
		4.52						18 12					6.58				18 28			
		5.10						18 25					6.46				18 16			
		5.16						18 31					6.40				18 10			
		5.24						18 39					6.34				18 04			
		5.36						18 51					6.22				17 52			
		5.45						18 59					6.10				17 40			
			w 6.05	7.16				19 16						7.06			17.17	w 18.58		
			6.12	7.23				19 23						6.59			17 11	18 51		
			6.21	7.32				19 32						6.51			17 03	18 43		
			6.33	7.44				19 44						6.39			16 51	18 31		
			w 6.44	7.55				19.55						6.27			16 39	w 18 19		

km	Zug Nr Gedob Krakau Zug Nr Klasse		3791 W 2. 3	641 2 3	3793 2 3		645 2 3	W3801 2 3		
0,0	ab **Krakau** Hbf	an		7.53	...		19 28	...		
4,0	an	ab		7.45	...		19 20	...		
4,0	ab **Krakau-Plaszow** ..	an		7.33	...		19 06	...		
5,4	Krakau-Podgorze	◄		7.29	...		19 01	...		
7,2	Krakau-Bonarka	◄		7.24	...		18 57	...		
8,4	Krakau-Borek Falecki	●		7.20	...		18 53	...		
11,1	Swoszowice	►		7.15	...		18 48	...		
19,5	an	ab		7.01	...		18 39	...		
19,5	ab **Skawina** 532 b	an		6.58	...		18 28	...		
28,0	Wielkie Drogi	◄		6.46	...		18 16	...		
30,7	Jaskowice Hp.	◄		6.40	...		18 10	...		
34,0	Brzeznica	●		6.34	...		18 04	...		
40,9	Ryczow	►		6.22	...		17 52	...		
46,1	an	ab		6.10	...		17 40	...		
46,1	ab **Spytkowitz** 148 r ▦	an	W 5.45		7.06		17.17	w 18.58		
	RBD Oppeln		5.38		6.59		17 11	18 51		
49,6	Zator	◄	5.30		6.51		17 03	18 43		
54,2	Przeciszow	◄	5.18		6.39		16 51	18 31		
61,4	Dwory	●	W 5.06		6.27		16 39	w 18 19		
68,2	an **Auschwitz** 146 d, 149	ab								

Document 50c: Timetable for line 532e (Cracow-Auschwitz) valid from November 1942. From: Generaldirektion, p. 104.

Document 51: Photograph of a corpse after 30 minutes of cremation. From: Michael Bohnert et al., figure 1 on p. 15.

5. Abbreviations of Archives

AFH: Friedman Archive, Haifa.
AGK: Archiwum Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Instytutu Pamieci Narodowej (Archives of the central comission for the investigation of the crimes against the Polish people – national memorial), Warsaw
AKfSD: Archiv des Kuratoriums für das Sühnemal KZ Dachau (Archives of the curators of the expiation site at KZ Dachau)
APK: Archiwum Państwowego w Katowicach (Kattowitz national archives)
APMGR: Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum Gross-Rosen (Archives of the national museum at Groß-Rosen), Wałbzrych
APMM: Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum na Majdanku (Archives of the Majdanek national museum), Lublin
APMO: Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu (Archive of the national museum of Auschwitz)
BAK: Bundesarchiv Koblenz (German federal archives), Koblenz
CDJC: Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris
FDRL: Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, New York
DPA: Deutsches Patentamt (German patent office), Berlin
FSBRF: Federal'naja Služba Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Federal security office of the Russian federation), Moscow
GARF: Gosudarstvenni Archiv Rossiskoi Federatsii (National archives of the Russian federation), Moscow
ICJ: Institute of Contemporary Jewry (The Hebrew University), Jerusalem
IMT: International Military Tribunal
NA: National Archives, Washington, D.C.
ÖDMM: Öffentliches Denkmal und Museum Mauthausen (Public monument and museum Mauthausen)
PRO: Public Record Office, London
PT: Památník Terezín (Monument of Terezin)
RGVA: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Vojennii Archiv (Russian national war archives), Moscow
ROD: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (National institute for war documentation), Amsterdam
SB: Sennefriedhof Bielefeld (Senne cemetery at Bielefeld)
SE: Stadtarchiv Erfurt (Erfurt municipal archives)
SPP: Studium Polski Podziemnej (Research institute for Polish underground resistance), London
SW: Staatsarchiv Weimar (Weimar state archives)
TMI: Tribunal Militaire International
VHA: Vojenský Historický Archiv (Archives of military history), Prague
WAPL: Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (Lublin national provincial archives)

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7. Index of Names

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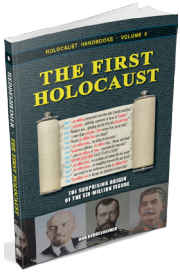

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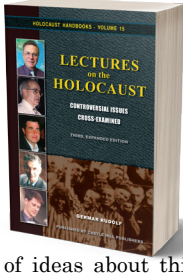

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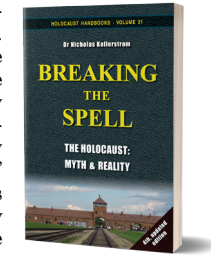

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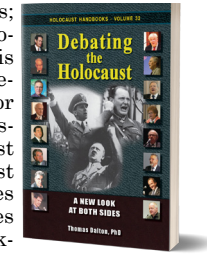

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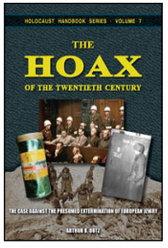

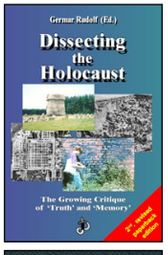

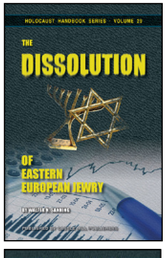

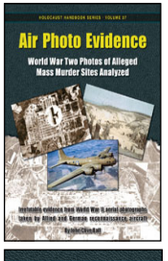

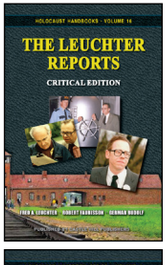

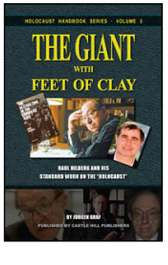

nesses of both sides, while declaring revisionism the winner of the current state of the debate. 2nd ed., 332 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#32)

The Hoax of the Twentieth Century. The Case against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry. By Arthur R. Butz. The first writer to analyze the entire Holocaust complex in a precise scientific manner. This book exhibits the overwhelming force of arguments accumulated by the mid-1970s. Butz's two main arguments are: 1. All major entities hostile to Germany must have known what was happening to the Jews under German authority. They acted during the war as if no mass slaughter was occurring. 2. All the evidence adduced to proof any mass slaughter has a dual interpretation, while only the innocuous one can be proven to be correct. This book continues to be a major historical reference work, frequently cited by prominent personalities. This edition has numerous supplements with new information gathered over the last 35 years. 4th ed., 524 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#7)

Dissecting the Holocaust. The Growing Critique of 'Truth' and 'Memory.' Edited by Germar Rudolf. *Dissecting the Holocaust* applies state-of-the-art scientific technique and classic methods of detection to investigate the alleged murder of millions of Jews by Germans during World War II. In 22 contributions—each of some 30 pages—the 17 authors dissect generally accepted paradigms of the "Holocaust." It reads as exciting as a crime novel: so many lies, forgeries and deceptions by politicians, historians and scientists are proven. This is the intellectual adventure of the 21st century. Be part of it! 2nd ed. 620 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#1)

The Dissolution of Eastern European Jewry. By Walter N. Sanning. Six Million Jews died in the Holocaust. Sanning did not take that number at face value, but thoroughly explored European population developments and shifts mainly caused by emigration as well as deportations and evacuations conducted by both Nazis and the Soviets, among other things. The book is based mainly on Jewish, Zionist and mainstream sources. It concludes that a sizeable share of the Jews found missing during local censuses after the Second World War, which were so far counted as "Holocaust victims," had either emigrated (mainly to Israel or the U.S.) or had been deported by Stalin to Siberian labor camps. 2nd ed., foreword by A.R. Butz, epilogue by Germar Rudolf containing important updates; 224 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography (#29).

Air Photo Evidence: World War Two Photos of Alleged Mass Murder Sites Analyzed. By Germar Rudolf (editor). During World War Two both German and Allied reconnaissance aircraft took countless air photos of places of tactical and strategic interest in Europe. These photos are prime evidence for the investigation of the Holocaust. Air photos of locations like Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Babi Yar etc. permit an insight into what did or did not happen there. The author has unearthed many pertinent photos and has thoroughly analyzed them. This book is full of air photo reproductions and schematic drawings explaining them. According to the author, these images refute many of the atrocity claims made by witnesses in connection with events in the German sphere of influence. 5th edition; with a contribution by Carlo Mattogno. 168 pages, 8.5"×11", b&w illustrations, bibliography, index (#27).

The Leuchter Reports: Critical Edition. By Fred Leuchter, Robert Faurisson and Germar Rudolf. Between 1988 and 1991, U.S. expert on execution technologies Fred Leuchter wrote four detailed reports addressing whether the Third Reich operated homicidal gas chambers. The first report on Auschwitz and Majdanek became world famous. Based on chemical analyses and various technical arguments, Leuchter concluded that the locations investigated "could not have then been, or now be, utilized or seriously considered to function as execution gas chambers." The second report deals with gas-chamber claims for the camps Dachau, Mauthausen and Hartheim, while the third reviews design criteria and operation procedures of execution gas chambers in the U.S. The fourth report reviews Pressac's 1989 tome *Auschwitz*. 4th ed., 252 pages, b&w illustrations. (#16)

The Giant with Feet of Clay: Raul Hilberg and His Standard Work on the "Holocaust." By Jürgen Graf. Raul Hilberg's major work *The Destruction of European Jewry* is an orthodox standard work on the Holocaust. But what evidence does Hilberg provide to back his thesis that there was a German plan to exterminate Jews, carried out mainly in gas chambers? Jürgen Graf applies the methods of critical analysis to Hilberg's evidence and examines the results in light of modern historiography. The results of Graf's critical

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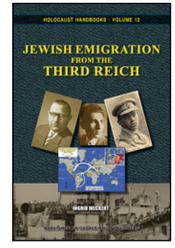
analysis are devastating for Hilberg. 2nd, corrected edition, 139 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#3)

Jewish Emigration from the Third Reich. By Ingrid Weckert. Current historical writings about the Third Reich claim state it was difficult for Jews to flee from Nazi persecution. The truth is that Jewish emigration was welcomed by the German authorities. Emigration was not some kind of wild flight, but rather a lawfully determined and regulated matter. Weckert's booklet elucidates the emigration process in law and policy. She shows that German and Jewish authorities worked closely together. Jews interested in emigrating received detailed advice and offers of help from both sides. 2nd ed., 130 pages, index. (#12)

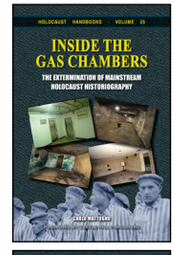
Inside the Gas Chambers: The Extermination of Mainstream Holocaust Historiography. By Carlo Mattogno. Neither increased media propaganda or political pressure nor judicial persecution can stifle revisionism. Hence, in early 2011, the Holocaust Orthodoxy published a 400 pp. book (in German) claiming to refute "revisionist propaganda," trying again to prove "once and for all" that there were homicidal gas chambers at the camps of Dachau, Natzweiler, Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Neuengamme, Stutthof… you name them. Mattogno shows with his detailed analysis of this work of propaganda that mainstream Holocaust hagiography is beating around the bush rather than addressing revisionist research results. He exposes their myths, distortions and lies. 2nd ed., 280 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#25)

SECTION TWO:
Specific non-Auschwitz Studies

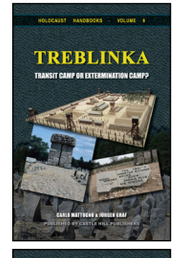
Treblinka: Extermination Camp or Transit Camp? By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. It is alleged that at Treblinka in East Poland between 700,000 and 3,000,000 persons were murdered in 1942 and 1943. The weapons used were said to have been stationary and/or mobile gas chambers, fast-acting or slow-acting poison gas, unslaked lime, superheated steam, electricity, diesel exhaust fumes etc. Holocaust historians alleged that bodies were piled as high as multi-storied buildings and burned without a trace, using little or no fuel at all. Graf and Mattogno have now analyzed the origins, logic and technical feasibility of the official version of Treblinka. On the basis of numerous documents they reveal Treblinka's true identity as a mere transit camp. 2nd ed., 372 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#8)



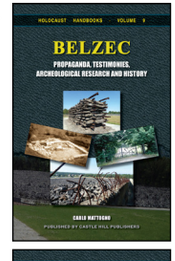
Belzec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research and History. By Carlo Mattogno. Witnesses report that between 600,000 and 3 million Jews were murdered in the Belzec camp, located in Poland. Various murder weapons are claimed to have been used: diesel gas; unslaked lime in trains; high voltage; vacuum chambers; etc. The corpses were incinerated on huge pyres without leaving a trace. For those who know the stories about Treblinka this sounds familiar. Thus the author has restricted this study to the aspects which are new compared to Treblinka. In contrast to Treblinka, forensic drillings and excavations were performed at Belzec, the results of which are critically reviewed. 142 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#9)

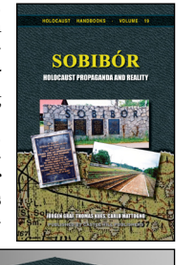


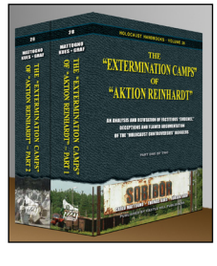
Sobibor: Holocaust Propaganda and Reality. By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. Between 25,000 and 2 million Jews are said to have been killed in gas chambers in the Sobibór camp in Poland. The corpses were allegedly buried in mass graves and later incinerated on pyres. This book investigates these claims and shows that they are based on the selective use of contradictory eyewitness testimony. Archeological surveys of the camp in 2000-2001 are analyzed, with fatal results for the extermination camp hypothesis. The book also documents the general National Socialist policy toward Jews, which never included a genocidal "final solution." 442 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#19)



The "Extermination Camps" of "Aktion Reinhardt". By Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues and Carlo Mattogno. In late 2011, several members of the exterminationist *Holocaust Controversies* blog posted a study online which claims to refute three of our authors' monographs on the camps Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka (see previous three entries). This tome is their point-by-point response, which makes "mincemeat" out of the bloggers' attempt at refutation. Caution: The two volumes of this work are an intellectual overkill for most people. They are recommended only for collectors, connoisseurs and professionals. These two books require familiarity with the above-mentioned books, of which they are a comprehensive update and expansion. 2nd ed., two volumes, total of 1396 pages, illustrations, bibliography. (#28)







Chelmno: A Camp in History & Propaganda. By Carlo Mattogno. At Chelmno, huge masses of Jewish prisoners are said to have been rounded up and mercilessly gassed in "gas vans" or shot (claims vary from 10,000 to 1.3 million victims). Mattogno has examined reams of wartime documents and conducted on-site investigations at the Chelmno camp site and the neighboring countryside. The results challenge the conventional wisdom about Chelmno. Mattogno covers the subject from every angle, undermining the orthodox claims about the camp with an overwhelmingly effective body of evidence. Eyewitness statements, gas wagons as extermination weapons, forensics reports, coroners' reports, archaeological excavations, the crematoria, building plans, official U.S. reports, German documents, evacuation efforts—all come under Mattogno's scrutiny. Here are the uncensored facts about Chelmno, not the propaganda. 2nd ed., 188 pages, indexed, illustrated, bibliography. (#23)

The Gas Vans: A Critical Investigation. (A perfect companion to the Chelmno book.) By Santiago Alvarez and Pierre Marais. It is alleged that the Nazis used mobile gas chambers to exterminate 700,000 people. Up until 2011, no thorough monograph had appeared on the topic. Santiago Alvarez has remedied the situation. Are witness statements reliable? Are documents genuine? Where are the murder weapons? Could they have operated as claimed? Where are the corpses? In order to get to the truth of the matter, Alvarez has scrutinized all known wartime documents and photos about this topic; he has analyzed a huge amount of witness statements as published in the literature and as presented in more than 30 trials held over the decades in Germany, Poland and Israel; and he has examined the claims made in the pertinent mainstream literature. The result of his research is mind-boggling. Note: This book and Mattogno's book on Chelmno were edited in parallel to make sure they are consistent and not repetitive. 398 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#26)

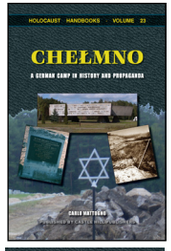
The Einsatzgruppen in the Occupied Eastern Territories: Genesis, Responsibilities and Activities. By C. Mattogno. Before invading the Soviet Union, the German authorities set up special units meant to secure the area behind the German front. Orthodox historians claim that these unites called *Einsatzgruppen* primarily engaged in rounding up and mass-murdering Jews. This study tries to shed a critical light into this topic by reviewing all the pertinent sources as well as material traces. Ca. 850 pp., b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (Scheduled for late 2018; #39)

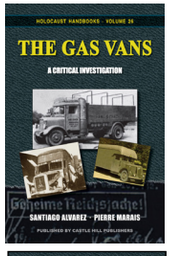
Concentration Camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study. By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. At war's end, the Soviets claimed that up to two million Jews were murdered at the Majdanek Camp in seven gas chambers. Over the decades, however, the Majdanek Museum reduced the death toll three times to currently 78,000, and admitted that there were "only" two gas chambers. By exhaustively researching primary sources, the authors expertly dissect and repudiate the myth of homicidal gas chambers at that camp. They also critically investigated the legend of mass executions of Jews in tank trenches and prove them groundless. Again they have produced a standard work of methodical investigation which authentic historiography cannot ignore. 3rd ed., 358 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#5)

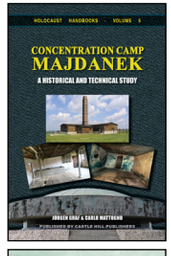
Concentration Camp Stutthof and Its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy. By Carlo Mattogno and Jürgen Graf. Orthodox historians claim that the Stutthof Camp served as a "makeshift" extermination camp in 1944. Based mainly on archival resources, this study thoroughly debunks this view and shows that Stutthof was in fact a center for the organization of German forced labor toward the end of World War II. 4th ed., 170 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#4)

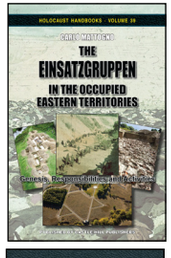
SECTION THREE:
Auschwitz Studies

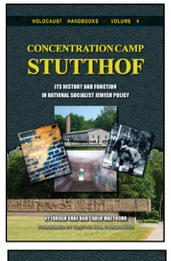
The Making of the Auschwitz Myth: Auschwitz in British Intercepts, Polish Underground Reports and Postwar Testimonies (1941-1947). By Carlo Mattogno. Using messages sent by the Polish underground to London, SS radio messages send to and from Auschwitz that were intercepted and decrypted by the British, and a plethora of witness statements made during the war and in the immediate postwar period, the author shows how exactly the myth of mass murder in Auschwitz gas chambers was created, and how it was turned subsequently into "history" by intellectually corrupt scholars who cherry-picked claims that fit into their agenda and ignored or actively covered up literally thousands of lies of "witnesses" to make their narrative look credible. Ca. 300 pp., b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (Scheduled for mid-2018; #41)











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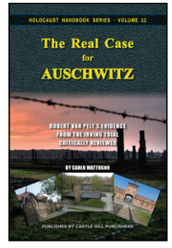
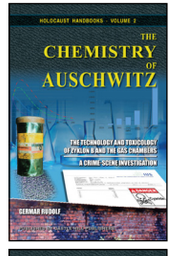
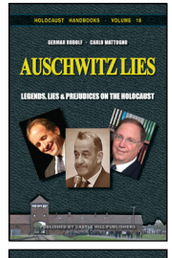
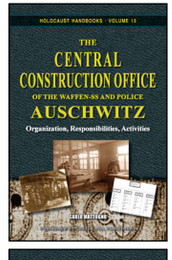
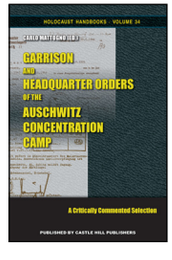










The Real Case of Auschwitz: Robert van Pelt's Evidence from the Irving Trial Critically Reviewed. By Carlo Mattogno. Prof. Robert van Pelt is considered one of the best mainstream experts on Auschwitz. He became famous when appearing as an expert during the London libel trial of David Irving against Deborah Lipstadt. From it resulted a book titled *The Case for Auschwitz*, in which van Pelt laid out his case for the existence of homicidal gas chambers at that camp. This book is a scholarly response to Prof. van Pelt—and Jean-Claude Pressac, upon whose books van Pelt's study is largely based. Mattogno lists all the evidence van Pelt adduces, and shows one by one that van Pelt misrepresented and misinterpreted each single one of them. This is a book of prime political and scholarly importance to those looking for the truth about Auschwitz. 2nd ed., 758 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. (#22)

Auschwitz: Plain Facts: A Response to Jean-Claude Pressac. Edited by Germar Rudolf, with contributions by Serge Thion, Robert Faurisson and Carlo Mattogno. French pharmacist Jean-Claude Pressac tried to refute revisionist findings with the "technical" method. For this he was praised by the mainstream, and they proclaimed victory over the "revisionists." In his book, Pressac's works and claims are shown to be unscientific in nature, as he never substantiate what he claims, and historically false, because he systematically misrepresents, misinterprets and misunderstands German wartime documents. 2nd ed., 226 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary bibliography, index. (#14)

The Chemistry of Auschwitz: The Technology and Toxicology of Zyklon B and the Gas Chambers – A Crime Scene Investigation. By Germar Rudolf. While respecting the victims, whether of foul play or of circumstance, this study nonetheless tries to conduct Auschwitz research on the basis of the forensic sciences, where material traces of the crime and their interpretation reign supreme. Although it is generally agreed that no autopsy of any victim has ever been performed, most of the claimed crime scenes – the chemical slaughterhouses called gas chambers – are still accessible to forensic examination to a greater or lesser degree. This book addresses questions such as: How did these gas chambers of Auschwitz look like? How did they operate? What were they used for? In addition, the infamous Zyklon B can also be examined. What exactly hides behind this ominous name? How does it kill? And what effect has it on masonry? Does it leave traces that can be found still today? By thoroughly examining these issues, the horror of Auschwitz is meticulously dissected, and thus, for the first time, it really becomes comprehensible. 3rd ed., 442 pages, more than 120 color and almost 100 b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#2)

Auschwitz Lies: Legends, Lies and Prejudices on the Holocaust. By C. Mattogno and G. Rudolf. The fallacious research and alleged "refutation" of Revisionist scholars by French biochemist G. Wellers (attacking Leuchter's famous report), Polish chemist Dr. J. Markiewicz and U.S. chemist Dr. Richard Green (taking on Rudolf's chemical research), Dr. John Zimmerman (tackling Mattogno on cremation issues), Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman (trying to prove it all), as well as researchers Keren, McCarthy and Mazal (how turned cracks into architectural features), are exposed for what they are: blatant and easily exposed political lies created to ostracize dissident historians. 3rd ed., 398 pages, b&w illustrations, index. (#18)

Auschwitz: The Central Construction Office. By C. Mattogno. Based upon mostly unpublished German wartime documents, this study describes the history, organization, tasks and procedures of the one office which was responsible for the planning and construction of the Auschwitz camp complex, including the crematories which are said to have contained the "gas chambers." 2nd ed., 188 pages, b&w illustrations, glossary, index. (#13)

Garrison and Headquarters Orders of the Auschwitz Camp. By C. Mattogno. A large number of all the orders ever issued by the various commanders of the infamous Auschwitz camp have been preserved. They reveal the true nature of the camp with all its daily events. There is not a trace in these orders pointing at anything sinister going on in this camp. Quite to the contrary, many orders are in clear and insurmountable contradiction to claims that prisoners were mass murdered. This is a selection of the most pertinent of these orders together with comments putting them into their proper historical context. (Scheduled for late 2018; #34)

Special Treatment in Auschwitz: Origin and Meaning of a Term. By C. Mattogno. When appearing in German wartime documents, terms like "special treatment," "special action," and others have been interpreted as code words for mass murder. But that is not always true. This study focuses on documents about Auschwitz, showing that, while "special" had many different meanings, not a single one meant "execution." Hence the practice of deciphering an alleged "code language" by assigning homicidal meaning to harmless documents – a key component of mainstream historiography – is untenable. 2nd ed., 166 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#10)

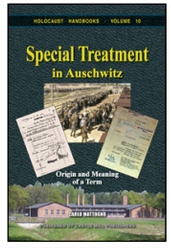
Healthcare at Auschwitz. By C. Mattogno. In extension of the above study on *Special Treatment in Auschwitz*, this study proves the extent to which the German authorities at Auschwitz tried to provide appropriate health care for the inmates. In the first part of this book, the author analyzes the inmates' living conditions as well as the various sanitary and medical measures implemented to maintain or restore the inmates' health. The second part explores what happened in particular to those inmates registered at Auschwitz who were "selected" or subject to "special treatment" while disabled or sick. The comprehensive documentation presented shows clearly that everything was tried to cure these inmates, especially under the aegis of Garrison Physician Dr. Wirths. The last part of this book is dedicated to the remarkable personality of Dr. Wirths, the Auschwitz garrison physician since 1942. His reality refutes the current stereotype of SS officers. 398 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#33)

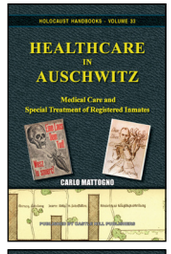
Debunking the Bunkers of Auschwitz: Black Propaganda vs. History. By Carlo Mattogno. The bunkers at Auschwitz, two former farmhouses just outside the camp's perimeter, are claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz specifically equipped for this purpose. With the help of original German wartime files as well as revealing air photos taken by Allied reconnaissance aircraft in 1944, this study shows that these homicidal "bunkers" never existed, how the rumors about them evolved as black propaganda created by resistance groups in the camp, and how this propaganda was transformed into a false reality. 2nd ed., 292 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#11)

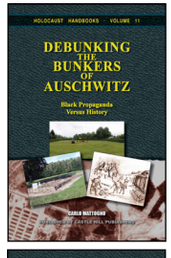
Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality. By C. Mattogno. The first gassing in Auschwitz is claimed to have occurred on Sept. 3, 1941, in a basement room. The accounts reporting it are the archetypes for all later gassing accounts. This study analyzes all available sources about this alleged event. It shows that these sources contradict each other in location, date, victims etc, rendering it impossible to extract a consistent story. Original wartime documents inflict a final blow to this legend and prove without a shadow of a doubt that this legendary event never happened. 3rd ed., 190 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#20)

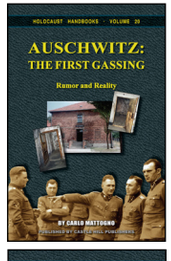
Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassings. By C. Mattogno. The morgue of Crematorium I in Auschwitz is said to be the first homicidal gas chamber there. This study investigates all statements by witnesses and analyzes hundreds of wartime documents to accurately write a history of that building. Where witnesses speak of gassings, they are either very vague or, if specific, contradict one another and are refuted by documented and material facts. The author also exposes the fraudulent attempts of mainstream historians to convert the witnesses' black propaganda into "truth" by means of selective quotes, omissions, and distortions. Mattogno proves that this building's morgue was never a homicidal gas chamber, nor could it have worked as such. 2nd ed., 152 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#21)

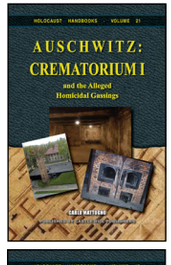
Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations. By C. Mattogno. In spring and summer of 1944, 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz and allegedly murdered there in gas chambers. The Auschwitz crematoria are said to have been unable to cope with so many corpses. Therefore, every single day thousands of corpses are claimed to have been incinerated on huge pyres lit in deep trenches. The sky over Auschwitz was covered in thick smoke. This is what some witnesses want us to believe. This book examines the many testimonies regarding these incinerations and establishes whether these claims were even possible. Using air photos, physical evidence and wartime documents, the author shows that these claims are fiction. A new Appendix contains 3 papers on groundwater levels and cattle mass burnings. 2nd ed., 202 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#17)











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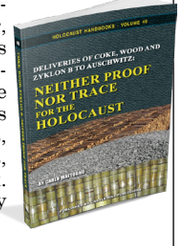
The Cremation Furnaces of Auschwitz. By Carlo Mattogno & Franco Deana. An exhaustive study of the history and technology of cremation in general and of the cremation furnaces of Auschwitz in particular. On a vast base of technical literature, extant wartime documents and material traces, the authors can establish the true nature and capacity of the Auschwitz cremation furnaces. They show that these devices were inferior make-shift versions of what was usually produced, and that their capacity to cremate corpses was lower than normal, too. 3 vols., 1198 pages, b&w and color illustrations (vols 2 & 3), bibliography, index, glossary. (#24)

Curated Lies: The Auschwitz Museum's Misrepresentations, Distortions and Deceptions. By Carlo Mattogno. Revisionist research results have put the Polish Auschwitz Museum under pressure to answer this challenge. They've answered. This book analyzes their answer and reveals the appallingly mendacious attitude of the Auschwitz Museum authorities when presenting documents from their archives. 248 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (#38)

Deliveries of Coke, Wood and Zyklon B to Auschwitz: Neither Proof Nor Trace for the Holocaust. By Carlo Mattogno. Researchers from the Auschwitz Museum tried to prove the reality of mass extermination by pointing to documents about deliveries of wood and coke as well as Zyklon B to the Auschwitz Camp. If put into the actual historical and technical context, however, these documents prove the exact opposite of what these orthodox researchers claim. Ca. 250 pages, b&w illustrations, bibliography, index. (Scheduled for early 2019; #40)



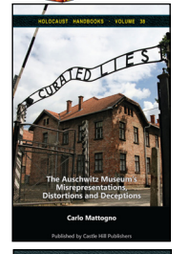
SECTION FOUR:
Witness Critique

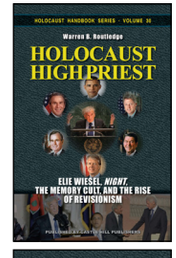
Holocaust High Priest: Elie Wiesel, Night, the Memory Cult, and the Rise of Revisionism. By Warren B. Routledge. The first unauthorized biography of Wiesel exposes both his personal deceits and the whole myth of "the six million." It shows how Zionist control has allowed Wiesel and his fellow extremists to force leaders of many nations, the U.N. and even popes to genuflect before Wiesel as symbolic acts of subordination to World Jewry, while at the same time forcing school children to submit to Holocaust brainwashing. 468 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#30)

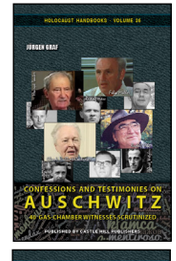
Auschwitz: Confessions and Testimonies. By Jürgen Graf. The traditional narrative of what transpired at the infamous Auschwitz Camp during WWII rests almost exclusively on witness testimony. This study critically scrutinizes the 40 most important of them by checking them for internal coherence, and by comparing them with one another as well as with other evidence such as wartime documents, air photos, forensic research results, and material traces. The result is devastating for the traditional narrative. (Scheduled for late-2018; #36)

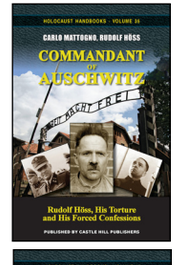
Commandant of Auschwitz: Rudolf Höss, His Torture and His Forced Confessions. By Carlo Mattogno & Rudolf Höss. From 1940 to 1943, Rudolf Höss was the commandant of the infamous Auschwitz Camp. After the war, he was captured by the British. In the following 13 months until his execution, he made 85 depositions of various kinds in which he confessed his involvement in the "Holocaust." This study first reveals how the British tortured him to extract various "confessions." Next, all of Höss's depositions are analyzed by checking his claims for internal consistency and comparing them with established historical facts. The results are eye-opening… 402 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#35)

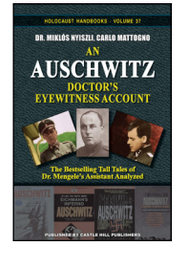
An Auschwitz Doctor's Eyewitness Account: The Tall Tales of Dr. Mengele's Assistant Analyzed. By Miklos Nyiszli & Carlo Mattogno. Nyiszli, a Hungarian physician, ended up at Auschwitz in 1944 as Dr. Mengele's assistant. After the war he wrote a book and several other writings describing what he claimed to have experienced. To this day some traditional historians take his accounts seriously, while others reject them as grotesque lies and exaggerations. This study presents and analyzes Nyiszli's writings and skillfully separates truth from fabulous fabrication. 484 pages, b&w illust., bibliography, index. (#37)











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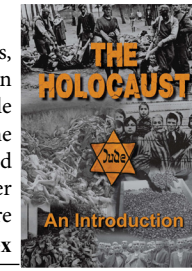
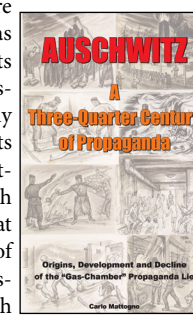
Thomas Dalton, *The Holocaust: An Introduction*



The Holocaust was perhaps the greatest crime of the 20th century. Six million Jews, we are told, died by gassing, shooting, and deprivation. But: Where did the six million figure come from? How, exactly, did the gas chambers work? Why do we have so little physical evidence from major death camps? Why haven't we found even a fraction of the six million bodies, or their ashes? Why has there been so much media suppression and governmental censorship on this topic? In a sense, the Holocaust is the greatest murder mystery in history. It is a topic of greatest importance for the present day. Let's explore the evidence, and see where it leads.

128 pp. pb, 5"×8", ill., bibl., index

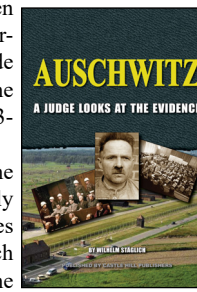
Carlo Mattogno, *Auschwitz: A Three-Quarter Century of Propaganda: Origins, Development and Decline of the "Gas Chamber" Propaganda Lie*



During the war, wild rumors were circulating about Auschwitz: that the Germans were testing new war gases; that inmates were murdered in electrocution chambers, with gas showers or pneumatic hammer systems; that living people were sent on conveyor belts directly into cremation furnaces; that oils, grease and soap were made of the mass-murder victims. Nothing of it was true. When the Soviets captured Auschwitz in early 1945, they reported that 4 million inmates were killed on electrocution conveyor belts discharging their load directly into furnaces. That wasn't true either. After the war, "witnesses" and "experts" repeated these things and added more fantasies: mass murder with gas bombs, gas chambers made of canvas; carts driving living people into furnaces; that the crematoria of Auschwitz could have cremated 400 million victims… Again, none of it was true. This book gives an overview of the many rumors, myths and lies about Auschwitz which mainstream historians today reject as untrue. It then explains by which ridiculous methods some claims about Auschwitz were accepted as true and turned into "history," although they are just as untrue.

125 pp. pb, 5"×8", ill., bibl., index, b&w ill.

Wilhelm Stäglich, *Auschwitz: A Judge Looks at the Evidence*

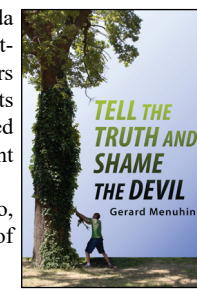


Auschwitz is the epicenter of the Holocaust, where more people are said to have been murdered than anywhere else. At this detention camp the industrialized Nazi mass murder is said to have reached its demonic pinnacle. This narrative is based on a wide range of evidence, the most important of which was presented during two trials: the International Military Tribunal of 1945/46, and the German Auschwitz Trial of 1963-1965 in Frankfurt.

The late Wilhelm Stäglich, until the mid-1970s a German judge, has so far been the only *legal* expert to critically analyze this evidence. His research reveals the incredibly scandalous way in which the Allied victors and later the German judicial authorities bent and broke the law in order to come to politically foregone conclusions. Stäglich also exposes the shockingly superficial way in which historians are dealing with the many incongruities and discrepancies of the historical record.

3rd edition 2015, 422 pp., 6"×9", pb, b&w ill.

Gerard Menuhin: *Tell the Truth & Shame the Devil*



A prominent Jew from a famous family says the "Holocaust" is a wartime propaganda myth which has turned into an extortion racket. Far from bearing the sole guilt for starting WWII as alleged at Nuremberg (for which many of the surviving German leaders were hanged) Germany is mostly innocent in this respect and made numerous attempts to avoid and later to end the confrontation. During the 1930s Germany was confronted by a powerful Jewish-dominated world plutocracy out to destroy it… Yes, a prominent Jew says all this. Accept it or reject it, but be sure to read it and judge for yourself!

The author is the son of the great American-born violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who, though from a long line of rabbinical ancestors, fiercely criticized the foreign policy of the state of Israel and its repression of the Palestinians in the Holy Land.

4th edition 2017, 432 pp. pb, 6"×9", b&w ill.

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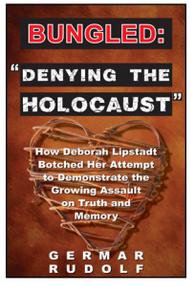
Germar Rudolf, ***Bungled: "Denying the Holocaust"*** *How Deborah Lipstadt Botched Her Attempt to Demonstrate the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*



With her book *Denying the Holocaust*, Deborah Lipstadt tried to show the flawed methods and extremist motives of "Holocaust deniers." This book demonstrates that Dr. Lipstadt clearly has neither understood the principles of science and scholarship, nor has she any clue about the historical topics she is writing about. She misquotes, mistranslates, misrepresents, misinterprets, and makes a plethora of wild claims without backing them up with anything. Rather than dealing thoroughly with factual arguments, Lipstadt's book is full of *ad hominem* attacks on her opponents. It is an exercise in anti-intellectual pseudo-scientific arguments, an exhibition of ideological radicalism that rejects anything which contradicts its preset conclusions. **F for FAIL**

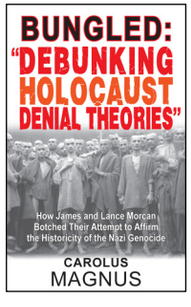
2nd ed., 224 pp., 5"×8", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.

Carolus Magnus, ***Bungled: "Denying History"***. *How Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman Botched Their Attempt to Refute Those Who Say the Holocaust Never Happened*

Skeptic Magazine editor Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman from the Simon Wiesenthal Center wrote a book in 2000 which they claim is "a thorough and thoughtful answer to all the claims of the Holocaust deniers." In 2009, a new "updated" edition appeared with the same ambitious goal. In the meantime, revisionists had published some 10,000 pages of archival and forensic research results. Would their updated edition indeed answer all the revisionist claims? In fact, Shermer and Grobman completely ignored the vast amount of recent scholarly studies and piled up a heap of falsifications, contortions, omissions, and fallacious interpretations of the evidence. Finally, what the authors claim to have demolished is not revisionism but a ridiculous parody of it. They ignored the known unreliability of their cherry-picked selection of evidence, utilizing unverified and incestuous sources, and obscuring the massive body of research and all the evidence that dooms their project to failure. **F for FAIL**

162 pp., 5"×8", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.

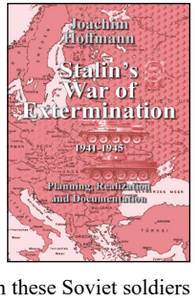
Carolus Magnus, ***Bungled: "Debunking Holocaust Denial Theories"***. *How James and Lance Morcan Botched Their Attempt to Affirm the Historicity of the Nazi Genocide*



The novelists and movie-makers James and Lance Morcan have produced a book "to end [Holocaust] denial once and for all." To do this, "no stone was left unturned" to verify historical assertions by presenting "a wide array of sources" meant "to shut down the debate deniers wish to create. One by one, the various arguments Holocaust deniers use to try to discredit wartime records are carefully scrutinized and then systematically disproven." It's a lie. First, the Morcans completely ignored the vast amount of recent scholarly studies published by revisionists; they didn't even identify them. Instead, they engaged in shadowboxing, creating some imaginary, bogus "revisionist" scarecrow which they then tore to pieces. In addition, their knowledge even of their own side's source material was dismal, and the way they backed up their misleading or false claims was pitifully inadequate. **F for FAIL.**

144 pp., 5"×8", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.

Joachim Hoffmann, ***Stalin's War of Extermination 1941-1945***



A German government historian documents Stalin's murderous war against the German army and the German people. Based on the author's lifelong study of German and Russian military records, this book reveals the Red Army's grisly record of atrocities against soldiers and civilians, as ordered by Stalin. Since the 1920s, Stalin planned to invade Western Europe to initiate the "World Revolution." He prepared an attack which was unparalleled in history. The Germans noticed Stalin's aggressive intentions, but they underestimated the strength of the Red Army. What unfolded was the most-cruel war in history. This book shows how Stalin and his Bolshevik henchman used unimaginable violence and atrocities to break any resistance in the Red Army and to force their unwilling soldiers to fight against the Germans. The book explains how Soviet propagandists incited their soldiers to unlimited hatred against everything German, and he gives the reader a short but extremely unpleasant glimpse into what happened when these Soviet soldiers finally reached German soil in 1945: A gigantic wave of looting, arson, rape, torture, and mass murder…

428 pp. pb, 6"×9", bibl., index, b&w ill.

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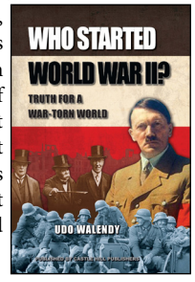
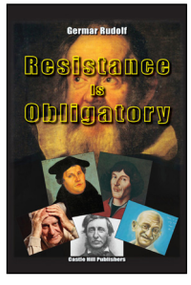
Udo Walendy, ***Who Started World War II:*** *Truth for a War-Torn World*



For seven decades, mainstream historians have insisted that Germany was the main, if not the sole culprit for unleashing World War II in Europe. In the present book this myth is refuted. There is available to the public today a great number of documents on the foreign policies of the Great Powers before September 1939 as well as a wealth of literature in the form of memoirs of the persons directly involved in the decisions that led to the outbreak of World War II. Together, they made possible Walendy's present mosaic-like reconstruction of the events before the outbreak of the war in 1939. This book has been published only after an intensive study of sources, taking the greatest care to minimize speculation and inference. The present edition has been translated completely anew from the German original and has been slightly revised.

500 pp. pb, 6"×9", index, bibl., b&w ill.

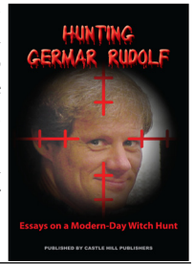
Germar Rudolf: ***Resistance is Obligatory!***



In 2005 Rudolf, a peaceful dissident and publisher of revisionist literature, was kidnapped by the U.S. government and deported to Germany. There the local lackey regime staged a show trial against him for his historical writings. Rudolf was not permitted to defend his historical opinions, as the German penal law prohibits this. Yet he defended himself anyway: 7 days long Rudolf held a speech in the court room, during which he proved systematically that only the revisionists are scholarly in their attitude, whereas the Holocaust orthodoxy is merely pseudo-scientific. He then explained in detail why it is everyone's obligation to resist, without violence, a government which throws peaceful dissident into dungeons. When Rudolf tried to publish his public defence speech as a book from his prison cell, the public prosecutor initiated a new criminal investigation against him. After his probation time ended in 2011, he dared publish this speech anyway…

2nd ed. 2016, 378 pp., 6"×9", pb, b&w ill.

Germar Rudolf, ***Hunting Germar Rudolf:*** *Essays on a Modern-Day Witch Hunt*



German-born revisionist activist, author and publisher Germar Rudolf describes which events made him convert from a Holocaust believer to a Holocaust skeptic, quickly rising to a leading personality within the revisionist movement. This in turn unleashed a tsunami of persecution against him: loss of his job, denied PhD exam, destruction of his family, driven into exile, slandered by the mass media, literally hunted, caught, put on a show trial where filing motions to introduce evidence is illegal under the threat of further proseuction, and finally locked up in prison for years for nothing else than his peaceful yet controversial scholarly writings. In several essays, Rudolf takes the reader on a journey through an absurd world of government and societal persecution which most of us could never even fathom actually exists.…

304 pp., 6"×9", pb, bibl., index, b&w ill.

Germar Rudolf, ***The Day Amazon Murdered History***

Amazon is the world's biggest book retailer. They dominate the U.S. and several foreign markets. Pursuant to the 1998 declaration of Amazon's founder Jeff Bezos to offer "the good, the bad and the ugly," customers once could buy every book that was in print and was legal to sell. However, in early 2017, a series of anonymous bomb threats against Jewish community centers occurred in the U.S., fueling a campaign by Jewish groups to coax Amazon into banning revisionist writings, false portraing them as anti-Semitic. On March 6, 2017, Amazon caved in and banned more than 100 books with dissenting viewpoints on the Holocaust. In April 2017, an Israeli Jew was arrested for having placed the fake bomb threats, a paid "service" he had offered for years. But that did not change Amazon's mind. Its stores remain closed for history books Jewish lobby groups disapprove of. This book accompanies the documentary of the same title. Both reveal how revisionist publications had become so powerfully convincing that the powers that be resorted to what looks like a dirty false-flag operation in order to get these books banned from Amazon…

128 pp. pb, 5"×8", bibl., b&w ill.

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