

**The Gas Chamber of
Sherlock Holmes:
An Attempt at a Literary Analysis
of the Holocaust Gassing Claim**

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"In Memoriam!"

December 22, 1997-November 3, 2000

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chambers, but rather gastight bomb shelters and delousing chambers. -- Since most of this evidence clearly argues for gastight bomb shelters, but was developed, and has been presented, as proof of gas chambers, it follows that there is no material or documentary evidence for gas chambers at all, and it follows further that there is a strong likelihood of a Polish and Soviet communist hoax in developing this particular evidence. -- Questions concerning the overall death toll at Auschwitz, or at the other alleged extermination camps, with or without gassings -- Distinct from the broader question of the overall total of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

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1. Introduction

Original nature of the gassing claim in 1945-1946.-- Criticism of the claim since then.-- Current calls for censorship. -- The need for free speech and free expression in this domain. -- Methodology: Literary analysis, or a chronological and comparative method.

IT IS COMMONLY BELIEVED that the National Socialist government of Germany carried out a secret policy of mass exterminations, chiefly using extermination gas chambers, during the Second World War. The policy is said to have been ordered by Adolf Hitler, and to have involved the gassing of millions of human beings, who were subsequently burned either in crematoriums or in huge pits so that scarcely a trace of their bodies remained.¹

The claim of mass gas extermination has been questioned ever since the late 1940's, but only by a few people, and very much on the fringe of public discourse.² In the early 1970's several new critics of the gas extermination claim emerged, and over the past two decades they have been joined by many others, so that now there are at least several dozen who have written on the subject.³ These researchers consider themselves heir to the tradition of those historians who sought in the 1920's to revise, and de-politicize, our understanding of the First World War, and so consider themselves historical revisionists. But the skepticism of these researchers towards mass gassing is usually accompanied by a desire to reevaluate the Holocaust in its entirety, and as a result they are more normally called "Holocaust revisionists" or "Holocaust deniers".⁴

The response of traditional historiography to the challenge of the revisionists has not been what one would expect. Normally, when someone challenges a historical orthodoxy, a minute analysis of the material and documentary record ensues, and the record is correspondingly revised. But nothing of the sort has happened here: instead, the arguments of the revisionists have been ignored and they have been reviled.⁵

In recent years, the expression of revisionist skepticism has been criminalized in several European countries, leading to heavy fines and prison terms, particularly in Germany and France.⁶ In Canada, two major trials have been held with the intention of silencing a gas chamber critic.⁷ In recent years the prime minister of Great Britain, during his initial candidacy, repeatedly promised to ban revisionist writings about the Holocaust.⁸

The further erosion of free speech on this matter must be considered intolerable to anyone who takes the intellectual life seriously. Therefore the purpose of this essay will be to deliberately review the gassing claim, with the object, not to prove that gassings did or did not take place, but rather to investigate whether there is a plausible basis for revisionist doubt. If we find that the traditional gassing narrative contains sufficient errors or lacunae to justify doubt, then we must allow doubt. On the other hand, if we find that the traditional gassing narrative has an irrefutable documentary or material base, then we must note this also. The result should be, in the first case, due recognition of revisionist contributions to the ongoing process of modern historiography, or, in the second case, a further marginalization of revisionist thinking, which should render its influence harmless and thus unobjectionable. But in any case we cannot maintain the current situation in which revisionists are dismissed as not serious even as many of them are punished with quite serious fines and prison terms.

The method we shall use is largely determined by the inherent problems of the subject, specifically the problems concerning text and source criticism. Even if charitably inclined, anyone with minimal historical training cannot fail to notice how traditional Holocaust scholars take a generally uncritical, selective, and anachronistic position with regards to their evidence. From a mass of materials that support, or seem to support, their position, they simply select heavily edited excerpts here and there.⁹ Rarely is an attempt made to explain the theoretical underpinnings of the selection or verification process for testimonies or affidavits. Rarer still are attempts to place the frequently ambiguous evidence in a wider documentary context. When the original sources contain errors or data inconsistent with the traditional interpretation, no attempt is made to explain the source or significance of these errors and inconsistencies.

Finally, traditional Holocaust scholars pay no attention to the chronological evolution or even the circumstances of gassing claims, even though it should be obvious that earlier statements, widely publicized, have a strong potential for influencing later permutations of a claim. This last is a particularly glaring omission, since the vast majority of Holocaust evidence is gleaned from testimonial or affidavit narratives. In short, the overall impression created by the traditional school's method is one of simply selecting data that supports what everyone already knows.

The revisionist approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. Its greatest strength has been its willingness to subject the standard evidentiary texts to rigorous criticism. But even here, there has been a tendency to confuse debunking with historical explanation. It is not enough to say that this or that affidavit contains several errors and is therefore suspect, nor, for that matter, is it

enough to carry out forensic studies and show the extreme unlikelihood of specific gassing claims. There have been important contributions in this latter area in the past decade, and the researches of Faurisson, Berg, Rudolf and Mattogno have gone a long way to define the physical limits against which testimonies and affidavits must be tested.¹⁰ Nevertheless, to show with a fair degree of probability that the mass gassings were impossible is not the same thing as explaining why everyone believes they took place.

Therefore we begin at the beginning with the simple proposition that the gassing claims are either true or not true. If they are true, then the historian should be able to establish how the claims came to be known, and at what point the fugitive claims of wartime crossed the threshold of fact. On the other hand, if the claims are false it should be possible to explain how they emerged, how they were constituted, and why they were believed. In short, the problem requires a chronological method.

In general the tendency in most writings on the Holocaust has been to ignore the difference between rumor and fact: the traditional school considers all rumors fact, the revisionists consider all facts rumor.¹¹ It is precisely at this juncture, then, that we seem to have a promising point of departure, in that all parties, traditional or revisionist, agree that the gassing claims began as vague, anonymous, and unverifiable reports, that is, as rumors.

Fact is a reflection of empirical reality; but rumor expresses a reality all its own, however difficult it is to define, since the world that rumor describes is itself the expression an inner world of unspoken assumptions, associations, and projections that characterize a human culture at a specific historical moment. Attempts to describe the parameters and nature of these unspoken worlds of human existence, which in some ways are more real than the empirical world, at least in terms of determining our perception and our judgment, has been a main project among intellectual historians and literary critics at least since the early 1960's.¹²

By way of a simple example: in 1976 a literary detective named Samuel Rosenberg wrote a book entitled *Naked is the Best Disguise: The Death and Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes*. Rosenberg closely analyzed the Holmes stories in order to argue that Conan Doyle was expressing in his work a great number of late Victorian concerns: evolution, Nietzsche's theories, German secret societies and bellicose nationalism, the White Man's Burden, and so forth. While we can debate his success in mapping out Conan Doyle's specific intellectual concerns, his book did succeed in placing the stories firmly within a specific cultural context, thus helping to explain their content.

We want to pursue a similar path here, and hence propose a literary analysis in a chronological format. That is, while skeptical of the gassing claims, we are not setting as our primary objective to prove or disprove any specific gassing claim. Instead we will have a simple narration of the gassing claims, from the spring of 1942 through the end of the Nuremberg and Auschwitz Trials in 1947. The analysis shall be "literary" because it will focus on the themes, motifs, tropes, and story elements that comprise the gassing claims. To put it another way, the gassing claims will be laid out, viewed as narratives or as "texts", arranged in order, and analyzed separately and in combination.

Literary analyses usually involve several different steps. One is simply the breakdown of a text into its parts along with a discussion of these. In the present case this will involve the isolation and tracking of some of the gassing claim story elements. A second step involves a textual analysis, in which the text is arrayed with similar texts that may have influenced it or which may have been influenced by it. Precisely for this reason, judgment on the veracity of claims will be suspended, in favor of investigating whether a given narrative shows textual links with prior or later texts. A third approach places the text in a broader social and cultural context, in order to see how it relates to, or expresses, its culture. In the present case the emerging story elements will be placed in the context of known historical and cultural crosscurrents, most of which have been undervalued or ignored by traditional historians of this subject. By putting these materials in context, it will be possible to see the extent to which the gassing claim was, or was not, peculiar to its time.

After discussing the various story elements of the emerging gassing claim three facts should become clear. First, the mass gassing narratives have a strong family resemblance among them and even to texts that predated the supposed gas exterminations by twenty years or more. Second, the unique characteristics of the gassing process can be traced, in the broader context of European social and cultural history, to completely ordinary procedures, albeit procedures which were the source of significant social and cultural anxiety. Finally, it should become plain that there is no documentary or material evidence that unambiguously supports the mass gassing claim: those documents that are said to bear even remotely on the gassing claim are, in context, completely benign, and for the most part refer back to the anxiety-producing procedures just discussed. These conclusions will not prove that there were no mass gassings. They will, however, vindicate revisionist doubt.

It will of course be impossible to indefinitely withhold a final judgment on the source or character of the gassing claims. But we can take guidance from two cautionary remarks of Conan Doyle's Baker Street sage. "How often have I said

to you that when you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?" said Sherlock Holmes to Dr. Watson in *The Sign of Four*. To be sure, the historian must always be willing to face uncomfortable truths. "I should have more faith," Holmes remarked in *A Study in Scarlet*, "I ought to know by this time that when a fact appears opposed to a long train of deductions it invariably proves to be capable of bearing some other interpretation." Indeed, it is precisely to the reasonable possibility of "some other interpretation" that all historical investigation must be dedicated.

Yet no one can authoritatively deny the existence of something that most everyone else accepts as true. Therefore categorical denials of mass gassing are not possible. One can, however, try to explain how the gassing claim could have arisen quite naturally given the characteristics and concerns of early twentieth century social and cultural life. It will be shown that the gassing claim, as a form of the more general extermination claim, comprises elements of specific concern to East European Jews since the early nineteenth century. It will also be shown that the traditional extermination scenario, featuring a shower-gas-burning sequence, is rooted in profound European and American concerns over disease and disease prevention, the use of poison gas and other mysterious weapons of mass destruction, and finally anxiety and fear over the recent reappearance of cremation as a means of disposal of the dead.

In short, it will be possible to see that the generation of a delusion of mass gas extermination did not require a conspiracy, or a hoax, nor much conscious effort at all, but only a social and cultural climate that would facilitate the generation of such claims, at a time of war, hatred, and social anomie. We will see that such claims, facilitated here and there by a little helpful fraud, but above all by a simple willingness to believe the worst about one's enemies, would allow these rumors to be stated as fact and become themselves part of that social and cultural landscape of which we are only half-consciously aware.

A few caveats are probably in order. Many people still feel that to question the mass gassing claim, or for that matter, any other aspect of the Holocaust, is tantamount to dismissing the enormous suffering and loss of life experienced by the Jewish people in the Second World War, and that it is even "wicked" to pose questions that may cause survivors any further suffering.¹³

As to the first point, it is only because of the emphases of recent historiography that the mass gassing claim has come to be so exclusively associated with the Jewish people and the Holocaust. In 1945, it was commonly claimed that ten million or more had been exterminated at the same half dozen camps where today three million Jews alone are said to have been gassed,¹⁴ which

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strongly implies that at the time it was believed that more non-Jews than Jews had in fact been exterminated with poison gas.¹⁵ Moreover, according to the current interpretation, mass gassing was applied first to insane and disabled non-Jewish Germans in the course of the euthanasia campaign. Therefore, skepticism of the mass gassing claim intersects, but does not embrace, the totality of the Holocaust.

As to the second point: the argument that we must spare the feelings of survivors is essentially an appeal to compassion. For many years, we were swayed, and even troubled, by this argument, but we have seen in recent times that this compassion has been invoked to justify persecution and censorship. So now the value of compassion has been placed at odds to the free reason of the individual. But in fact all compassion, and all human action, can only flow from the reasoned choice of free human beings. We conclude, therefore, that the most positive end is served by insisting on the right of free people to speak their minds.

2. The First Reports

The first reports emanate from Polish Jewish underground newspapers in the winter and spring of 1942. -- Conveyed to England, widely publicized from the summer of 1942. -- The first BBC broadcasts. -- Concept of a feedback loop for developing and legitimizing rumors. -- Nature of rumors. Extermination in a bathhouse by: steam, electricity, a vacuum, a hammer, or poison gas. -- Evolution of the typical shower-gas-burning sequence. -- The Katyn Forest Massacre: a model of forensic investigation. -- Soviet response: gas vans in Krasnodar, massacre at Babi Yar. -- Possible origins of rumors: German secret weapons technology, German experiments with cyanide gas after discovery of Soviet plans to use it in 1941, analogy with Western execution techniques (electrocution, gas), and disinfection procedures.

MOST HOLOCAUST RESEARCHERS begin their analysis of the gassing claims in the spring of 1942, so we shall follow that custom here.¹⁶ We are not concerned with recording every single enumeration of a gassing claim; we are concerned above all with recording characteristic changes in how the story is reported. Throughout 1942, 1943, and well into the summer of 1944, all claims of mass gassing must be considered as uncorroborated rumors because of their origin in anonymous and unverifiable reports. Therefore, after briefly covering the evolution of the story we must pause and attempt to provide other possible explanations for these rumors that are not keyed to the assumption that they reflect reality. To that end, we will have to duly note a few other rumors pertaining to alleged German National Socialist activities that are generally conceded to be untrue today, that is, rumors that assumed a life of their own in the Second World War.

It should be pointed out here that in the spring of 1942 the National Socialist government of Germany began to systematically deport all Jewish persons in Europe to Poland, and, according to their claims, to points farther east. There is no denying that these deportations were cruel, or that they involved the unjust seizure of wealth and belongings, or that many Jews were done to death one way or another during this process. Virtually everyone, revisionist and non-revisionist, agrees about this aspect of the National Socialist persecution of the Jewish people.¹⁷

There is also agreement that in the subsequent course of the war hundreds of thousands of Jews were dragooned into the German labor system, particularly into the armaments industry, working largely out of concentration camps, and several types of labor camps, and that the death rate in these camps was very high, particularly at the end of the war when disease control measures and provisioning

completely broke down. The question is whether in the course of these concentrations in Poland and subsequent deportations farther east the German National Socialists were also carrying out a policy of deliberate extermination of Jewish people, specifically using poison gas.

The first claim of mass gassing pertaining to Jewish people that received wide circulation was contained in the so-called Bund Report that was smuggled to the Polish government-in-exile, located in London, in the third week of May, 1942.¹⁸ The report contained two gassing rumors: first that a special automobile (a gas chamber) was being used to gas 90 persons at one time.¹⁹ Since the victims were supposed to have dug their graves before being gassed, it follows that this was more a gas chamber that could be moved from place to place than a gas van (normally conceived as a vehicle that would drive victims to a grave while they died from gas inhalation on the way).²⁰ The second rumor pertains to actions in Warsaw: it is said that Jews were being experimented upon with poison gases.²¹

The Bund Report, in turn, appears to be a composite of at least two documents that had come from Warsaw during the spring of 1942. The first of these was an underground communication from the Jewish Labor Bund, in Warsaw, dated March 16, 1942, which described German activities in western Poland as follows:

"In a number of villages the Jews were put to death by gas poisoning. They were herded in a horrible way into hermetically sealed trucks transformed into gas chambers, in groups of fifty, entire families, completely nude"²²

and further alleged that "gas poisoning" was being carried out in Lodz.²³ The second document that contributed to the Bund Report was a lead article in *Der Veker*, April 30, 1942, at a time of internecine struggle between Jewish resisters and collaborators in the Warsaw ghetto.²⁴ That article is the source of most of the numerical totals in the Bund Report, but neither of these documents indicates 700,000 total dead.²⁵ The April 30, 1942 *Der Veker* article also specifies Chelmno as the site of poison gassings, without giving details, but it is worth noting that from the March 16 communication there is an implied connection of bathing (the enforced nudity) and gassing, although, as we shall see, it will be some months before either element become dominant in the recitation of atrocities.

Two of the members of the Polish National Council-in-exile were Jewish: Zygielbojm and Szwarcbart, and they could be expected to be particularly interested in what was being alleged about their co-religionists several hundred miles away under German military occupation, and, in spreading these allegations

as a means of getting support for their people.²⁶ The Bund Report was thus extensively publicized in the media.

On June 24, 1942, the Bund Report was summarized on the BBC.²⁷ The following day, the Daily Telegraph ran a major story on the Report, with two headlines of note: "Germans murder 700,000 in Poland," and "Traveling Gas Chambers".²⁸ The following day, Zygielbojm delivered a broadcast over the BBC, summarizing the Bund Report, in Yiddish, and hence obviously directed to the Jewish population in Poland.²⁹ Within a week, the BBC had made an arrangement with the Polish National Council giving the BBC priority in the reporting of all future atrocity stories.³⁰

On July 1, 1942, the Polish Fortnightly Review published a report, based on the allegations made in the Bund Report, and now also mentioning specific camps: Sobibor, and Majdanek, near Lublin.³¹ It also made a reference to atrocities at Auschwitz, described as a labor camp, where about a thousand Soviet and Polish POWs were supposed to have been gassed the previous September, as well as to another camp nearby, called '*Paradisa*' -- the name, so the report alleged, because "from it there is only one road, leading to Paradise."³² It further alleges that the crematoriums in the *Paradisa* camp were five times larger than at Auschwitz, and that experiments with poison gas were conducted there.³³ It should be emphasized that the remarks in the Polish Fortnightly Review concerning Auschwitz were not in the Bund Report; they appear to have come from earlier reports that were sent to London.³⁴

Looking over these initial claims it is clear that the claim of gassing is but one of a number of extermination claims being made. Furthermore it is evident that the claims of gassing focus more on the allegation of experiments rather than a systematic extermination procedure. On the Auschwitz claims, there are some startling inaccuracies: *Paradisa* is clearly a reference to Birkenau, but Birkenau had no crematoriums until the following spring, and the term *Paradisa* itself, as a road to paradise, is obviously the origin of the "*Himmelfahrt*" that will later figure so prominently in the folklore of Sobibor and Treblinka but which has no place in the history of Birkenau.³⁵

The other thing that is important to note in this first rush of stories about gassings is that the BBC has already begun to play a major role in recycling these rumors back to their point of origin in Poland.³⁶ These broadcasts in effect create a feedback loop that repeats and gives authority to Polish rumors, which are then re-injected back into Poland, where they may be expected to multiply and burgeon. There will be more to say of these broadcasts shortly, but the role of radio in disseminating and universalizing the rumors of mass gassing is something

that deserves a very thorough accounting.

By July 16, 1942, the allegations of gassing were repeated in the News Review, here with the claim that the Germans were preparing "large gas stations" where the Polish Jewish population would be murdered.³⁷ The report claims that Jews were to be given "no sleeping drugs"... "they were just trussed up and finished off."³⁸ This report is getting us closer to the claim as we understand it today, but the reference to drugs and trussing up the victims suggests more a reference to gassing as a form of execution than for mass extermination: in other words, it appears that the author was attempting to compare the gassing procedure alleged in Poland with that used for executions in the United States.³⁹

Later on that same summer, two rumors were passed on to Gerhart Riegner, the Geneva representative of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva.⁴⁰ Both of these came from Germans, private citizens hostile to Nazism, and both claimed that the National Socialist government was preparing to use poison gas: the one claim would mutate into the formulation of "lighting the gas ovens"⁴¹ the other made a specific reference to the use of prussic acid, or cyanide gas (*Blausäure*).⁴² Both of these rumors are considered important because they stem from German sources and secondly because cyanide gas would later be considered to be a basic "murder weapon" in the extermination process.⁴³ But it should be clear that rumors heard even by prominent Germans in the context of the established BBC gassing claim feedback loop are no more valid than any others. In this respect it is interesting to note that when two "eyewitnesses" from Poland were interviewed in Geneva at about the same time neither one said a word about gas exterminations, although they described many other hardships endured by Polish Jews.⁴⁴

A BBC broadcast on September 27 featured the exiled German author Thomas Mann, who repeated the gassing claim, saying that 16,000 French Jews had been gassed on a train after it had been "hermetically sealed" and that 11,000 Polish Jews had been put to death in the same way.⁴⁵ It is known that such rumors were heard in Europe at the time.⁴⁶ It follows that among the French and Dutch Jews being deported in the fall of 1942 there would be some who would be quite anxious about what awaited them in the concentration camps.

The next important development in the mass gassing claims comes again from Polish sources, and in particular the testimony of Jan Karski, a Polish intelligence operative who claimed to have been an eyewitness at Belzec, indeed, his report also mentions Sobibor and Treblinka.⁴⁷ These various reports were compiled by the Geneva Zionists, and then publicized in London and New York at the same time.⁴⁸ There were two apparently new elements to these materials.

The first is the description of the loading of deported Jews into trucks covered with lime and chlorine -- this apparently the origin of the later claim of extermination with chlorine gas.⁴⁹ The second was the description of extermination at Belzec -- the victims were told to strip, as if for a shower, were led into a room, and then electrocuted via a metal plate on the floor.⁵⁰ The elaboration of these materials in the New York Times on November 26, 1942, would include allegations by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise that the Germans were also turning the bodies of dead Jews into "fats and soaps and lubricants" and that the Germans were now "injecting bubbles into their veins" because "prussic acid had been found to be too expensive."⁵¹

This particular cycle of extermination claims seems especially rich. Lime and chlorine were standard materials used to combat epidemics -- we will discuss this in more detail shortly. The extermination description at Belzec is noteworthy for two reasons: first, because it is apparently the first time that "showering" is explicitly described as an element in pre-extermination deception, although as we have seen the connection appears have preceded this statement,⁵² and second because the electrocution claim is no longer made today (although it must be said that it would later undergo significant elaboration.)⁵³

The last element that is interesting is in regard to the soap claim, which has quietly been abandoned by all responsible researchers in recent decades.⁵⁴ The claim of corpse utilization seems obviously related to a similar false claim made about the Germans in the First World War, and indeed it was recognized as such in some quarters even in 1942.⁵⁵ Another point is that there are two documents that indicate that the Germans were attempting to squelch such rumors in Slovakia and Lublin in July and October of 1942.⁵⁶ Indeed, we know that "soap making" originally arose among ethnic Poles in 1942, who, along with the Jews, were being resettled on the right bank of the Bug River.⁵⁷

The accumulation of extermination claims made in 1942 would lead the Allied leaders to make a declaration on December 17, 1942, condemning German practices, without, on the other hand, specifying procedures.⁵⁸

In April 1943, an interesting memo of atrocities was drafted in London by a Pole, identified only as a member of the Polish underground. It claimed to describe extermination activities at Auschwitz- Birkenau. Three types of extermination were alleged in this anonymous document besides shooting. They were:

- a. Gas Chambers, the victims were undressed and put into those chambers where they suffocated.

b. Electric Chambers, these chambers had metal walls, the victims were brought in and high-tension electric current was introduced.

c. The so-called Hammerluft system. This is a hammer of air. These were special chambers where the hammer fell from the ceiling and by means of a special installation victims found death under air pressure.⁵⁹

Needless to say neither method b. nor c. form part of the current extermination narrative. However these two story elements are good examples of how Holocaust claims are later elaborated and developed. The description of the electric chambers is almost certainly derived from the Karski report, and will surface again. The *Hammerluft* system appears even more interesting. The crux of this rumor appears to be the idea of a falling hammer: this is an early appearance of a claim for method of execution that will later emerge as a (purportedly) prime form of death at Mauthausen (where it was supposed to be the "Kugel Decree"), Buchenwald, and also Sachsenhausen, where in the form of what Carlos Porter sarcastically called the "pedal-driven brain-bashing machine" it was supposed to have been used to exterminate 840,000 Russian POWs.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the element in the claim that touches on air pressure is probably the grandfather of the so-called "vacuum chambers" at Treblinka that would make a brief appearance in 1945.⁶¹

For all of the subsequent development of the *Hammerluft* claim, it seems odd that this rumor could have arisen in the first place, since there is no material or physical evidence to support it (to be sure, there is no such evidence for any of the claims we have reviewed so far). We are tempted to think that someone encountered the term "*Hammerluft*", which might conceivably refer to a pneumatic hammer, and this led to some grisly speculation. On the other hand it is interesting to note that during the war the Germans attempted to develop a secret weapon that involved high-pressure jets of gases that would penetrate the fuselage of low-flying aircraft, and, as a military project, POWs and Jewish forced laborers were no doubt involved.⁶² Perhaps rumors of this project also mutated into this particular extermination claim.

The abovementioned memo, drafted April 18, 1943, was never issued, probably because the main atrocity story at the time was the massacre of the Polish officers in Katyn forest which had just been revealed by the Germans.⁶³ The story is simply this. Over ten thousand Polish officers fell into Soviet hands in 1939 and were never heard from again. In February 1943, shortly after the fall of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad, Germans stationed outside of Smolensk discovered mass graves of Polish officers. The Germans spent two months

exhuming and analyzing the remains, accounting for 4,400 bodies in all. Several non-German forensic experts, including an independent Polish commission, were called in to investigate and carry out autopsies. The results in the subsequent German report, which was more than 300 pages in length, concluded that the officers had been systematically butchered in the spring of 1940. It was, in other words, an atrocity carried out by the Soviet Union.⁶⁴

The Katyn episode is interesting for a few reasons. In the first place, confronted with well nigh irrefutable evidence of the criminality of their main ally, both Britain and the United States took the position that it was a German crime.⁶⁵ Second, the German conduct of the exhumations and autopsies was thorough and meticulous: the international specialists, including the Poles, were allowed to conduct their researches with the minimum of interference.⁶⁶ Third, the German forensic report is probably the most detailed analysis of any atrocity that ever occurred in the Second World War. Nothing even remotely comparable has ever been produced for the many allegations of German atrocity.⁶⁷

In the midst of now typical gas chamber claims in May and June, and perhaps as a response to the Katyn accusation, the Soviets conducted a trial in Krasnodar in July of 1943, featuring German POWs who confessed to the gassing of people by use of "gas vans" or as the Russians called them, "*Dushegubki*" or "murder vans".⁶⁸ It is worth mentioning here that no "gassing van" has ever been located.⁶⁹ In August of 1943 a periodical entitled *Polish Labor Fights!* repeated extermination claims for Treblinka once more, now referring to rooms that are filled with people, sealed, and then filled with steam that kills the victims.⁷⁰ Aside from the novel use of steam, later abandoned, one notes here again the use of the "showering" motif in the extermination process.

In late November 1943, the Soviets, upon the liberation of Kiev, would allege that several tens of thousands had been shot at Babi Yar, a ravine outside of the city.⁷¹ The absence of forensic evidence was explained by claiming the Germans had somehow managed to dig up all of the remains a few weeks before retreating from the Red Army and burned all of the bodies without leaving a trace. What is at issue here is not the reality of shooting claims, *per se*, for there certainly is much evidence to corroborate the notion that the Germans and their East European auxiliaries massacred many people, including many Jews, apparently in the course of carrying out the Commissar Order to kill communists and communist sympathizers, as well as in the context of anti-partisan warfare.⁷² Rather, what is interesting about the Soviet claim is the assertion that all of the remains were completely destroyed. This is a very prominent feature of atrocity claims made against the Germans in the Second World War.

In December 1943, the Soviets held another atrocity trial, this time in Kharkov, a city in the Eastern Ukraine that had changed hands several times during the war. Again, there were repetitions of the gas van testimony given at the Krasnodar trial, and, on December 16, 1943, an interesting description of Auschwitz given by an SS officer, Heinisch:

Prosecutor: Tell the court about your talk with Somann.

Heinisch: Somann told me that death caused by gas poisoning was painless and more humane. He said that in the gas van death was very quick, but actually death came not in twelve seconds but much more slowly and was accompanied by great pain.

Somann told me about the camp in Auschwitz in Germany where the gassing of prisoners was carried out. The people were told that they were to be transferred elsewhere, and foreign workers were told that they would be repatriated and were sent under this pretext to bath-houses. Those who were to be executed first entered a place with a signboard with "Disinfection" on it and there they were undressed -- the men separately from the women and children. Then they were ordered to proceed to another place with a signboard "Bath." While the people were washing themselves special valves were opened to let in the gas which caused their death. Then the dead people were burned in special furnaces in which about 200 bodies could be burned simultaneously.⁷³

Heinisch went on to say that Somann was the chief of the Security Service in the Breslau area, which is the general area where Auschwitz is located, that gas executions took place only in camps on German soil, and further revealed that the decision to carry out executions "by means of gas poisoning" was made at a conference in the Summer of 1942 which Hitler, Himmler, and Kaltenbrunner attended.⁷⁴

Heinisch's testimony is remarkable in several respects. First of all, we have by December, 1943, at a trial under Soviet auspices, a clear albeit erroneous narrative of the gassing claim at Auschwitz, in a form more or less similar to the standard narrative and in a publication that received wide distribution. It is also notable that Heinisch does not specify the ethnicity of the victims, but rather prefers to speak of foreign workers and their families: this at a time when large numbers of Ukrainians were being evacuated to the Reich for labor and were being subjected to the indignities of communal showers.⁷⁵

The description of the gassing process provided by Heinisch is erroneous. Therefore in attempting to account for it we could conceive of a link back to the unpublished narrative concerning Auschwitz in May, or to other rumors that may have been circulating at the time. But it is important to note that the narrative contains details about bathing and disinfection that we have not encountered prior to this point. It is also important to reflect on how it would be possible for Heinisch, a district commissar at Melitopol in occupied Russia, and Somann, an SS chief in Breslau, to be informed of a process that the postwar trials have assured us were carried out in the greatest secrecy.⁷⁶

In early 1944, in February, the Belzec electrocution story once more emerged.⁷⁷ Finally, at the beginning of May, the New York Times repeated a story in which the Germans were planning to construct "special baths" which were in fact gas chambers, and in which the Hungarian Jews were to be exterminated.⁷⁸ By this time, then, the gassing claim had become cemented its most typical form.

It should be emphasized at the end of this brief review of gassing and other extermination claims that to this point not a hint of what we would normally call evidence had been brought forward. Nevertheless we can see emerging over time a kind of model for extermination procedures, what we will call the shower-gas-burning sequence. The idea that victims would be led into a bathing facility of some kind, and then be executed (the method of execution focusing on gas more and more as time went by), and then burned so that no trace would remain was already a very common idea by the summer of 1944.

In fairness it should also be kept in mind that the shower-gas-burning concept still coexisted with other methods of extermination, including steam, vacuums, hammers of air, and electrocution, which have not been alleged in many years. We should expect therefore a heightened level of material and documentary proof in support of the gassing allegations as opposed to the others. We will find out the extent to which this is true in subsequent sections.

In reviewing these gassing claims we find that virtually all of them came from anonymous sources in Poland, and that all of them were publicized and propagated by Jewish agencies in Switzerland, London, and America.⁷⁹ The conclusion that many revisionists have drawn is that these gassing claims were therefore developed by Jewish groups as part of a hoax.⁸⁰ We would dissent from this interpretation: it is too great a leap to suggest that these Jewish agencies, in publicizing these claims, knew them to be false, or were publicizing them to some nefarious purpose. On the contrary, all of the internal evidence -- letters, diaries, stray conversations -- indicates that the Western Jews most responsible for the

spread of these claims actually believed them.⁸¹ Whether these stories were then used to pursue political ends, and specifically Zionist ends, does not by itself discount the apparent sincerity of what these Jewish leaders were writing and saying at the time. To put the matter simply, they were in no position to know what was really going on: all they knew, or thought they knew, was that their co-religionists were undergoing a terrific ordeal of persecution, and needed help.

Having surveyed the claims, we must now attempt to interpret the nature of these various story elements. In other words, if these rumors are not a reflection of reality, then where did the rumors come from? It is clear that the use of gas was expressed in three ways before settling on the shower-gas scenario. One of these involved the idea of gas as a means of execution, in which the victims were not sedated, another involved the use of gas in experiments, which tied to the allegation of prussic acid use, and finally there was the variant that featured the "lighting of the gas ovens."⁸²

The "gas oven" motif is clearly a garbled association between crematoriums, almost all of which are gas operated, and the basic gassing claim. This perhaps innocent association, which corresponds to the known gas ovens that existed in many homes, tended to create an absolute linkage between gas chambers and crematoriums: that is, wherever a crematorium was, there also was a gas chamber.

The "lack of sedation" motif, as already discussed, was probably an extension of the use of poison gas for execution purposes in the United States. The electrocution motif, prominent at about the same time, was a probable extension of the same idea, since electrocution was even more widely used for executions in America.⁸³

Since the poison gas used for American executions was also cyanide, that could account for the rumors of cyanide gas usage. But there are other contexts in which cyanide gas could have emerged in official German documents or discussions during this period, and these usages could have led to garbled understanding which would account for the rumors as well, particularly those concerning experiments.

Soon after the invasion of Russia, the Wehrmacht obtained materials indicating that the Red Army had contingency plans for spraying German troops with cyanide gas from low-flying aircraft. As a result, in January 1942, the Germans conducted experiments on farm animals using this gas, with generally fatal effect. This in turn led to the development of the FE 42 gas mask filter, which provided protection against cyanide gas. But the Germans, for reasons of security, attempted to keep these developments secret.⁸⁴ Thus we have here at the

beginning of 1942 secret experiments with prussic acid and the development of a device to protect against it, all of this before or roughly simultaneous with the emergence of rumors that the Germans were experimenting with this gas on human beings. A far more potent association in which prussic acid would emerge concerned the use of this material for delousing and disinfecting communities in Eastern Europe. Therefore we must make a detour to discuss these German delousing and disinfection procedures.

3. German Disinfection Procedures

Western disinfection procedures developed in nineteenth century to combat cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and typhus. -- German methods very systematic, constant exposure to cholera and typhus because of Eastern European immigrants fleeing persecution. -- Hamburg epidemic in 1892. -- Mary Antin's passage in 1893. -- American procedures, 1892, and the fear these evoked in Jewish community. -- German disinfection procedures in the First World War in Turkey. -- In Poland. -- English procedures in Poland in 1919. -- American procedures in Poland. -- German technological developments in the 1920's and 1930's. -- The mechanics of disinfection: shaving, showering, and fumigating. Zyklon B. -- Double-doored *Apparate* for disinfection. -- Railway car gassing tunnels. -- Typical responses among Eastern Jews and others: non-comprehension, fear, anxiety, evasion, and destructive rumors of extermination.

DISEASE HAS MOVED hand-in-hand with warfare and migrations throughout history, and has brought more than one army to its knees. Eastern Europe was a particularly dreaded location for such epidemics: the Allies in the Crimean War, and Napoleon's Army in 1812 were decimated by diseases, above all typhus and cholera, but also typhoid and dysentery.⁸⁵ For a long time the cause of these diseases was unknown. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century was it understood that cholera, typhoid, and dysentery were transmitted by microbes usually in contaminated water.⁸⁶ The vector of typhus -- the body louse - - was not identified until shortly before the First World War.⁸⁷

This lack of understanding did not prevent Europeans from attempting to control these diseases, since the general understanding was that filth and poor hygiene had something to do with their transmission.⁸⁸

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Germany developed a number of procedures for the delousing and disinfection of people and their clothing. These involved showering, smearing the body with petroleum or other substances to kill bugs, and steaming or boiling belongings.⁸⁹ The application of the these procedures soon came to a test in the 1880's.

Typhus was endemic in Eastern Europe, and cholera had swept through the region on several occasions in the nineteenth century.⁹⁰ The constant saturation, particularly with typhus, conferred a certain immunity on the inhabitants.⁹¹ Someone transplanted to these regions could easily catch these diseases.⁹² Someone leaving the area might carry them.⁹³ The population of the area, comprising roughly the Western Russian Empire and the Eastern provinces of Austria Hungary, Jewish and gentile, were uniformly impoverished, hungry, and, by then current Western hygienic standards, filthy.⁹⁴ It is no exaggeration to

state that most of the people in this region were but one crop failure away from death.⁹⁵

In 1881, after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, anti-Semitic riots became characteristic in the region.⁹⁶ That was the last straw for many Jews, who had borne impoverishment, hunger and filth as stoically as their gentile counterparts, in addition to government interference in their traditional way of life. As a result, many Jews chose to emigrate, and this led them in many cases through Germany.⁹⁷ In Germany, they were subjected to the standard disinfection procedures, of which Mary Antin gives a much-quoted account in her memoirs⁹⁸

In a great and lonely field, opposite a solitary house within a large yard, our train pulled up at last, and the conductor commanded the passengers to make haste and get out. [...] [The conductor] hurried us into the one large room that made up the house, and then into the yard. Here a great many men and women, dressed in white, received us, the women attending the women and girls of the passengers, and the men the others. This was another scene of bewildering confusion, parents losing their children, and little ones crying; baggage being thrown together in one corner of the yard, heedless of contents, which suffered in consequence; those white-clad Germans shouting commands, always accompanied with "Quick! Quick!" -- the confused passengers obeying all orders like meek children, only questioning now and then what was to be done with them. And no wonder if in some minds stories arose of people being captured by robbers, murderers, and the like. Here we had been taken to a lonely place where only that house was to be seen; our things were taken away, our friends separated from us; a man came to inspect us, as if to ascertain our full value; strange-looking people driving us about like dumb animals, helpless and unresisting; children we could not see crying in a way that suggested terrible things; ourselves driven into a little room where a great kettle was boiling on a little stove; our clothes taken off, our bodies rubbed with a slippery substance that could be any bad thing; a shower of warm water let down on us without warning; again driven together to another little room where we sit, wrapped in woolen blankets till large, coarse bags are brought in, their contents turned out, and we see only a cloud of steam, and hear a woman's voice to dress ourselves, -- "Quick! Quick!" -- or else we'll miss -- something we cannot hear. We are forced to pick out our clothes from among the others, with the steam blinding us; we choke, cough, entreat the women to give us

time; they persist, "Quick! Quick! -- or you'll miss the train!" Oh, so we really won't be murdered! They are only making us ready for the continuing of our journey, cleaning us of all suspicions of dangerous illness. Thank God!

Mary Antin's bewilderment at disinfection and quarantine, arising from disorientation and novelty, is understandable, so too are the wild rumors that would come from incomprehension and anxiety.⁹⁹ But it must be said that such measures were necessary: the year before Mary Antin made her passage in 1893, Hamburg had been hard hit by a cholera epidemic, and New York City had been hit with both a cholera and typhus epidemic.¹⁰⁰

In the case of the New York epidemics we find many themes that would repeat themselves over subsequent decades. The immigrants, particularly Jews, feared the process of disinfection and quarantine, believing in some cases that their loved ones were being taken to a slaughterhouse.¹⁰¹ They distrusted the health authorities, and sought to hide instances of typhus, never realizing of course that such opposition and concealment merely spread the disease further.¹⁰² In addition, there were problems with the quarantine. By regulation, those dead of typhus had to be cremated, but this was a violation of Jewish law.¹⁰³ The quarantine stations did not make provision for kosher food, and, as a result, several pious Jews starved themselves.¹⁰⁴ The interactions between the New York health authorities and the immigrant Jews could almost be characterized as culture shock, so deep was the chasm of non-comprehension and non-accommodation that divided them.

The same pattern emerged in the First World War, and not only among Jewish people. The Germans, in the context of reorganizing the Turkish army, spent a great deal of effort in controlling typhus and other diseases.¹⁰⁵ The two main tools of this effort were the *Dampfdesinfektionswagens* (mobile steam disinfection trucks) and the Turkish baths, which were converted for disinfection purposes.¹⁰⁶ The Germans used primarily sulfur gas, which required a generator (*Vergaser*) that would burn the sulfur and provide the gas.¹⁰⁷ Already at the beginning of 1914 the Germans were using *vergasen* (gasify, gas) as a synonym for *begasen* (fumigate).¹⁰⁸

Cooperation among the local populations varied: the Turks did not understand why lice had to be killed, because Allah forbade it, the Greek Orthodox and Jewish subjects objected on religious grounds to the bathing and shaving that was part of the treatment.¹⁰⁹

A severe typhus epidemic in Serbia in the winter of 1914-15 led to international intervention, including an American Relief Expedition that did much

to control the disease in its early stages.¹¹⁰ In 1915-1916, as Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers, she was given large chunks of Serbian territory and this in turn required heightened vigilance on the part of the disinfection squads.¹¹¹ In this context a story appeared in the London Daily Telegraph in March 1916, that alleged that 700,000 Serbians had been asphyxiated.¹¹² Robert Faurisson has successfully shown that this rumor or atrocity claim was directly related to the application of disinfection measures in the region.¹¹³ Surely it is no coincidence that the first claim of mass exterminations in 1942, as we recall, also featured gassings, the Daily Telegraph, and 700,000 victims. The story also reminds us that a mobile steam disinfection truck could easily be converted in a frightened and ignorant mind into a traveling gas chamber.¹¹⁴

The reactions to disinfection procedures in Turkey and the Balkans were also apparent in Poland, whether the disease control was being administered by Germans, Americans, or the British.¹¹⁵ The Germans went to extensive lengths to control diseases, and particularly typhus throughout Poland.¹¹⁶ This involved carrot and stick methods: on the one hand, the Germans painstakingly wrote a brochure in the Yiddish language, trying to explain, with appropriate references to the Torah, the importance of personal hygiene, and the necessity of controlling lice.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, the Germans would sometimes be required to force the local inhabitants to bathe and shower at bayonet point.¹¹⁸

When the war was over, a terrible typhus epidemic swept through Poland and the Western Russian provinces.¹¹⁹ American and British specialists went to Poland with a view to controlling the disease. They also sought to delouse and disinfect the residents.¹²⁰ The American effort included the establishment of several disinfection stations, including one at Auschwitz, which held 2,500 prisoners, 700 children, and processed tens of thousands more.¹²¹ Both the Americans and Britons also ran into resistance and non-compliance, particularly on the part of the Jewish population.¹²² One feature of the American treatment that soon became typical was the use of bottled cyanide gas as a means of destroying vermin.¹²³

In the 1920's the Germans developed media for using cyanide gas that were safer than the use of bottles or the so-called barrel system.¹²⁴ One substance developed, called Zyklon B, used clay-like pellets into which the gas was absorbed as liquid under pressure and then sealed in a can.¹²⁵ When the can was opened, the pellets would be strewn and the gas would slowly develop.¹²⁶ By the Second World War, through the addition of gypsum, Zyklon B had achieved a stability such that three hours were required for the full evolution of the gas at near room temperature,¹²⁷ which was ideal for its purpose as an insecticide.

During this period the Germans also developed fumigation chambers or *Entwesungskammern*.¹²⁸ These were usually constructed out of steel, although brick and concrete could also be used.¹²⁹ About 10 meters square, the rooms were filled with clothes and then the Zyklon pellets would be strewn among them. Such chambers, or *Apparate*, typically had two doors: the dirty clothes would go in one door, the disinfected clothes would be taken out of the other door.¹³⁰ The Germans also developed a complicated machinery whereby forced air at or near the boiling point of cyanide would be blown through the pellets to speed up the evolution time.¹³¹ The same air-circulation technology (*Kreislauf*) was employed in large railroad tunnels, which by means of the air-circulation gas-generating apparatus (*Kreislaufvergasungsapparaturen*) could fumigate an entire passenger train at one time.¹³²

Although Zyklon B was widely used for disinfection, it is important to note that throughout the '30's and during the war many other gases and substances were employed to combat vermin.¹³³ One gas which was widely substituted for Zyklon was "T-Gas" a mixture of ethylene oxide and carbon dioxide which came in steel tanks and would be piped into the disinfection chamber.¹³⁴ Other gases included Tritox, Ventox, and Areginal.¹³⁵

Delousing and disinfection procedures were also a major component of German municipal disinfection centers, temporary huts of the German Labor Service, and transit camps (*Durchgangslagern*) for POWs or deported populations. All three featured a division into a dirty and clean side (*reine und unreine Seite*), and all three featured undressing rooms, shower rooms, and standard size fumigation chambers with double doors.¹³⁶ There were some variations of course. The municipal disinfection center at Darmstadt for example, was enlarged in the Second World War to make room for the influx of laborers from the East, which we assume to have comprised Poles, Soviet POWs, and Jews.¹³⁷ Its cellars were also adapted to air raid shelters.¹³⁸ The standard huts (*Unterkünfte*) for the German labor service were equipped with a diesel room, since diesels were expected to provide electricity in the absence of a power net for these outlying structures: these structures were also meant to be temporary and were designed to be put up and taken down in a minimum of man hours.¹³⁹

In the Second World War, the Germans aggressively pursued the containment of disease using all of these methods. As the concentrations of Jews in the ghettos increased, epidemics would break out, and the Germans would attempt to get the local Jewish authorities to implement disinfection procedures.¹⁴⁰ Sadly, concealment, non-compliance, and resistance were characteristic in many ghettos, on the other hand, the records indicate that the

ghetto in Vilna (Vilnius) was able to successfully control epidemics throughout the war.¹⁴¹

The experience of the Wehrmacht in the field also suggests a successful effort at controlling epidemics, including the use of decontamination vehicles and mobile showering units, many of which were improvised by the men of the German Medical Corps (*Sanitatsdienst*).¹⁴²

Of course, the most notorious example of the application of these procedures came in the concentration camps. Upon arrival, inmates were routinely stripped, searched for valuables, showered, and then given clothes that had been previously disinfected.¹⁴³ In fact, the most common procedure involved disinfecting the clothing in one part of the "bath and disinfection complex" while the arrivals showered in another part. Kurt Vonnegut's description shows how even American prisoners of war entering German custody could become anxious and fearful at the strangeness of the ritual:

The naked Americans took their places under many showerheads along a white-tiled wall. There were no faucets they could control. They could only wait for whatever was coming. Their penises were shriveled and their balls were retracted. Reproduction was not the main business of the evening.

An unseen hand turned a master valve. Out of the showerheads gushed scalding rain. The rain was a blowtorch that did not warm. It jazzed and jangled Billy's skin without thawing the ice in the marrow of his long bones.

The Americans' clothes were meanwhile passing through poison gas. Body lice and bacteria and fleas were dying by the billions. So it goes.¹⁴⁴

There seems little reason to doubt that the level of disorientation and fear had changed since the time of Mary Antin fifty years before, to say nothing of the humiliation: indeed, there are witness testimonies that support the idea of such continuity.¹⁴⁵

In recounting these aspects of German disinfection procedures, as well as Jewish responses, which ranged from sullen non-compliance and avoidance to paranoid fear, one finds a remarkable similarity and a probable point of contact for virtually all of the gassing claims from 1942 into the summer of 1944.

Sobibor, for example, was described in German documents as a transit camp [*Durchgangslager*].¹⁴⁶ Yet a transit camp would require facilities for showering arrivals and disinfecting their belongings before sending them further on their journey.¹⁴⁷ And indeed we find in survivor testimonies that that is exactly what happened to them there.¹⁴⁸ Yet at the same time, we have rumors reported in the West, and later we will have testimonies, that assure us that Sobibor was a camp where arrivals were simply exterminated via the familiar shower-gas-burning sequence.¹⁴⁹ The same situation applies to Treblinka testimonies, for the Malkinia disinfection establishment was only a few kilometers away.¹⁵⁰

For Majdanek the situation is even more remarkable. As we shall see later, the Bath and Disinfection Complex II would be earmarked as an extermination center by the Soviets: but in its construction it is virtually identical to the standard hut for delousing incoming members of the Labor Service and disinfecting their belongings.¹⁵¹

In summarizing the gassing rumors for the period 1942 through the spring of 1944 we encountered several references to prussic acid, showers and baths, and mobile gas chambers that led us into a discussion of German disinfection procedures. We have found that over six decades before the Second World War the Germans had devised, for purposes of disease control, procedures that called for the use of mobile delousing and disinfection chambers, baths and disinfection complexes, and fumigation chambers that would utilize a common pesticide, Zyklon B, whose active ingredient was cyanide gas.

But above and beyond the German procedures we have found characteristic reactions to such diseases control measures, among many ignorant or traditional religious communities, and also among Jews, particularly those from the traditional and insulated East European communities.¹⁵² The reactions have ranged from avoidance and non-compliance, to anxiety, fear, and rumor-mongering of a particularly destructive sort. Finally, we note a haunting similarity between the delousing procedures known to have been applied and the rumors of mass gassing that were current at the time.

Therefore the most likely explanation for the evolution of the mass gas extermination legend, to this point in our analysis, is that the application of delousing measures on the populations of Eastern Europe, and particularly on the Jewish people who were being resettled to the East, or dragooned into forced labor, conjured up rumors of extermination and slaughter as they had in the past. These rumors, in turn, were conveyed to Jewish parties in Western Europe and the United States, who appear to have all too readily believed them. The rumors in turn were propagated by the British in radio broadcasts back to Europe, including

broadcasts in Yiddish, such that the rumors were already widely known, if not widely credited, throughout Europe by the end of 1942.¹⁵³ We are now prepared to engage the next evolution of the mass gassing claim.

4. The First Reports on Auschwitz and Majdanek

First claims of mass gassing at Auschwitz sandwiched around Soviet occupation of Majdanek camp. -- The first inaccurate Auschwitz memo, July 1944. -- Soviet guided tour of Majdanek, August 1944, and Special Commission. Gassing motifs emerge. -- Double doored disinfection *Apparate* identified as gas chamber. -- Fascination with the peephole on the door: fundamental proof of the gassing claim. -- Peephole then figures in Auschwitz claim, in War Refugee Board Report, November 1945. -- An apparent convergence of fact is perhaps merely a convergence of rumor.

IN THE SUMMER of 1944 the legend of mass gas extermination was solidified by a series of reports that were published by the Soviet government, and, at the end of the year, by a report issued by an agency of the United States government. At this point the gassing claims assumed authoritative status, so much so that by the end of the year the Germans would explicitly deny them. The issuance of official reports cannot be overstressed: a claim of any kind repeated over an official medium, such as radio, and particularly in print, gains enormous weight. Nevertheless, as we shall see, these claims were not accompanied by hard evidence.

The first document that is important is a communication that seems to have come from a Jewish circle in Slovakia at the beginning of July, 1944, which we will call the July Report. This report is noteworthy because it contains the first full series of allegations about the Auschwitz Birkenau camp. Gilbert reproduces the document in full.¹⁵⁴ In the context of the gassing claim, the report contains some data that may be considered accurate, in the sense that they do not contradict the current version. Thus we have a garbled reference to the Zyklon B issued by Tesch and Stabenow, and we have a reference to a bathing establishment, and holes in the ceiling where the gas drops down.¹⁵⁵ But there are other elements in the report that are clearly false, for example, the reference to the number of holes (three), the time required for execution (one minute), the rails that are said to have led to the cremation ovens, which are also incorrectly described and counted, and so on.¹⁵⁶

While we can grant that different observers might incorrectly estimate the time of execution, or the number of victims, because of the shock of what they were observing, it is quite another matter for such a witness to lose his or her ability to count or perceive at the most elementary level. Therefore, while we may be inclined to dismiss the differences in the time of gassing, or the number of victims, the errors of physical detail are much more serious, and strongly suggest that whoever described these processes was never anywhere near a gas chamber

or a crematorium. Therefore it must be conceded that the witnesses who wrote the report were repeating rumor, and, even if the witnesses believed it, the existence of a rumor is certainly not proof of the facts which the rumor alleges. The only thing the July report really shows is that gassing rumors were current in Auschwitz at the time.

The actual elements of the July report combine old and new features. The communiqué represents the first time that Zyklon B was specifically described as the source of poison gas. On the other hand, as we have seen, rumors about cyanide usage sprang up in the summer of 1942 but were abandoned later that year. The showering motif appears, which had been a common feature ever since late 1942. It seems that the association of poison entering through the actual holes in the shower nozzle was an easy inference -- we note that already in the previous year, in discussing the steam exterminations at Treblinka, the steam was described as emerging from holes in the pipes. This conceptualization of the gas dropping down on the inmates may also account for the idea of overhead openings needed for introducing the gas: obviously, Zyklon could not pass through a shower-head and would require a larger opening.

Another explanation, and a possible clue to another motif, involves the dusting with chlorine and lime which frequently accompanied the deportations, which goes back to the Karski report. That description had already led to some descriptions of chlorine gassing.¹⁵⁷ In the July Report, however, we have a situation in which the bathers are led into a room, allowed to stand for several minutes so that an optimum temperature is achieved, and then the gas in the form of powder is thrown on them. Of course the problem with this description is that it is false, Zyklon B does not act in this fashion.¹⁵⁸

The next event in the evolution of the gassing legend is crucial, because it involves the first Allied exposure to a German concentration camp. Majdanek was liberated at the end of July 1944, during a massive Soviet offensive that destroyed Army Group Center.¹⁵⁹ For a month, the Soviets did not allow any visitors, then, at the end of August; they gave Western journalists a brief tour.¹⁶⁰ This tour, in turn, generated wide press reportage by the New York Times and the Christian Science Monitor, and was accompanied by an official report of the Soviet Special Commission on Majdanek.¹⁶¹

The gassing sequence at Majdanek is different from that described at Auschwitz in July or at any other camp to this point. Previous accounts had always stressed that the victims were disrobed and met their end in the shower or bath itself. But at Majdanek it was now alleged that the shower was a preliminary step to the gassing process, which occurred at the other end of the building.¹⁶²

This is a major divergence and we must inquire why.

The reason appears to lie in the physical layout that presented itself to the Russians. Most of the gassings were supposed to have taken place in the building labeled "Bath and Disinfection Complex II." This is a long narrow building that featured a series of rooms, including an undressing room, a shower room, a drying room (*Trockenraum* -- that is a heated room for drying inmates after showering) and, at the far end, and originally detached from the bathing complex,¹⁶³ three small squarish rooms (approx. 4 x 4 meters, but one larger), two of which had outside attachments with boilers that piped air into the rooms (the third boiler was connected to the drying room).¹⁶⁴ The showers in the building actually worked, therefore the gassings could not have happened there. The smaller rooms and the drying room, brick faced on the outside and roofed with reinforced concrete, thus became the gas chambers.¹⁶⁵

There were other features present at the site. The drying room (sometimes called Room "A") had two wooden openings carved into its concrete ceiling: the same room contained several wooden struts, apparently with some wire reinforcing.¹⁶⁶ It was also equipped with wooden doors with three sets of bi-directional handles.¹⁶⁷ The smaller rooms had heavy steel doors and gastight doors with peepholes, also with bi-directional handles.¹⁶⁸ In addition, two of the rooms had piping running along the wall, about 30 cm above the floor, that appeared to be connected to five steel tanks located outside of the rooms.¹⁶⁹ At first glance the gastight doors and the ceiling openings seem to be peculiar additions for a bath and disinfection complex, but they do not necessarily support a gassing claim. Otherwise the structure corresponds to typical bath and disinfection complexes.

The Soviet scenario that was presented to the world's press went like this: the people were told to strip, leave their clothes in one room, then pass into another room where they would shower.¹⁷⁰ After the shower, they would be led into one of the "gas chambers" into the Zyklon B would be dropped down on them after a waiting period. The three boilers, on the other hand, would generate carbon monoxide gas that would be piped into the rooms, or else hot air to heat the rooms, or finally carbon monoxide would be piped in through the tanks.¹⁷¹ Meanwhile, the Germans were said to have watched the death throes of the victims through the peepholes.¹⁷²

There are some problems with this scenario. Of four rooms designated as gas chambers, only one (Room "A") had openings in the ceiling for the Zyklon to be introduced. Two of the other rooms had crudely cut holes in the reinforced concrete.¹⁷³ One of the rooms, the largest one, had no ceiling opening at all. Three

of the rooms had boilers attached outside (hence, perhaps, the origin of the "three gas chambers"), the fourth room had no opening of any kind except the door.¹⁷⁴ Graf and Mattogno have noted that of the five tanks found, only two remain, and they are marked not CO, but CO₂, that is, carbon dioxide, necessary for the generation of disinfection gases (T-Gas and others), but with no claimed extermination potential.¹⁷⁵ These, along with the boilers, would suggest that the rooms were used over time with a variety of disinfestation substances, including Zyklon B, T-Gas, and hot air. The gastight doors with peepholes, due to their bi-directional handles, could be opened from inside or outside.¹⁷⁶ Finally, the idea that showering ahead of time would facilitate the evolution of Zyklon B is simply wrong.¹⁷⁷ What we have here is a clear case of forcing the facts to fit the theory.

Furthermore, while we continue to maintain that most of the elements in the gassing story arose more or less spontaneously and were just as spontaneously believed, at Majdanek we are confronted with grim evidence of a deliberate Soviet hoax. This is because while Room "A" of the complex features two carefully crafted and well dressed openings of wood in the ceiling, someone had attempted to replicate the openings in two of the smaller rooms ("B" and "C") by clumsily hacking small, squarish holes through the reinforced concrete roof and not even bothering to remove the rebar.¹⁷⁸ It is simply unbelievable that the workmanship that created the apertures in the ceiling of Room "A" created the holes in the roof in Rooms "B" and "C", and, moreover, the openings could never have been gastight. To the extent that these latter openings are claimed as contemporaneous openings devised for introducing poison gas, to that extent we are looking at a clear cut case of Soviet fraud.

The reverberations of the Majdanek Special Commission were extremely broad; many of the symbols of the Holocaust have their beginning here. Among these one may note the huge piles of clothes, shoes, and hair, which were taken as *prima facie* evidence of exterminations of a million and a half human beings, although we now know that these piles of belongings indicate no such thing, and the current evaluation holds that less than 100,000 perished at Majdanek.¹⁷⁹ Other features that would soon become common in Holocaust narratives include the red-brick facing of the gas chambers, the flat concrete roofs, the piping above the floor, and similar elements. But the most sensational element of the Majdanek report was the gastight doors with peepholes. The first place this would become apparent was in the War Refugee Board report.

The War Refugee Board would not be issued until late 1944, but the matter it contained, including the July Report, circulated in various indeterminate forms for several months before.¹⁸⁰ It is known that repetition of some of these via radio broadcasts called forth a German rejection of its allegations in

October.¹⁸¹ It was not until November 26, 1944, that the WRB Report was issued, and was summarized in the world press.¹⁸² The contents of the report, with respect to the gassing claim, largely recapitulated material from the July Report. However, there is one reference to the peephole not present in the earlier report that strongly suggests the influence of the Majdanek Special Commission:

Prominent guests from Berlin were present at the inauguration of the first crematorium in March 1943. The "program" consisted of the gassing and burning of 8,000 Cracow Jews. The guests, both officers and civilians, were extremely satisfied with the results and the special peephole fitted into the door of the gas chamber was in constant use. They were lavish in their praise of this newly erected installation.¹⁸³

The WRB report contained many errors by the standards of today's knowledge: neither its number of victims nor its descriptions of the crematoriums and gas chambers are accepted by any authority.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless it was for some months the most important document in propagandizing not only the shower-gas-burning sequence but also the alleged unique status of Auschwitz Birkenau as a slaughterhouse of vast proportions. But as we have seen, it contained enough errors that it could not be a reliable source for the mass gassings it alleged, and, in fact, it appears to have both influenced, and been influenced by, the Soviet Special Commission on Majdanek.¹⁸⁵ In the panicked atmosphere of the time, no doubt the similarities of the two reports would have caused more than one sincere individual to feel at the time that they were slowly piercing a veil of truth; 50 years later, however, it seems less likely that that was the case.

5. The Eastern Camps, Polevoi's Report, and the Gerstein Statement

Soviet propagandists begin gathering gassing stories in August 1944; these are published in Yiddish. -- Soviet Special Commissions in fall. -- Deposition of Leleko, February 1945, summarizes these claims. Close linkage of Leleko deposition with descriptions for Majdanek, therefore probable derivation. -- Gerstein Statement from April of 1945. -- Contains many fantastic elements, gassing elements in turn derivative of Leleko, Majdanek, and initial Pravda reports on Auschwitz. -- Gerstein illustrates absolute identity of Zyklon B with an extermination program in Allied thinking. Gerstein's story widely publicized in France in July 1945. -- His suicide follows.

ALREADY IN THE SUMMER of 1944, the Soviet propagandist Ilya Ehrenburg began acquiring testimonies from the Aktion Reinhardt Camps. Some of these were collected and published in *Merder fun Folker* in 1945.¹⁸⁶ Looking over some of these testaments today, one finds that while gassing claims are repeated, they are not usually presented with much detail.¹⁸⁷ We should keep in mind however that for these Aktion Reinhardt camps (Sobibor, Treblinka, and Belzec) the buildings had been dismantled and there were no physical traces of gas chambers.¹⁸⁸ No orders, correspondence, or documents concerning gas chambers were presented in the immediate postwar period, nor has there been any such documentation since.¹⁸⁹ Our knowledge of these three camps -- in which today it is said that close to two million were killed -- rested then, as now, solely on witness depositions and SS confessions.¹⁹⁰ The only corroboration for the actions alleged at these camps are some mass graves, which by normal estimation of grave mass, contain perhaps a few tens of thousands of bodies altogether.¹⁹¹ This may indicate murders and mass executions of some type, but they do not indicate mass exterminations on the scale usually alleged, and to date there is still no evidence for the use of poison gas.

At the end of January, Auschwitz was liberated, and the Red Army found about six thousand prisoners who were considered too ill by the Germans to march back to Germany.¹⁹² Photographs of the liberated inmates, that included several hundred children, indicate old age, even infirmity, but neither starvation nor epidemics.¹⁹³ Obviously the fact that such inmates were alive tended to contradict the already reigning conception; later, an SS man would confess that Himmler had ordered all exterminations to cease the previous November, in fact, precisely on November 26, 1944, the day the WRB report was issued.¹⁹⁴ Needless to say no documentary evidence in support of this confession has ever surfaced.¹⁹⁵

At the same time, the Soviets made reference to the liberated Auschwitz camp in their national propaganda organ, *Pravda*. After a brief reference on

February 1, a full report, by correspondent Boris Polevoi, was published on Friday, February 2, 1945, less than a week after the camp had been liberated, and a full three months before the official Soviet report on Auschwitz.

Polevoi's indebtedness to the Majdanek reportage is explicit, but at the same time there are some differences:

Last year, when the Red Army revealed to the world the terrible and abominable secrets of Majdanek, the Germans in Auschwitz began to wipe out the traces of their crimes. They leveled the mounds of the so-called "old" graves in the Eastern part of the camp, tore 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 rolling mills, and then sent to the surrounding fields.

In retreat were taken the special transportable apparatuses for killing children. The stationary gas chambers in the eastern part of the camp were restructured, even little turrets and other architectural embellishments were added so that they would look like innocent garages.

There is one major surprise to this narrative: first, it is completely different from the report of the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz. That report, in turn, would show the influence of the War Refugee Board (WRB) Report of November 26, 1945. An obvious inference is that the Soviet Auschwitz narrative was revised subsequent to this report to make it harmonize with the various anonymous messages which comprised the WRB report. Nevertheless, Polevoi's report shows other influences and connections.

For example, the concept of the "factory of death" is today well-known in the Holocaust literature, but appears to have its beginnings here. That concept in turn seems clearly linked to Russian, Soviet, and Western symbolism rejecting the industrial factory system, compare the short stories of Anton Chekhov or various writings of Maxim Gorky, or further the *angst* of German Expressionism. Meanwhile, the concept of the Germans "wiping out the traces of their crimes" goes back, as we have seen, to the Katyn Forest revelations of 1943.

It hardly needs to be pointed out that the "electric conveyor belt" has no place in any subsequent Auschwitz narratives, this story element is probably linked to the reports concerning the large electric chambers at Belzec and

elsewhere.¹⁹⁶ The "special transportable apparatuses for killing children" are probably references to gas vans, their special utilization for that purpose first attested at the Krasnodar-Kharkov trials. The description of "stationary gas chambers" is apparently a reference to either the delousing stations BW 5/A and 5/B at Birkenau, or else Crematoriums IV and V. The reference to the "gas chambers" as "garages" ("*garazhi*") was a characterization first made of the "gas chambers" at Majdanek.

What is most striking about this press report is not its derivative nature or that it is totally at variance with the version of Auschwitz that we have come to know, substituting the traditional atrocity record with another, completely imaginary one. Rather, that the first non-anonymous observer at the Auschwitz camp could be so far from the current narrative speaks not only to the inaccuracy of this initial report, but also to the artifice of subsequent ones.

Shortly after Polevoi's report was published, Soviet interrogators developed affidavits from Pavel Leleko, who had been a police guard at Treblinka.¹⁹⁷ Coincidentally, Leleko's interrogations are supposed to have begun on the same day that the WRB Report was issued, three months before. On the following February 20 and 21, 1945, Leleko contributed two affidavits, and these rehearse the structure of the Treblinka mass gassing claim, and indeed, the gassing claim for all the Aktion Reinhard camps.¹⁹⁸

The Leleko depositions contain the following details of the gassing process:

1. The victims were detained, asked to turn in all valuables, were separated by sex, and stripped. Then the victims were walked to a separate area that housed the gas chambers.
2. The gas chambers had flowers growing alongside in boxes. Instead of a door the victims entered through a heavy hanging made from a rug.
3. A long passage moved through the length of the building, five rooms on each side (10 in all).
4. Four rooms on each side comprised gas chambers, 6 meters square in size, 2.5/3 meters high.
5. The center of the ceiling had a light fixture with no wiring and two showerheads whereby the gas was let into the chamber.
6. The walls, floor, and ceiling were of cement.

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7. Each gas chamber had two doors, one opening to the outside whereby the bodies were removed.
8. 500 people per chamber (500 people in 36 square meters).
9. Eight rooms out of the 10 used for gas chambers, the other two contained "powerful German engines" that fed the gas into the chambers.
10. After being filled, the gas chambers were sealed "by hermetically closing doors."
11. Progress of the gassing was observed by looking through a "porthole" "near each door."
12. The gassing took 15 minutes.
13. About 20 meters distant was the old gas chamber building, which had only three gas chambers.
14. The bodies were disposed in a concrete incineration pit about 20 meters long and 1 meter deep.¹⁹⁹

The interrogation of Leleko is valuable because it is one of the most detailed description of a gassing at one of the Aktion Reinhardt camps. All other confessions, to the extent that they describe the gassing process at all, show clear traces of harmony with Leleko's testimony.²⁰⁰

The problem is that Leleko's testimony offers nothing new. The entire shower-gas-burning sequence was already well known by this time, so Leleko's remarks are not revelatory and could have been derivative. More interesting are his comments on the unwired lightbulbs in each room, and the two showerheads through which the gas was supposed to have filled the chamber. Such details tends to confirm our surmise that the association of showers and gas would inevitably lead to the conception of the gas actually coming down through the nozzle: although this method does not seem that it would be particularly effective, given that carbon monoxide is lighter than air.

More serious is the fact that the description of the building sounds remarkably similar to the Bath and Disinfection Complex at Majdanek. Again, we have a long corridor. Again, medium sized rooms into which hundreds of people are forced in the nude. Again, the chambers are constructed with cement, or more likely reinforced concrete. Again, each chamber has two doors. Again, the doors are hermetically sealed, and again, the dying are observed through a porthole or peephole. Even the number of "old gas chambers" corresponds to the number

alleged at Majdanek.

Finally there is the detail that is almost decisive in linking Leleko's account with Majdanek: the engines. As we recall, three rooms at the bathing complex were equipped with outside boilers that forced hot air into the rooms. This is entirely consistent with the idea of hot air delousing, disinfection with Zyklon or other cyanide products, or combinations of the two. But the Soviet Special Commission on Majdanek had suggested that these boiler rooms instead generated carbon monoxide gas that was led into the rooms in order to kill the people inside. (The Soviets also alleged that carbon monoxide was led into another room through a pipe.²⁰¹) Leleko's description of powerful German engines that generated enough carbon monoxide to kill 500 people in 15 minutes seems clearly derivative of the Majdanek concept. Leleko's confession does not specify the type of engine; that would be left to Kurt Gerstein two months later, with even more problematic implications for the mass gassing claim.

Kurt Gerstein was a minor officer in the SS who was apparently involved in some anti-Nazi activities before and during the war.²⁰² He was, however, an engineer, and was apparently involved in the use of cyanide gas for disinfection purposes.

He fled the approaching Red Army and surrendered to Allied custody in late April 1945, and on May 6 was turned over to the French authorities.²⁰³ During this period he wrote several versions of an affidavit or statement, which differ in small details, but which generally provide a picture of a gassing at Belzec concentration camp and a confirmation of gassing operations at the other Aktion Reinhardt camps.²⁰⁴

The Gerstein Statement, as the various drafts are known, is probably the most widely quoted document for those who claim that mass gassings took place.²⁰⁵ The problem is that it is almost never quoted in full, because the entire document contains a number of errors and improbabilities.²⁰⁶

The Gerstein Statement, concerning gassing, and a few other matters, may be summarized as follows:

1. Gerstein visits Belzec and Treblinka,
2. Belzec has a capacity 15,000 per day, i.e., 15,000 persons could be killed per day,
3. Sobibor (not seen), has a capacity of 20,000 per day,
4. Treblinka, a capacity of 25,000 per day.

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5. Globocnik, who controls the camps, instructs Gerstein to disinfect clothes and also increase efficiency of the gas chambers which are using old diesel engines.
6. Globocnik informs Gerstein that Hitler and Himmler had been to the camp August 15, 1942: Gerstein records an utterly incredible conversation between Hitler and Globocnik.
7. At Belzec, Gerstein describes the bathhouse,
8. with flowers growing outside,
9. and a sign "To the baths and inhalations"
10. The building is accessed by a small stairway,
11. there are three rooms on either side, 4 x 5 meters, 1.9 meters high, "like garages" (the wording in one version appears to describe two doors per chamber, viz. "on return")
12. A transport arrives and everyone is forced to strip and turn in valuables in sequence,
13. the hair is shorn, someone tells Gerstein, "to make of it something special for the submarines, linings, etc."
14. The people are crowded into the gas chambers, 700-800 in 25 square meters.
15. The diesel engine fails to work; Gerstein times the delay, two hours and 49 minutes on his stopwatch.
16. One can see that many are still alive through a little window and the electric light in the room.
17. After 32 minutes of the gassing all are dead.
18. Later Gerstein goes to Treblinka, there are 8 gas chambers,
19. mounds of clothes and underwear 35-40 meters high. and
20. The numbers reported on the BBC are too low: 25 million have been gassed.
21. that on June 8, 1942, Gerstein had spread rumors that the cyanide he was picking up at Kollin, in Czechoslovakia was for killing people

22. that the cyanide in his transport consisted of bottles which he later poured out,
23. that another method of murder consisted of leading people up staircases and throwing them into blast furnaces.²⁰⁷

The material or documentary evidence for any of these claims is nil.²⁰⁸ It is not normally claimed that anyone was killed with bottled cyanide, when that claim is made, as for example, in postwar testimony by former SS, it is arbitrarily corrected by historians.²⁰⁹ It is established that Hitler and Himmler were never at these camps in August 1942.²¹⁰ The crowding elements and the piles of clothing are impossible exaggerations. Therefore we are not bound to analyze the document as fact but are rather entitled to move immediately to the question of the source of the statement's elements.

The diesel gas reference is probably connected either to Soviet revelations of gas vans, or else to Soviet discussions of Treblinka.²¹¹ Other tropes can be identified, for example, the description of the gas chambers as appearing "like garages" is almost certainly indebted to Werth's description of Majdanek the previous summer, or Polevoi's description of Auschwitz two months previous.²¹² It is interesting to note that if Gerstein really was involved in the spreading of rumors about cyanide use for human beings, then the timing of these rumors (June 8, 1942) would coincide with the rumor of cyanide use that reached Switzerland the following August.

Another element: The 25 million victims goes back to a usage manual on Zyklon.²¹³ The heaps of piled clothes are a reference to Majdanek.²¹⁴ Above all, the statement shows the influence of Leleko's February interrogations and probably other testimonies concerning Treblinka and Sobibor made at the same time or before. In particular, the use of the "blast furnace" motif shows the clear influence of Polevoi. But many other elements, including the number of rooms, the arrangement of the building, the engines, the peepholes, even the flowers in front of the building, also appear derivative.

The main problem with the Gerstein Statement is that one does not pick and choose from a document. Many elements of Gerstein's statement are simply false, if we reject these; we must legitimately ask why we should give credence to the other elements.²¹⁵ As it turns out the only part of the statement which is quoted, and considered unambiguously true, relates to its repetition of the now conventional shower-gas-burning concept. Yet this simply means that we are using a part of Gerstein to confirm what we already know.

The gravest structural difficulty with the Gerstein Statement is that it

insists on the use of diesel engines in the generation of carbon monoxide gas for the gas chambers. Since 1983, Friedrich Paul Berg, a professional engineer and former environmental expert, has demonstrated that this would be a most improbable method for mass exterminations: diesel engines emit virtually no carbon monoxide.²¹⁶ These analyses, in turn, cast grave doubts on the alleged gassings at all of the Aktion Reinhardt camps, because, following Gerstein, diesel engines -- usually from Soviet tanks but sometimes from submarines -- are nowadays always alleged as the means of the gas production at these three camps.²¹⁷

Another point to be borne in mind in evaluating the Gerstein Statement is that Gerstein, a Zyklon technician, was attempting by his confession to deflect guilt away from himself, which in turn proves the extent to which Zyklon was perceived solely as a death dealing mass murder weapon at the time.²¹⁸ In this regard he was unsuccessful: after his claims were widely publicized in the press in July 1945, the French indicated their intention to try him as a war criminal, and Gerstein committed suicide.²¹⁹

6. The Canonical Holocaust

The gassing claim as we understand it today is double-rooted: first, in the photographs and newsreels of the dead at Belsen, who perished from typhoid, typhus, and tuberculosis, and second from the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz, which concluded four million dead with no direct documentary evidence. -- Analysis of the Soviet claim. -- Influence of Soviet report on Allied interrogators. -- Influence of Soviet report on eyewitnesses: Bendel and Bimko. -- Influence of Soviet report on German confessions: Maximillian Grabner and others.

IF WE WERE TO PINPOINT the time at which the gassing claim assumed its present shape, it would be in the three-week period from April 15 to May 6, 1945. During this period the Western Allies liberated a number of concentration camps, and at the end of this period the Soviets issued their Special Commission report on Auschwitz Birkenau.

On April 15, the British Army took over the Bergen Belsen complex, which at this point contained tens of thousands of prisoners.²²⁰ The images of Belsen, cultivated by British military photographers, left an indelible impression: stacks of nude, discolored and disfigured corpses, many in advanced stages of putrefaction, lined like cordwood outside of buildings. Overcrowded barracks full of dead and dying inmates. Large mass graves full of contorted and twisted bodies. The universal reaction was one of shock, horror and disbelief: a common remark was that words could not describe what the liberators had seen.²²¹

That April, the United States Army liberated Dachau and Buchenwald.²²² These camps, too, provided their own images: at Dachau, a group of open train cars containing the bodies of a few hundred dead prisoners, at Buchenwald, a handful of strips of human skin which had apparently been lifted from the corpses of tattooed inmates.²²³ The American reaction to such death and destruction transcended shock in at least one instance: an American officer, confronted with the bodies at Dachau, is said to have lined up several hundred German soldiers (mostly youths) who had ended up in the camp at its liberation and machine gunned them in cold blood.²²⁴

The Allied soldiers, confronted with these scenes of horror, interpreted them in terms of what they knew. And what they knew after three years of unchecked propaganda was that the Germans had been engaged in the systematic murder of millions of human beings in the camps by means of the shower-gas-burning sequence. The presence of a shower, or a crematorium, or a delousing chamber became *prima facie* evidence of the well-known gas extermination

claim.²²⁵ The nude, discolored, and disfigured bodies were no doubt victims who had been gassed just before the Allied forces arrived.²²⁶ Again and again one finds the sentiment that the corpses were the proof of the totality of the accusation which had been made for years, and that the Germans had been stopped, as one American put it, "before they had time to get their act together."²²⁷

The problem is that these perceptions were wrong. What the Allies had found in the Western camps was simply the result of the "last major epidemic of typhus in world history."²²⁸ The epidemic had been precipitated by the complete breakdown of sanitation, transportation, and provisioning for the concentration camp system in the last weeks and months of the war.²²⁹ The bodies were discolored and disfigured by the process of putrefaction, they were nude because whenever a prisoner died the other prisoners would strip their clothing and burn the lice-infested garments.²³⁰ Although widely publicized descriptions and photographs of gas chambers were proffered at the time for the western camps, these turned out to be nothing but standard delousing chambers.²³¹ In 1960, it was established that there were no gassings in the Western camps.²³² But none of this penetrated the western consciousness in 1945 which could not see beyond the piles of dead bodies, and saw in them proof of German evil and Nazi *Kultur*.²³³ The imagery of the western camps, and above all Belsen, would remain for decades the proof of the Holocaust, and by extension, of the gas extermination claim.

Just before the end of the war, the Soviets issued a report which would authoritatively establish the nature of the extermination program. Like most Soviet Reports, The Soviet Special Commission on was relatively brief, about thirty pages, and published in brochure format.²³⁴ Given the emphasis given to the gassing claim there is very little descriptive material contained in the report, only two documents are cited: one, a reference to the construction of crematoriums, second, a document that refers to baths for special purposes for either Crematorium IV or V.²³⁵ We should note that this evidence is not only considered incriminating but sufficient proof of the crime: this shows the extent to which the shower-gas-burning sequence was fundamental to thinking at the time, any one of the elements was considered decisive for the others. The substance of the report, with respect to the gassing claim, can be summarized in the following extract:

1. Twelve crematory ovens with 46 retorts were available in four new crematoriums.
2. Every retort could take three to five corpses.
3. The cremation procedure took approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

4. The baths for special purposes, that is, the gas chambers for the killing of human beings were located in the cellars of special buildings next to the crematoriums.
5. There were also another two separate "baths", the bodies of people killed here were burnt in separate fires in the open.
6. Dogs helped to drive the men intended for death into the baths.
7. On the way, they were driven with blows from clubs and rifle butts.
8. The doors to the chambers were hermetically sealed, and the people in them were poisoned with Zyklon.
9. Death occurred within 3-5 minutes;
10. after 20-30 minutes, the bodies were removed and taken to the crematory ovens in the crematoriums.
11. Before cremation, cremation dentists removed all gold teeth from the bodies.
12. The "production" of the "baths" and gas chambers by far exceeded the capacity of the crematory ovens; therefore the Germans used gigantic fires in the open to burn the bodies.
13. Ditches 4 - 6 m wide, 25 - 30 m long, and 2 m deep were dug for these fires.
14. Channels ran along the floor of the ditches and were used for air supply.
15. The bodies were brought to the fires by narrow-gauge railway, and placed in layers crossways in the ditches.
16. Oil was poured over them and that is how they were burnt.²³⁶

At the end of the report, the Soviets calculated the number of bodies that could be burned in each of the five crematoriums; this totaled 279,000 per month, from which they concluded that the maximum capacity of the crematoriums was over five million.²³⁷ Nevertheless, their conclusion stated that "the technical commission established that the German hangmen killed not less than 4,000,000 citizens of the USSR, Poland, France, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Holland, Belgium, and other countries during the period of the existence of Auschwitz camp."²³⁸

Hence was born the Auschwitz four million.

The Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz is probably the most important document ever issued on the gas extermination claim.²³⁹ Indeed, it is somewhat shocking to see the extent to which the claim is traced back to this slim and insubstantial brochure. But at the time it established not only the fact of the gas extermination claim but also the implementation of that alleged policy at the largest of all of the concentration camps. On the other hand, the report offers no proof of the claims which it makes, only two documents in circumstantial support, an assertion of the number of victims based merely on arbitrary multiplication of cremation rates, and is buttressed only with large amounts of eyewitness testimony that fail to even come close to providing details of the gassing procedure.

The importance of the document immediately became apparent in the interrogations, confessions, and immediate postwar trials. The first of these was at Belsen in the fall of 1945.²⁴⁰ Although the purpose of the trial was ostensibly to try the SS personnel who had been captured at that camp, it turned out that many of the SS and many of the prisoners had been transferred to Belsen from Auschwitz in late 1944 and early 1945.²⁴¹ As a result, the Belsen trial was also a trial about the reality of what happened at Auschwitz: indeed, the proceedings included the showing of a Soviet film on Auschwitz.²⁴²

The German defendants were almost all former Auschwitz guards. The Belsen commandant, Josef Kramer, had formerly served briefly as commandant at Birkenau. Hößler had been the head of the women's camp. Irma Grese had been a warder at Birkenau. All of them were accused of participating in selections for the gassing process and all of them eventually admitted their participation. The extent to which the Soviet commission colored their confessions can be readily seen.

On May 22, 1945, the day after Heinrich Himmler was taken into British custody; Josef Kramer gave a lengthy statement describing the conditions in all the camps where he served, including Belsen, Birkenau, and Natzweiler Struthof. He explicitly denied the existence of "a gas chamber" at Auschwitz.²⁴³ The next day, Himmler was dead, an apparent suicide.²⁴⁴ In a later interrogation, Kramer admitted to the existence of "a gas chamber" at Birkenau over which he had no jurisdiction.²⁴⁵ From the stand, he would declare that his initial denial was motivated by an oath of silence to which he was no longer bound by the death of Hitler and Himmler.²⁴⁶ Unfortunately we do not have the date of the second statement by Kramer, but it seems likely that the revelations of the Soviet Special Commission were instrumental in getting him to admit to the gassing claim. The

idea that he would be silent about the gassing claim, if it was true, when the WRB report had made essentially the same charges as far back as November, 1944²⁴⁷, and when the Soviet Auschwitz Report had been issued two weeks earlier, is very difficult to believe. The idea of an oath to remain silent makes no sense with regard to Hitler, who had been dead for weeks, nor is it likely that Kramer would deny, while his superior Himmler was also in British custody, something his interrogators were surely expecting him to admit.²⁴⁸

The rest of the defendants at the Belsen Trial also endorsed the gassing claim, with varying degrees of vagueness -- Grese, for example, would claim that she heard of the gas chamber from the prisoners' grapevine -- and after being found guilty 11 of the 45 defendants were hanged.²⁴⁹

The Auschwitz Special Commission definitely set the tone not only for subsequent confessions but also for eyewitness testimonies: in early September, 1945, the former political officer at Auschwitz, Grabner, gave a confession in Vienna in which he said that 3 million had been exterminated at the camp by the time he left in December, 1943.²⁵⁰ This generally accords with the Soviet projections, in the sense that if 3 million had died by the end of 1943, that would project to another million or so by the time the camp was liberated in January 1945. Even more precisely, at the Belsen Trial, two former Auschwitz prisoners, Dr. Bendel and Ada Bimko, also attested to the reality of the gas chambers, Bimko in particular supporting the four million figure in two places.²⁵¹

The fact that the eyewitness testimonies and confessions in the postwar period correspond to the Soviet Special Commission could be taken as simple corroboration of the Soviet report, except that it has now been recognized that the Soviet report was wrong, in particular on its totally arbitrary calculation of four million victims (current estimates hold one million or less.²⁵²) That figure derived from the Soviet calculation of cremation capacities. It did not derive from testimony. On the other hand, we have several testimonies and confessions which support it. But since the figure is wrong, it follows that the testimonies and confessions which support the calculation were influenced by that report.

If a witness or a confessor makes statements that corroborate statements in an official and widely publicized report, that witness or confessor may be viewed as independently verifying the truth, although the absence of material or documentary support would still leave the matter in doubt. But when the witness or confessor corroborates statements and the statements are false, then one can presume that the witness and confessor statements were simply derivative of the reports. To put it another way, several testimonies may converge on a truth, but several testimonies cannot converge on a falsehood: in such a case one is dealing

either with statements derived from a common erroneous source or a kind of mass hysteria determined by the authority of an erroneous source.

Such is the problem with all witness testimonies and confessions for the gas extermination claim, particularly for this initial period, but even more subsequently. The allegations of mass gassing had been widely disseminated since 1942, and had assumed official status by the fall of 1944. Under these circumstances it would have been impossible to obtain "blind" testimony or an untainted confession. Only statements that provided high levels of corroborative detail would be probative, yet that is precisely what was never offered. Eyewitness testimonies and confessions made the gravest errors whenever they strayed into details, for example, in Ada Bimko's odd notion that the cyanide gas was kept in large round tanks²⁵³, or Josef Kramer's assertion that a gassing at Natzweiler was carried out by pouring half a pint of salts into a pipe.²⁵⁴

The Auschwitz Special Commission derived its authority partly because the Soviet government issued it and partly because there were no other reports -- as in the case of Katyn -- to contradict it. Its authority was certainly not due to any exhaustive forensic, documentary, or material calculations. Yet for some time it was, along with the WRB report, the only substantial document describing what had supposedly occurred at Auschwitz, and appears to be the only one entered into evidence at the International Military Tribunal.²⁵⁵ As a result it became one of the fundamental documents to consult for anyone who wished to know what had transpired there. Witnesses, preparing to testify, would have consulted it so that they could refresh their memories or to put their own experiences in a wider context. Most importantly, Allied officials, confronted with former Auschwitz personnel, would have to consult the report in order to know how to distinguish truth from falsehood in the course of their prisoner interrogations.²⁵⁶

As soon as a witness or confessor made statements corroborating the Soviet Special Commission, then those statements themselves acquired the Soviet report's weight of authority because they matched its claims. Over time the proof of the mass gas exterminations at Auschwitz would not be traced in the popular mind back to the Soviet Auschwitz report itself, but rather to testimonies and confessions that were clearly produced under its influence. Thus a version of the gassing claim, what we would call the Canonical Holocaust, evolved almost entirely through oral testimonies that built upon the basis of a report which had no substance. Meanwhile, the damning newsreels of Belsen would be manipulated and juxtaposed from camp to camp according to the whim of the prevailing culture, and provide the unanswerable ground to the claim.²⁵⁷

7. The Nuremberg Trials

The aim of the Nuremberg Trials to discredit National Socialism and German militarism: the future pacification of Germany. -- Evidence provided for incriminating value. -- No attempt at putting documents in context. Soviet Union oversees most of the gassing claim presentation. -- Soviet record in 1930's show trials indicates mass hysteria, conspiratorial thinking, forced confessions. -- Hysterical atmosphere at Nuremberg: Judges, who privately doubt, fail to maintain a rational atmosphere.

THE ORIGINS of the Nuremberg Trials lay in the desire of the Allies as far back as 1943 to take revenge on the Nazi leadership, and punish the German people.²⁵⁸ It is clear that part of the desire was to ensure that there would be no more wars with Germany: hence at this early date one frequently encounters statements of simply executing tens of thousands of the leadership cadre in Germany, or even sterilizing the total German population.²⁵⁹

A general aspect of this hostile attitude was one of paranoia, evinced in conspiracy thinking about the Germans or at least about their leadership. The roots of such paranoia could be variously explained. For one thing, wars always generate suspicions and anxieties that frequently go over the top: one thinks of elements of the British Army, confused and disoriented by the German offensive of May, 1940, finding secret messages in the plowings of Belgian farmers.²⁶⁰ Another contributing factor is the death and destruction of the war: history provides many instances where terrible misfortunes have been attributed to the secret plotting of others. Jews, for example, were frequently scapegoats in times of plague and disease.²⁶¹ In the context of war-hatred against Germans, such attributions were a natural extension: during the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919, an American official attributed this terrible outbreak to a German submarine which had brought the disease to America under the Kaiser's order.²⁶²

Still another contributing factor to such paranoia is the extent to which war hysteria attributes malevolent "fifth column" tendencies to specific minority groups. The internment by the Allies of the Japanese and other European nationals, the Soviet deportations of the Volga Germans and Crimean Tatars, as well as the German deportations of the Jews, all seem to have been influenced by this kind of thinking to at least some degree.

To a certain extent such conspiratorial thinking is probably a throwback to shamanistic thinking; the idea that misfortune has a direct cause that can be traced back to a specific malevolent agent: one thinks of the various witchhunts that have cropped up here and there in European history.²⁶³ As it applied to the

Germans in the twentieth century, such conspiratorial thinking about German motives and German conduct clearly preceded the Second World War: one thinks of the Reichstag fire and even more sinister theories traced back hundreds of years.²⁶⁴

In the context of the postwar period this simply meant that the Allies were not inclined to trust the German people and least of all their former leadership.²⁶⁵ The Allies were convinced, on the basis of the Canonical Holocaust, that the German people, or at least the SS, had engaged in the most barbaric crimes and they would not be dissuaded by denials.²⁶⁶ Down to the common soldier, one finds that whenever any German denied knowledge of "what was going on in the camps" the usual conclusion drawn was that he was simply lying.²⁶⁷ A final contributing element to this Allied paranoia involved the fact that they were essentially occupying with relatively small numbers a nation of 80 million people; history again shows that when such a small group attempts to impose its will on the majority, conspiracy thinking is a natural result.²⁶⁸

Simply put, a profound gulf existed between occupier and occupied. Allied paranoia created the certainty of German conspiracies, of which the mass gassing program was merely one. The Germans were not to be trusted to tell the Allies what had happened and why, they were merely expected to confirm what they were told. The source of the information for what had happened was, after all, available in reports that had been authoritatively issued by the Soviet and later Polish communist governments, as well as by confessions and affidavits that simply restated what everyone had known all along. In this atmosphere of assumed guilt and conspiracy, it was unfortunate that the presentation for the mass gassing and extermination claims at Nuremberg fell almost entirely to the Soviet Union, which already had long experience with conspiracies, paranoia, and show trials.

What transpired at Nuremberg cannot be fully grasped without some understanding of the psychology of Soviet judicial procedure under Stalin. In the 1930's, the Soviets conducted numerous trials, mostly involving prominent communists but also "saboteurs" who, it was said, were attempting to destroy the Soviet Union.²⁶⁹ It is generally granted that the accusations made in these trials were false, an extract from one confessor's affidavit, who was charged with sabotaging Soviet agriculture as part of a German plot, is very revealing:

The chief task assigned to me by the German intelligence service at that time was to arrange to spoil grain within the country. This involved delaying the construction of storehouses and elevators, so as to create a discrepancy between the growing

size of the grain collections and the available storage space. In this way [the German agent] said, two things would be achieved: firstly, the grain itself would be spoiled; and secondly, the indignation of the peasants would be aroused, which was inevitable when they saw that grain was perishing. I was also asked to arrange for the wholesale contamination of storehouses by pests, especially by corn-beetle ... The German intelligence service made a special point of the organization of wrecking activities in the sphere of horsebreeding in order .. not to provide horses for the Red Army. As regards seed, we included in our program muddling up seed affairs, mixing up sorted seed and thus lowering the harvest yield in the country. As regards crop rotation, the idea was to plan the crop area incorrectly and thus place the collective farm peasants in such a position that they would be virtually unable to practice proper crop rotation and would be obliged to plough up meadows and pastures for crop growing. This would reduce the size of the harvests in the country and at the same time arouse the indignation of the peasants, who would be unable to understand why they were being forced to plough up meadows and pastures when the collective farms wanted to develop stock-breeding and required fodder for the purpose. As regards the machine tractor stations, the aim was to put tractors, harvester combines and agricultural machines out of commission, to muddle the financial affairs of the machine and tractor stations, and for this purpose to place at the machine and tractor stations useless people, people with bad records, and above all members of our Right organization. As regards stock-breeding, the aim was to kill off pedigree breed stock and to strive for a high cattle mortality ... to prevent the development of fodder resources and especially to infect cattle artificially with various kinds of bacteria in order to increase their mortality ... I instructed [the head of the veterinary department] and Boyarshinov, Chief of the Bacteriological Department, to artificially infect pigs with erysipelas in the Leningrad region and with plague in the Voronezh region and the Azov-Black Sea Territory. I chose these two bacteria because the pigs are inoculated not with dead microbes, but with live ones, only of a reduced virulence. It was therefore quite simple from the technical standpoint to organize artificial infection ... For this purpose three factories were selected at my suggestion ... In these factories serums were made with virulent bacteria and given special serial numbers. Boyarshinov was informed of these serial

numbers and he transmitted them to the chiefs of the veterinary departments in the localities who could be relied on in this matter, and they in turn transmitted them to veterinary surgeons who had anti-Soviet feelings and who in case of a heavy cattle mortality would not raise a big fuss.²⁷⁰

The detached reader notes first of all the tremendous scope of the secret conspiracy alleged as well as the fact that every conceivable shortcoming of Soviet agriculture is being attributed to it. A natural conclusion is that the Soviet government had orchestrated a tremendous hoax. But that is probably too radical an interpretation. It is hard to believe that any rational government; intent above all on simply suppressing its enemies,²⁷¹ would devise such a lunatic indictment. Rather it suggests that, probably with some rational and deliberate coaxing from above, the concept of sabotage took on a life of its own in the minds of the security apparatus, the interrogators, and probably even among many of the defendants as well. In other words, we are looking at an instance of mass hysteria in which Soviet society had been taken over by rumors of secret "wreckers" whose secret agenda was so skillfully masked that no hard evidence existed, and whose works comprised all of the misfortunes of the process of collectivization and de-kulakization. To say that it was wholly deliberate is to go against the weight of analysis from history: as Malise Ruthven pointedly notes, histories of the witchcraft mania never suggest that the inquisitors were perpetrating a fraud.²⁷²

A similar hysterical atmosphere of endlessly ramifying atrocity appears to have prevailed at Nuremberg. The Americans had found half a dozen strips of human flesh at Buchenwald ornamented with tattoos.²⁷³ At Nuremberg, this freak discovery became a veritable cottage industry in the concentration camps: according to Dr. Blaha, the Germans made riding breeches, gloves, and ladies' handbags from human flesh at Dachau,²⁷⁴ while the witness Balachowsky assured the court in his testimony that it was used to bind books.²⁷⁵ The Soviets then produced samples of what they claimed was tanned human skin along with a few exhibits that were purportedly human soap.²⁷⁶ It need hardly be said that none of these claims have ever been verified; the Soviet samples have disappeared.²⁷⁷

The prosecution's case at the Trial consisted mostly of reading into the record miscellaneous atrocity claims from affiants who never appeared to testify.²⁷⁸ (The defense was allowed half a day to summarize 300,000 affidavits in rebuttal.)²⁷⁹ With regards to the gas extermination claim, an important document was an affidavit from Höttl, who subsequently evaded prosecution, which explained that secret orders from Himmler had established the extermination program, and that four million had been killed in the concentration camps, six

million Jews in all.²⁸⁰ Later testimony by Wisliceny repeated Höttl's claim, and put the blame for the events on the missing and presumed dead Adolf Eichmann.²⁸¹ No documents, then or now, have ever been advanced that point to the planning, budgeting, or ordering of a gas extermination program.

The Soviet presentation, covering most of February, 1946, was considered excessive by some: after presenting an affidavit that a German commandant had taken Jewish children, thrown them in the air, and then shot them for the entertainment of his small daughter, Justice Parker of the United States would be heard to privately comment: "They have gone too far!"²⁸² When Mesdames Vaillant Couturier and Shmaglevskaya presented fantastic testimonies of the mass gassings at Auschwitz, Justice Biddle of the United States would note privately "I doubt this"²⁸³ and Justice Birkett of the United Kingdom would express private misgivings.²⁸⁴ But it points to the hysterical atmosphere of the time that neither they, nor anyone else, had the courage to publicly dissent and inject some rationality into the proceedings.²⁸⁵

In the summer of 1946, Soviet hubris finally overreached itself when they submitted a 56 page octavo pamphlet that claimed that the Germans had murdered 11,000 Polish officers and had buried them in the Katyn Forest in order to discredit the Soviet Union: under the rules of the Court, the mere submission of such a report would normally be enough to establish it as "fact of common knowledge."²⁸⁶ The depressing thing about the Soviet Katyn report is that it is in fact longer and more substantial than either the Majdanek or Auschwitz reports.²⁸⁷ It is also completely false, since it has been reasonably well known since 1952 and was admitted by the Soviet Union in 1989 that Katyn was a Soviet atrocity.²⁸⁸ The Germans, who finally had evidence to contradict a Soviet claim, tested the assumption, and finally, after some conflict, were able to present their own witnesses to the affair.²⁸⁹ The court made no mention of Katyn in its final judgment, making it very clear that at this trial justice and morality had to defer to political expediency.²⁹⁰

At the end of the Soviet prosecution case, the defense phase of the trial began. About a week after that, Winston Churchill, borrowing a phrase from Joseph Goebbels, spoke of an Iron Curtain descending over the continent of Europe.²⁹¹ Almost simultaneously, a week long trial was held in the Hamburg Curio House against the principals of the firm Tesch and Stabenow, which sold Zyklon B to the Auschwitz camp. That trial, which yielded two death sentences, brought to the fore a number of witnesses -- Bendel, Broad, and Bimko -- whose narratives had already been before the public eye. Just days after the conclusion of that trial, and not far away, the British Field Police seized the former commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss.

8. The Confessions of Rudolf Höss

Höss captured and interrogated by British after Soviets conclude gassing claim presentation. -- Höss' confessions clearly coerced. Analysis of March 16, 1946 and April 5, 1946 affidavits and associated interrogations. -- Content of these affidavits derive from Soviet presentation, and probable other sources. -- Errors in that affidavit.

HÖSS WAS SEIZED on March 13, 1946, on a farm in the British Zone where he had spent the past several months as a common laborer.²⁹² His affidavits deserve particular attention: for many years historians have been content to merely quote extracts from Höss' affidavits, usually the one from April 5, 1946, as proof of the mass gassings. The popularity of this affidavit, also known as PS-3868, is directly related to the fact that it is the only thorough narrative concerning Auschwitz made by Höss that was entered into the trial record at the IMT. In later writings, Höss would claim that he had been severely beaten in the early period of his confinement,²⁹³ and later revelations, largely developed by Robert Faurisson, indicate that he was systematically tortured, largely by sleep deprivation.²⁹⁴

These factors probably explain the incoherence of his very first affidavit of March 16, 1946, which betrays a British influence in its many references to Belsen. The most interesting of these concerns a legend concerning 1,800 Belsen inmates who were sent to Auschwitz, a particularly venerable Holocaust story.²⁹⁵

The April 5, 1946 affidavit is the one most frequently quoted and the one which makes the various gas extermination claims with some semblance of order.²⁹⁶ The claims may be summarized:

1. Mass gassings began in the summer of 1941 and continued until fall 1944.
2. 2,500,000 were gassed, another 500,000 died from other means for a total of 3 million.
3. Höss left Auschwitz in December of 1943, but he kept informed.
4. The "Final Solution" meant the complete extermination of Jews in Europe.
5. Höss was ordered to establish extermination facilities in Auschwitz in June, of 1941, on direct orders from Himmler.

6. Höss visited Belzec, Treblinka, and Wolzek, where carbon monoxide was used.
7. Höss decided to use Zyklon B.
8. "We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped."
9. Gas chambers could hold 2,000 people at a time.
10. Children were invariably exterminated and mothers tried to hide their children.
11. The exterminations were secret, but
12. The stench from the burnings informed everyone for miles around that exterminations were going on.

Offhand, the affidavit seems impressive and authoritative. But on closer analysis it is clear that the document contributes absolutely nothing to what was already known as a "fact of common knowledge" at the time.²⁹⁷ Indeed, it seems remarkable that nearly all prior commentators on Höss fail to recognize the significance of the fact that by the time of his capture the gassing narrative had achieved almost finished form at the bar of the International Military Tribunal.²⁹⁸

In detail: that Himmler directly ordered the exterminations simply repeats the unsubstantiated assertion found the Höttl affidavit of 1945.²⁹⁹ The idea that the exterminations went back to 1941, and that the Final Solution was a code word for the extermination of the Jews, goes back to the Nuremberg testimony of Dieter Wisliceny, Bach dem Zelewski, and Ohlendorf given in January, 1946.³⁰⁰ The emphasis on the fate of the children reflects the testimonies of Shmaglevskaya and Vaillant-Couturier in January and February.³⁰¹ The reference to the stench of the burnings is, as we shall see, a hoary exaggeration that goes back to rumors of the euthanasia campaign in 1941. The claimed number of victims for Höss' tenure -- 2.5 million gassed and 0.5 million dead by other means -- is traceable to the confession of Grabner the previous September. Both reflect the calculations of the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz, which claimed 4 million for the entire period of the camp's operation, which, if it came to 3 million by the end of 1943, implied approximately 1 million in 1944. It is also interesting to note that the range of victims -- 2.5 to 3 million -- as well as other details, coincides with the testimony of Pery Broad at the Tesch and Stabenow trial in Hamburg just weeks before.³⁰² On the other hand, there was no "Wolzek" camp, and none of the three camps Höss claimed to have inspected existed in 1941.

The April 5, 1946 Höss affidavit is simply a confirmation of what was already known.³⁰³ What it contributed was not new, and where it was new it was clearly wrong. It provides no elaboration or explanation for any of the claims which it repeats, in fact, most of Höss' testimony at Nuremberg, ten days later, consisted of making statements that failed to confirm the contents of the affidavit.³⁰⁴ After his testimony on behalf of Kaltenbrunner, his cross-examination by the prosecution consisted merely of nodding or answering "yes" as his affidavit was read into the record.³⁰⁵ The affidavit is ultimately an extension and confirmation of the Canonical Holocaust as represented by the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz. As such it is practically valueless from a historiographical point of view.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Höss' statements speak with great authority to most historians due to his role at the commandant of Auschwitz. Therefore the peculiarities of this affidavit require further study. The best way to do this is by reviewing the previous record of interrogations and affidavits. It soon becomes evident that the affidavit of April 5, 1946 drew not only on the antecedent interrogations but also on the affidavit of March 16. It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at that affidavit.

We recall first of all that according to a number of sources, Höss was beaten and deprived of sleep for perhaps three days while the March 16 affidavit was being prepared.³⁰⁶ This is important to note because it suggests that pressure was being applied to Höss during these initial interrogations. One can easily imagine, for example, that a prominent Nazi might have been beaten upon entering custody. Yet sleep deprivation is something else, it is not a punishment one would inflict on someone in anger or in a rage. Hence there exists a strong suspicion that Höss was deprived of sleep in the course of his interrogation, in order to manipulate his responses.

The affidavit of March 16, 1946, also known as NO-1210, exists only in an English version (although it references an original). After going over details of his early life and prior career as a Nazi, Höss discusses Auschwitz:

I was given the order, by a higher authority the then inspectorate of concentration camps, to transform the former Polish Artillery Barracks near AUSCHWITZ into a quarantine camp for prisoners coming from Poland. After HIMMLER inspected the camp in 1941, I received the order to enlarge the camp and to employ the prisoners in the to be developed agricultural district and to drain the swamps and inundation area of the Weichsel. Furthermore he ordered to put 8-10000 prisoners at

the disposal of the building of the new Buna Works of the I.G. Farben. At the same time he ordered the erection of a POW camp for 100 000 Russian prisoners, near BIRKENAU.

The number of prisoners grew daily in spite of my repeated interventions that billets were not sufficient, and further intakes were sent to me. Epidemic diseases were unavoidable because medical provisions were inadequate. The death rate rose accordingly. As prisoners were not buried, crematoriums had to be installed.

In 1941 the first intakes of Jews came from Slovakia and Upper Silesia. People unfit to work were gassed in a room at the crematorium in accordance with an order which HIMMLER gave to me personally.

I was ordered to see HIMMLER in BERLIN in June 1941 and he told me, approximately, the following:- The Fuehrer ordered the solution of the Jewish Question in Europe. A few so-called Vernichtungslager are existing in the General Government (BELZEK near RAVA RUSKA East Poland Tublinka near MALINA on the river Bug, and WOLZEK near Lublin).³⁰⁷

The first thing we notice upon reviewing this excerpt is that Höss is providing two different narratives. According to the first two paragraphs, in 1941 Himmler visited Auschwitz in order to direct the expansion of the camp (which would have meant Birkenau) with a view to establishing a quarantine camp. The establishment of a quarantine camp in turn implies a function similar to the disinfection center established at Auschwitz twenty years earlier by the Americans, while the quarantine itself implies the later transfer of prisoners into Germany for labor purposes. The increased transports and the increasing epidemics (which presumably would have meant 1942) accords with all sources, and provides a ready explanation for the construction of the crematoriums which were planned in the summer of 1942 and were completed in the spring of 1943.

On the other hand, the very next two paragraphs tell a completely different story, albeit one more or less consistent with the affidavit of April 5. According to this one, Höss was called to Berlin in June 1941 for a meeting with Himmler, and was told to arrange for the extermination of the Jews. For this reason, he conducted a tour of the other extermination camps in 1942, yet still back in this 1941 meeting

I had to make the preparations at once. He [Himmler]

wanted the exact construction plans in accordance with this instruction in four weeks.³⁰⁸

In other words, from June 1941, Höss was now to be constructing crematoriums with gas chambers for the purpose of exterminating the Jewish people.

Before proceeding with a comparison of these two narratives there are three points of detail to establish. The first is the date of Höss' tour of the other extermination camps. This came up in the interrogation of April 3, 1946 in the morning session (page 7):

Q. To come back to the facts about your trip to Treblinka. If I understand you correctly, you told me the other day that you visited Treblinka in 1941.

A. Yes.

Q. And in another statement by you, made at another place, you said you visited Treblinka in 1942. Which year is correct?

A. 1941 is correct. If I said 1942, it was incorrect.³⁰⁹

The second point of detail concerns the timing of the order Höss claimed to receive from Himmler. This was addressed during the first interrogation of April 1, 1946 (page 18-19):

Q. But you said you received the order from the Reichsfuehrer SS in person.

A. Yes.

Q. About July, 1941? Where did you see him?

A. I was ordered to him in Berlin.

Q. Are you sure it was after the Russian campaign had started.

A. No, it was before the Russian campaign had started.

Q. Then it couldn't have been in July.

A. I cannot remember the exact month, but I know it was before the date that the Russian campaign was launched.³¹⁰

The third and final point of detail concerns the mysterious "Wolzek" camp, described as "near Lublin" on March 16 and therefore clearly a garbling of "Majdanek" which was actually the name of the suburb of Lublin where the camp was situated. This came up in the interrogation of April 4, 1946 in the afternoon session (page 5), during the following exchange:

Q. Did the camps in the East come under the Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps?

A. Only those that I mentioned in the Baltic countries, as those labor camps belonging to the Riga territory, and Lublin, Warsaw, and Krakow, which I mentioned before.

Q. How about Treblinka, Wolzek, and Belzek?

A. They came under the commander of the Security Police and Higher SS and Police Leader of Krakow.

Therefore, with respect to the second narrative of the March 16, 1946 affidavit we can say that there is no doubt that Höss claimed his meeting with Himmler took place in June, 1941, that he inspected the other extermination camps at that time, and that he prepared plans for gas chambers and crematoriums within a few weeks of that meeting: all of these claims are objectively false. The reference to "Wolzek" is of importance mainly because its mention by the American interrogator establishes that the March 16, 1946 affidavit was used as the basis for these interrogations as well as for the drafting of the April 5, 1946 affidavit.

At this point we have to exercise some judgment, and attempt to reconstruct the sequence of events. In the first two paragraphs of his March 16 description of events at Auschwitz, Höss sets forth a narrative that corresponds with all currently known facts about the camp. In other words, the account is objectively true; the only questionable aspect concerns the rationale behind the construction of the crematoriums. On the other hand, in the second two paragraphs Höss provides a narrative that cannot possibly be true, but which accords with conventional wisdom in a general sense in terms of crematorium construction and Jewish exterminations. It is doubtful if Höss, unbidden, would have told two completely different stories one right after the other. We surmise therefore that Höss was pressured, probably by sleep deprivation, at some point between the two narratives.

Now the question concerns the order of the stories. We can imagine a situation where Höss might have been pressured after the first narrative in order to

produce the second one, but it is not believable that Höss would have been pressured to produce the first one after freely offering the second. The reason should be obvious: the first narrative provides an innocuous rationale both for the construction of Birkenau as well as the crematoriums, and furthermore contradicts the second narrative. It follows therefore that the first narrative was the original narrative that Höss offered.

But was that initial narrative true? We know that it does not contradict our current knowledge about the camp, except, again, with regard to a possibly self-serving explanation for constructing the crematoriums. But the real point is not the objective truth of the initial narrative as much as the fact that the apparent pressure subsequently applied tells us that his interrogators did not believe it. They were, however, apparently satisfied with the second narrative, including other details which Höss offered farther on, including such statements as

I imagine about 3,000,000 people were put to death, about 2,500,000 were put through the gas-chambers. Those numbers are officially put down and personal experiences also by Obersturmbannfuehrer EICHMANN in a report to the specialist on Jews in the RSHA to be passed on to HIMMLER. Those people were mostly Jews. I personally remember during my time as Camp Commandant at Auschwitz the order from the Gestapo to gas 70,000 Russian Prisoners of war which I did. The highest number of prisoners put through the gas-chambers at AUSCHWITZ was 10,000 in one day. The limit of what the installations could do. I also remember the big transports which arrived: 90,000 from Slovakia, 85,000 from Greece, 110,000 from France, 20,000 from Belgium, 90,000 from Holland, 400,000 from Hungary, 250,000 from Poland and Upper Silesia and 100,000 from Germany and Theresienstadt.³¹¹

Here we have another implicit contradiction: first, the claim that three million were put to death, of which 2.5 million were gassed, and that they were "mostly Jews" but that at the same time only slightly over one million Jews "arrived" at the camp. As already noted, the 2.5-3 million range is false, and was never supported by any written document. But the distribution of the Jewish transports is remarkably consistent with numbers Höss would come back to again and again, and with the exception of the Hungarian and Polish numbers, accords more or less with universally accepted calculations. At this point, we will simply note that Höss references the "arrival" of these Jews but not their deaths.

The final question we have to deal with here is the state of mind of his

interrogators. If the first narrative is correct, and the second narrative false, why would his interrogators allow him to make what in retrospect are such obvious errors? The simplest explanation is that his interrogators did not recognize the errors as such, which indicates that they were acting more or less in good faith, but under a cloud of ignorance. Interrogating the commandant of Auschwitz, with a general sense of what had happened, based on such documents as the WRB Report, the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz, and the ongoing International Military Tribunal, the interrogators simply led the interrogation -- and the sleep deprivation -- in order to get him to provide a version of events that would correspond not so much with what they knew, but what they felt would be the truth.

The erroneous details of the March 16, 1946 affidavit loom larger when we realize that all of the interrogations leading up to the preparation of the April 5 affidavit are based on it, in an almost literal page by page sequence. We also find, in reviewing those early April interrogations, that Höss coolly repeats again and again the same false statements from the prior affidavit -- sometimes, admittedly, with some confusion, which usually led to some prompting by the Americans as to where he should be going with his answers.

But the interrelationship of the materials is very important. Reading the interrogations of April 1-4, 1946 in isolation, one is generally impressed with the manner in which Höss frankly describes the development of an extermination program. He must be telling the truth. On the other hand, the researcher is likely to be crestfallen as Höss repeats other statements that couldn't possibly be true. He must, for some reason, be lying. It is only after comparing the various statements that one begins to understand that by April, 1946 Höss was mechanically repeating the story elicited from him in March, and that narrative structure, including the 1941 extermination order, and the visits to non-existent camps, would be a feature of all subsequent affidavits.

Within a few weeks, Höss was transferred to Poland, where he was extensively interrogated prior to hearings in Krakow in December 1946.³¹² A number of affidavits were prepared in November, and these, stitched together with the memoirs he penciled in early 1947, have frequently been issued as his "Autobiography."³¹³ A feature of one of these affidavits, "The Final Solution of the Jewish Question" contains elements that differ from the previous affidavits but retains most of the same errors. The main feature of this affidavit is that Höss distanced himself from the figure of 2.5-3 million victims, which he blamed on Eichmann and British torture, while repeating the distribution by nationality of about one million Jewish arrivals.³¹⁴

It is frequently stated that the "Autobiography" was composed in its entirety after Höss was sentenced to death, so that he would have had no reason to lie or shade the truth.³¹⁵ This does not appear to be accurate. Whatever the determination of the Krakow hearings, Höss was not put on trial until March 11 of 1947, the trial lasting for almost three weeks.³¹⁶ At his trial, Höss admitted to all charges and directed all of his questions to witnesses with a view to bringing down the total number of victims, cited in the indictment as "about 300,000 camp registered inmates", "about 4,000,000 people mainly Jews brought to the camp from different European countries to be killed upon their arrival" and twelve thousand Soviet POWs.³¹⁷ On the other hand, Höss did contradict his November, 1946 affidavit in court by claiming that the total killed was 2.5 million.³¹⁸ It appears that Höss' questioning had some effect: in its verdict, the court determined that "an undetermined number of people, at least 2,500,000, mainly Jews" were murdered.³¹⁹

Höss was sentenced to death on April 2, 1947, by the Supreme National Tribunal of Poland, just two weeks before he was hanged, and two months after his memoirs had been completed.³²⁰ The memoirs themselves are a model of incoherence and contradiction, containing a number of demonstrable untruths, as for example the reference to the secret files recording the "several millions" of Germans who were killed in the Anglo-American bombing campaign.³²¹ Nevertheless the memoirs, or more precisely the November affidavit on the "Final Solution" attached to them to form the "Autobiography", remain the most frequently cited source for the reality of the gassing claim,³²² although what actually happens is that the mere existence of these writings is used to give retroactive authority to the problematic April 5, 1946 affidavit, which, as we have seen, leads back to the March 16, 1946 affidavit, which contained numerous false statements extracted under torture.

9. Interpreting Documents and the Postwar Literature

Quality of documents offered at Nuremberg. -- Documents offered as indicative of gassing actually indicate something else. -- The Wetzel-Lohse correspondence. -- The Diary of Dr. Kremer. -- Post-war literature emerging in this period: Olga Lengyel, Miklos Nyiszli. -- Clear influence of claims in Soviet report. -- Inaccuracy of details and unreliability of descriptions. The main conduit for cultural awareness of the gassing claim. -- The absence of evidence is considered the proof of the gassing claim: the conspiratorial nature of the gassing claim.

A DISCUSSION of Höss' various confessions, and particularly those in the spring of 1946, leads naturally to the quality and context of the documentary evidence offered at the Nuremberg Trials.³²³ Thousands of documents were submitted; but the documents were selected and submitted with a view to convict, not to understand. AJP TAYLOR recognized this years ago.³²⁴

The evidence of which there is too much is that collected for the trials of war-criminals in Nuremberg. Though these documents look imposing in their endless volumes, they are dangerous material for a historian to use. They were collected, hastily and almost at random, as a basis for lawyer's briefs. This is not how a historian would proceed. The lawyer aims to make a case; the historian wishes to understand a situation. The evidence which convinces lawyers often fails to satisfy us; our methods seem singularly imprecise to them. But even lawyers must now have qualms about the evidence at Nuremberg. The documents were chosen not to demonstrate the war-guilt of the men on trial, but to conceal that of the prosecuting Powers. [...] The verdict preceded the tribunal; and the documents were brought in to sustain a conclusion which had already been settled. Of course the documents are genuine. But they are "loaded"; and anyone who relies on them finds it almost impossible to escape from the load with which they are charged.

It is advisable therefore to pause momentarily and look at some of the documents that were presented as proof of exterminations, and particularly gas exterminations.

It is surprising to note that it appears no documents referencing gas chambers were entered into the record of the International Military Tribunal, if we exclude affidavits and testimony.³²⁵ Most of the few documents that we have

were recorded by the Nuremberg Military Tribunal, an American court that ran from 1946 to 1949, and which comprised 12 cases against the Nazi leadership. The most important of these, in terms of the gassing claim, was Case #4, the "Concentration Camp Case" which occupied most of 1947. Of the seven hundred documents entered by the prosecution, only four can be interpreted as referencing gas chambers: NO-4473, the so-called "*Vergasungskeller*" letter, NO-4465, a letter referencing "three gas chambers" specified as "*gasdichte Türme*", and NO-4344 and 4345, which references the construction of "extermination chambers" specified as "*Entwesungskammern*" at the concentration camp of Gross-Rosen.³²⁶

Two of these documents are definite mistranslations, and the third is quite possibly so. As we have seen, "*Entwesungskammern*" were standard delousing and disinfestation chambers, and had nothing to do with extermination gas chambers. Similarly, "*gasdichte Türme*" are better translated as "gastight turrets" or "towers" but in any case cannot be associated with "gas chambers." Finally, as we have seen, "*vergasen*" (to gas) was widely used as a synonym for "*begasen*" (to fumigate) -- even in Auschwitz documents³²⁷ -- and has no necessary relationship to extermination gassing. The fact that at least two of these documents were clearly misused goes far to prove the argument that in the immediate postwar period the gassing claim was buttressed by the ignorant misuse of German documents taken completely out of context.

Probably for this reason, present day arguments in favor of the mass gassing claim rarely depend on such obvious mistakes, but rather on a second order of documentation that suggests, without directly attesting, to the existence of mass gassing.³²⁸

One example concerns a draft memo, the so-called Wetzel-Lohse correspondence, concerning conditions around Riga, and entered into the Nuremberg Military Tribunal as NO-365. The draft letter mentions putting large numbers of Jews into forced labor, and discusses the need for building the necessary "*Unterkünfte*" with the appropriate "*vergasungsapparate*".³²⁹ In the context of the disinfection literature, however, this is clearly a reference to a Labor Service hut that would be equipped with the standard *Entwesungskammern* for delousing clothing.³³⁰ Yet this same document has been occasionally put forth as evidence of a homicidal gassing program, even though there is no material or documentary support for that interpretation, and even though no one claims today that there were any homicidal gas chambers in Riga.³³¹

Another example concerns the Diary of Dr. Kremer, who arrived at Auschwitz at the beginning of September 1942.³³² The Diary makes one reference to Zyklon B, in the unambiguous context of a barracks fumigation ("*vergasung*

eines Blocks") and then goes on to record the arrival of convoy after convoy of Western Jews arriving at the camp at a time when typhus is ravaging the camp and killing thousands. Yet this document, unambiguous on its face, is constantly advanced as proof of a mass gas extermination campaign. Two quotes are usually given:³³³

September 5, 1942. In the morning attended a Sonderaktion from the women's concentration camp (Muslims); the most dreadful of horrors. Hschf. Thilo -- army doctor -- was right when he said to me that this was the anus mundi. In the evening towards 8:00 attended another Sonderaktion from Holland. Because of the special rations they get of a fifth of a liter of schnapps, 5 cigarettes, 100 g salami and bread, the men all clamor to take part in such actions. [...]

October 18, 1942. Attended 11th Sonderaktion (Dutch) in cold wet weather this morning, Sunday. Horrible scenes with three women who begged us for their bare lives.³³⁴

It is conceivable that Kremer is describing here selections for hospitalization, disinfection, or even euthanasia.³³⁵ But it is extremely unlikely that a gassing process is being described. For example, the *Sonderaktionen* (special actions) appear to be taking place outside, and there is a rush of SS men who wish to participate for extra rations. Yet, according to Pery Broad's writing, this is precisely the description of the rewards given to the SS men for helping in the processing of a new transport, not mass murder and not gas exterminations.³³⁶ Moreover, gassings would not take place outside nor would they require large participation -- the role of the SS in the gassings was supposed to have been limited to one or two individuals throwing the cans of Zyklon down some kind of chute.³³⁷

Nor are the terrified Dutch women determinative of mass murder. We know that Thomas Mann had broadcast rumors of gassings (specifically, train gassings) on the 27th of September.³³⁸ We further know that Anne Frank was aware of such gassing rumors from the "English radio" in Holland on the 9th of October.³³⁹ Other European Jews, recalling the war years, also regularly listened to the BBC.³⁴⁰ So we have every reason to believe that many of these Dutch deportees were at least aware of these kinds of rumors, and, regardless of the eventual fate of these people, since the Dutch Jews lost many lives in the camp system, there is a valid reason for suspecting that the reaction of the Dutch women was, in this particular instance, one of panic and hysteria. This is further borne out by the fact that Dr. Kremer told his interrogators where the diary was

after the war was over, believing that its contents would exonerate him.³⁴¹

Such examples as these could be multiplied many times over, although not that many times, because the documentary basis for the gassing claim is so thin. The simple fact remains that most of the documents generated at Nuremberg that were said to apply to mass gas extermination are simple references to known German delousing and disinfection procedures, or else documents that are benign onto which a gassing interpretation has been placed. It is noteworthy that those who use these documents as a means of proving the mass gassing claim tend to give short shrift either to the disinfection use of Zyklon B, German disinfection procedures in general, or the rampant epidemics that probably killed hundreds of thousands in the camps.³⁴²

The same situation pertains to documents that claim to prove the extermination program *per se*. The vast majority of these involve the substitution of terms. In other words, the Germans had a policy of deporting Jews to Eastern Europe (*Evakuierung zu dem Ost, umsiedlung*), drawing off the able-bodied for labor, or the unfit for concentration in ghettos through special actions (*Sonderaktionen*) where selections (*Selektionen*) were made, by way of achieving a final solution (*Endlösung*) to the Jewish problem in Europe.³⁴³ But according to the gas extermination interpretation, following on the assertions of Höttl and Wisliceny, all of these terms were simply code words for gas extermination.

The problem is that this interpretation is undercut by many other documents, for example, by the following extract from the summer of 1942, when the "Final Solution" had been in effect for almost a year:

In order to get initial control over the Jews, regardless of whatever measures may be taken later, Jewish Councils of Elders have been appointed which are responsible to the Security Police and Security Service for the conduct of their fellow Jews (*Rassengenossen*). Moreover, the registration and concentration of the Jews in ghettos have been started.... With these measures, the foundations for the Final Solution of the Jewish Problem -- planned for a later time -- have been laid in the territory of Byelorussia (*Weissruthenien*)³⁴⁴

As well as by Hitler's own words in the fall of 1941:

From the rostrum of the Reichstag, I prophesied [in 1939] to Jewry that, in the event of the war's proving inevitable, the Jew would disappear from Europe. That race of criminals has on its conscience the million dead of the First World War and now

already hundreds of thousands more. Let nobody tell me that all the same we can't park them in the marshy parts of Russia! Who's worrying about our troops? It's not a bad idea, by the way, that public rumor attributes to us a plan to exterminate the Jews. Terror is a salutary thing.³⁴⁵

Hitler's interlocutors at this particular table-talk were Himmler and Heydrich: therefore, to read this text as something other than what it says one would have Hitler dissembling to the two main architects of his anti-Jewish policy.³⁴⁶ It is also worth pointing out that the "marshy parts of Russia" is a reference to Byelorussia (Belarus).

Finally the interpretation of Final Solution as a mass murder policy is undercut by a document shown by David Irving in his most recent book on Nuremberg, in which *Staatsekretär* Franz Schlegelberg wrote, in the spring of 1942, that Dr. Hans Lammers had phoned him, telling him that Hitler had repeatedly said that the Final Solution was to be postponed until after the war. The document was missing for many years.³⁴⁷

Therefore, to maintain that these documents pertain to an extermination plan, one must argue that sometimes these words meant extermination, and sometimes they did not. The reader is left to ponder how the German bureaucracy would ever have been able to function under such conditions, if such was the case.

Beginning in 1946, and therefore concurrent with the introduction of these documents at the International Military Tribunal, a number of personal eyewitness accounts were published for mass circulation. These included, among others, Olga Lengyel's *I Survived Hitler's Ovens*, and Miklos Nyiszli's *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*.³⁴⁸

It seems clear when reviewing this literature that it was written in a deliberately sensational style meant to appeal to the lowest common denominator in reading tastes. Lengyel's book, for example, is full of lurid gossip about Irma Grese, her supposed affair with the notorious Dr. Mengerle (sic!), grotesque medical experiments, and lesbian affairs among the women inmates.³⁴⁹ Nyiszli is an endless series of hard to believe mass murders, by various means.³⁵⁰ On the other hand, Nyiszli is considered an important source for all Holocaust historians, even though, by the time his book achieved prominence in the West in 1953, he was already dead and therefore incapable of being cross-examined.³⁵¹

The books, which, incidentally, were both written by Hungarian physicians, are clearly derivative of the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz. This is made clear not only by the number of victims (Nyiszli cites 4

million, Lengyel cites 1.4 million in the summer of 1944, that is, on the Soviet scale),³⁵² but also by the general arrangement of gas chambers and crematoriums, the precise arrangement of the burning pits,³⁵³ and the numerous descriptions of medical experiments. In fact, when read in conjunction with the Soviet report these two books read almost like novelizations of that document. But it is precisely where the Soviets are silent in their report, that is, on the actual layout and carrying out of the gassing process, that Drs. Lengyel and Nyiszli make mistakes. Thus Dr. Nyiszli makes a number of observations about the size of the crematoriums and gas chambers that are clearly wrong,³⁵⁴ while Dr. Lengyel writes that the gas crystals were introduced from a trapdoor on top of the chamber, and that a glass porthole had been fitted into the trap for observing the operation, which contradicts the current version.³⁵⁵

Such sensational and inaccurate studies are doubtless the most popular medium whereby knowledge of the mass gassing claim has been disseminated. But as we have seen these treatments are heavily indebted to, if they are not completely derived from, the Canonical Holocaust of the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz and other camps. That decreases their historical value greatly.

But in fact what has happened over time is that the exaggerated claims in these sensationalist efforts have multiplied and acquired an authority almost equal to that of the Nuremberg court itself, for the simple reason that, having accepted the claim of mass gassing without adequate documentary or material support, we are in no position to deny the claim of streams of melted human fat gathered from the runoff of burning corpses, which is then either made into soap or ladled back onto the pyre to expedite the burning.³⁵⁶

In the fall of 1946, the International Military Tribunal gave its final verdict, and endorsed both the gassing claim and the soap making claim.³⁵⁷ Having thus officially passed into the historical record, any further proof would have been considered superfluous. But the problem, as we have seen so far, is that little in the way of proof was offered at Nuremberg.

The most troubling aspect of the mass gassing claim is not that it was made on the basis of slender or non-existent evidence. It is rather that nothing has been produced over the past 50 years that supports the claim. In the past several years numerous archives have been opened to study, and the British government has released many of its ULTRA decrypts for scholarly use along with the transcripts of conversations among detained Germans that were secretly recorded.³⁵⁸ The tapes and decrypts indicate a knowledge of mass shootings as far back as the summer of 1941, as well as the confessions of SS officers who took

part in such procedures, as well as secret concentration camp radio traffic, including that of Auschwitz, but there is nothing in any of these materials about gassing.

This should represent a serious problem for historians. To maintain the gas extermination claim, purely on the basis of the documentation at Nuremberg, is to also maintain that it was carried out with such stealth and cunning that no record was ever made, not even in secret radio traffic or eavesdropped conversations. Because of the broad currency of the gassing claim, it is sometimes said that to deny it is to accuse the Jewish people of a grand conspiracy to create it. But the truth would seem to be the other way around: given the lack of evidence, it is those who assert that mass gassings took place who are in the position of having to explain why the evidence does not exist. They are the ones who end up asserting the existence of a grand conspiracy.

10. Retrofitting the Euthanasia Campaign

Euthanasia program begins 1939, evidence indicates lethal injections were used. -- German people began to rumor poison gas and death ray usage because the bodies were cremated, by 1940. -- Strong opposition of German people. -- In summer, 1946, narratives of euthanasia killings emerge, these use the same materials (Double-doored *Apparate*) and procedure for the now familiar shower-gas-burning sequence. -- Shower element does not fit the euthanasia procedure. - - Confusion of deceptions. -- Concept transference, compare the First World War. -- Conclusion is that Euthanasia gassing narratives derived from extermination gassing narratives, but rumors of gas usage came first. -- Demonstrated German fear of poison gas and cremation.

SO FAR WE HAVE SEEN that through the spring of 1946 the gassing claim continued to develop, acquiring weight from authoritative reports and the judicial notice of the court, and acquiring immediacy and broad acceptance through the medium of popular paperbacks, graphic photos and newsreel footage. After two years, the claim had fastened on the now-familiar shower-gas-burning sequence, and beginning in the summer of 1944 that claim was imposed upon the physical facts of the camps. By the summer of 1946, the mass gassing claim, as a "fact of common knowledge" had been saturating popular consciousness for four years, even though up to this point, as we have seen, no direct material or documentary evidence had been offered in its support. The next development, starting in July, 1946, was remarkable: the gassing claim, and specifically the shower-gas-burning sequence, was now extended to the time period before the spring of 1942, and in particular to the National Socialist euthanasia program.

That there was a euthanasia campaign, beginning in the fall of 1939, is not in dispute.³⁵⁹ The program was enacted by a secret Hitler decree and so the nature and the processes of the program were never officially discussed. The program was meant to provide for the mercy killing of the insane, and others who suffered severe mental and physical handicaps, or were near death. The program also provided for the euthanizing of children with severe disabilities.³⁶⁰ The severe mental and/or physical limitations of the victims is something that should be kept in mind, because of the euthanasia scenarios that would emerge beginning in the fall of 1946.³⁶¹

The euthanasia program generated many rumors which indicated the strong opposition of the German people. In December 1941, Thomas Mann claimed over the BBC that 10,000 individuals had already been killed in the euthanasia program with poison gas.³⁶² Before that, there had been widespread rumors in 1941, that elicited strong comments objecting to the program by

Catholic clerics. The most famous of these was the sermon by Cardinal Count von Galen of Munster, on August 3, 1941, which explicitly discussed the claims that the mentally handicapped were being put to death and which vigorously condemned the killings.³⁶³ No method of execution was discussed; but what had registered in the minds of the people was the fact that the deceased were in all cases cremated: this alone gave rise to suspicions.³⁶⁴

Ten days later the Bishop of Limberg wrote a letter to the Reich Minister of Justice which demonstrated the extent to which the rumors had now filtered down even to children at play, once again emphasizing the extent to which cremation was the source of rumors:

Buses arrive at Hadamar several times a week with a large number of these victims, school children know these vehicles and say: "Here comes the murder wagon." After the arrival of such vehicles the citizens of Hadamar see the smoke coming from the chimney and upset by constant thoughts about the poor victims especially when, depending on the direction of the wind, they have to put up with the revolting smell. The consequence of the principles being practiced here is that children, when quarreling with one another make remarks like: "You are thick, you'll be put in the oven in Hadamar."³⁶⁵

It should be noted in passing that the references to the stench and smoke from the cremations are inaccurate exaggerations, but we will have more to say about cremation shortly.³⁶⁶

What we have then, as early as 1941, are rumors concerning the euthanasia program which have fastened on the cremation or burning element of the usual sequence. Going even farther back, we find rumors from 1940 that help to round out the picture. William Shirer's Berlin Diary was published in June of 1941, and, as a note for November 25, 1940, we find the following entry:

Of late some of my spies in the provinces have called my attention to some rather peculiar death notices in the newspapers.
[...]

I am also informed that the relatives of the unfortunate victims, when they get the ashes back -- they are never given the bodies -- receive a stern warning from the secret police not to demand explanations and to 'spread false rumors.' [...]

No wonder that to Germans used to reading between the

lines of their heavily censored newspapers, these [death] notices have sounded highly suspicious.[....] And why are the bodies cremated first and the relatives told of the deaths later? Why are they cremated at all? Why aren't the bodies shipped home, as is usually done?

A few days later, I saw the form letter which the families of the victims receive. It reads: 'We regret to inform you that your ---, who was recently transferred to our institution by ministerial order, unexpectedly died on --- of ---. All our medical efforts were unfortunately without avail. [....]

Because of the danger of contagion existing here, we were forced by the order of the police to have the deceased cremated at once."

This is hardly a reassuring letter [...] and some of them, upon its receipt, have journeyed down to the lonely castle of Grafeneck [...] They have found the castle guarded by black-coated SS men who denied them entrance. Newly painted signs on all roads and paths leading into the desolate grounds warned: "*Seuchengefahr!*" (Keep Away! -- Danger of Pestilence!)..

[...]

What is still unclear to me is the motive for these murders. Germans themselves advance three:

1. That they are carried out to save food.
2. That they are being done for the purpose of experimenting with new poison gases and death rays.
3. That they are simply the result of the extreme Nazis deciding to carry out their eugenic and sociological ideas.

The first motive is obviously absurd, since the death of 100,000 persons will not save much food for a nation of 80 million. Besides, there is no acute food shortage in Germany. The second motive is possible, though I doubt it. Poison gases may have been used in putting these unfortunates out of the way, but if so, the experimentation was only incidental. Many Germans I have talked to think that some new gas which disfigures the body has been used, and that this is the reason why the remains of the

victims have been cremated. But I can get no real evidence of this.
[...]³⁶⁷

Therefore no later than the fall of 1940 we have a full range of speculative rumor concerning the euthanasia program. There are associations with cremation, which is considered incriminating; the association with cremation has in turn led to rumors about death administered by poison gas and death rays which disfigure the victims.³⁶⁸ There are associations with disease control: first, the justification given by the government for the rapid cremations, and second, the quarantine signs that Shirer reports. So already we have in this period identified the burning element of the familiar sequence, which has in turn generated the gassing element. What we appear to be missing is the showering element, although we do have an association with the dread of disease and disease control measures.

Beginning with the affidavits of Konrad Morgen in July of 1946, which were intended to absolve the SS of responsibility for the mass extermination gassings, we have an attempt to link the latter procedures to the prior rumors of euthanasia gassings.³⁶⁹ The proof offered then, and which has been considered sufficient since, consisted not of direct material or physical evidence, but rather post-war testimonies.³⁷⁰

The numbers arriving varied between 40 and 150. First, they were taken to the undressing room. There they -- men and women in different sections -- had to undress or they were undressed. Their clothes and luggage were put in a pile, labeled, registered, and numbered. The people who had undressed then went along a passage into the so-called reception room. [...] Then the people were led [...] through a second exit back into the reception room and from there through a steel door into the gas chamber. The gas chamber had a very bare interior. It had a wooden floor and there were wooden benches in the chamber. Later, the floor was concreted and finally it and the walls were tiled. The ceiling and other parts of the walls were painted with oil. The whole room was designed to give the impression that it was a bathroom. Three showers were fixed in the ceiling. The room was aired by ventilators. A window in the gas chamber was covered with a grill. A second steel door led into the room where the gassing apparatus was installed. [...] The steel doors were shut and the doctor on duty fed the gas into the gas chamber. After a short time the people in the gas chamber were dead. After around an hour and a half, the gas chamber was ventilated. At this point, we burners had to start work. Before I deal with that I would like to

make a few more statements about the feeding of the gas into the gas chamber. Next to the gas chamber was a small room in which there were a number of steel canisters. I cannot say what kind of gas was in these canisters or where it came from. The contents of these canisters was fed through a rubber pipe into a steel pipe. On the canisters there was a pressure gauge. When the gas chamber was full, the doctor went to the canisters, opened the tap, and the gas poured through a 15-20 mm pipe into the gas chamber. As I have stated previously, between the gas chamber and the gas canister room there was a steel door. A third door led from the gas chamber into the yard. These doors had a brick surround and there was a peephole into the gas chamber. Through this peephole one could see what went on in the gas chamber.

The remarkable thing about this testimony, generated in 1946 or thereafter, is that it so closely parallels the kind of procedure said to have taken place according to the Canonical Holocaust. Hence, we have the arrival of a bus or train of people. They are separated by sex. They are led to undressing rooms where their belongings are sorted and registered. Then they are led into a shower, where they are gassed. Finally, they are burned. The other remarkable thing about this testimony is that its physical description strongly suggests the disinfection chamber arrangement at Majdanek: the steel doors with peepholes, the small pipe that leads to nowhere, but which is here explained as connected by rubber tubing to carbon monoxide in tanks,³⁷¹ the two steel doors with peepholes to the gas chamber, one of which leads to the outside, but for no apparent reason, and the brick facing on the concreted structure.

There are two fundamental problems with such testimony: one is that it simply repeats the by-then universally known shower-gas-burning sequence. Second, the concept behind the extermination procedure makes no logical sense.

Let's just assume for the moment that the shower-gas-burning sequence had actually been developed for the extermination of people being deported to the East. There would be some logic to the procedure, but only to this extent: some means would have been needed to deceive the victims so that they could be concentrated into a small enclosed space, and the regulation delousing procedure might theoretically provide cover for this deception.³⁷² But such a procedure would have been purposeless for the euthanasia victims, since many were incapable of any rational thinking and would hardly require such subterfuge, let alone the fact that many could probably not even stand, to say nothing of standing in a camouflaged shower room waiting to be gassed.

There is a confusion of deceptions here: the deception to get people into the gas chambers is not the same as the deception whereby people are gassed with carbon monoxide so that they die painlessly and without premonition.³⁷³ The trappings of a shower would be irrelevant to bring about the deceptive death by CO to a euthanasia victim. Moreover, there has never been any testimony that the extermination gassing victims did not know that they were being killed.

As a result the euthanasia eyewitnesses contradict each other: on the one hand we are told that the victims would go into the shower facility, and then within a few moments would go lie down on the benches where they would pass into a lethal sleep unawares,³⁷⁴ while others assure us that the death agony would take 10 minutes or more and would be accompanied by horrible scenes.³⁷⁵ And this leads to another confusion: euthanasia victims in Germany were not passing through zones where diseases were endemic, indeed, in most cases they were simply being transported from asylums or sanitariums. A delousing procedure would not be necessary, so, apparently for this and for other reasons the showers were now to be equipped with benches: in other words, in the testimonial descriptions, the shower rooms were transformed into steam baths. But what is the purpose of showerheads in a steambath?

Nevertheless, to the Allies prosecuting the Doctor's Trial it must have made sense. After all, it was known by virtue of the International Military Tribunal's judicial notice that millions of people in Eastern Europe had been exterminated by the shower-gas-burning sequence, and it was further alleged that thousands had been gassed and burned in the euthanasia program. Therefore it must have seemed obvious to the Allies that the euthanasia program would have employed the shower element and all that was necessary was to get the defendants -- on trial for their lives -- to confess. This led to one of the strangest exchanges in the Nuremberg Trials, during the questioning of Dr. Viktor Brack:

Question: And these people thought that they were going to take a shower bath?

Brack: If any of them had any power of reasoning, they had no doubt thought that.

Question: Well, now, were they taken into the shower rooms with their clothes on or were they nude?

Brack: No. They were nude.

Question: In every case?

Brack: Whenever I saw them, yes.³⁷⁶

The continuation of Brack's testimony, involving the close questioning by the presiding judge, was even more opaque and evasive:

Question: Now, of what materials were these gas chambers built? Were they movable gas chambers, very much like the low-pressure chambers that Professor Dr. Ruff talked about, or were they something that was built permanently into the camp or installation?

Brack: No special gas chamber was built. A room suitable in the hospital was used; a room of necessity attached to the reception ward and to the room where the insane persons were kept. This room was made into a gas chamber. It was sealed, given special doors and windows, and then a few meters of gas piping were laid, or some kind of piping with holes in it. Outside this room there was a container, a compressed gas container with the necessary apparatus, that is, pressure gauge, etc.

Question: Now what department had the responsibility for constructing or building these gas chambers, what department of the Party or of the government?

Brack: No office of the Party. I don't understand the question.

Question: Somebody had to build these chambers. Who gave the orders and who had the responsibility of building them, was that your department?

Brack: I assume the orders were given by the head of the institution, but I don't know who actually did give the orders.

Question: In other words, were these chambers not built according to some specifications, plans and specifications?

Brack: I can't imagine that, every chamber was different. I saw several of them.

Question: Do you know what department gave the order for having the numbers built? Was that your department under Bouhler?

Brack: No. It was Bouhler himself.

Question: And he gave the order to the various heads of institutions to install this chamber, is that correct?

Question: Now, how would the heads of each of these institutions know how to install a gas chamber unless there were certain plans and specifications given to them?

Brack: I never saw any such plan. I don't know of any.

Question: Would you know how to go out and build a gas chamber unless some engineer or planner had told you? Certainly I wouldn't.

Brack: I don't know whether I would either. Presumably he called in an engineer.

Question: That's what I'm trying to say. What engineer or group of engineers was responsible for seeing that these gas chambers were built so that they would do the job they were supposed to do?

Brack: There was certainly no group of engineers. I presume there was somebody at the institutions who had enough technical ability to do it. I don't know.

Question: Then, so far as you know, someone at one of these institutions would be told by Bouhler to construct a gas chamber and he would call the head of the institution then would call on someone, you don't know whom, to go out and build the chamber. Is that correct?

Brack: That is how I imagine it.

Question: Well, wouldn't it make a considerable difference whether the chamber was to be constructed for euthanasia by carbon monoxide or by some other means? Wouldn't there have to be some technical information available to the head of the institution so that he could give directions to his mechanic to build the thing to do the thing it was supposed to do?

Brack: I must say honestly I really don't know anything about that. I can't judge.

Question: Do you know whether or not any department of the government, under Bouhler, or under Brandt, or under anybody else, was responsible for seeing that the gas apparatus was installed properly?

The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes

Brack: I don't know, but I don't believe so because I would probably have heard of it.

Question: How large were these gas chambers?

Brack: They were of different sizes. It was simply an adjoining room. I can't remember whether they were 4 x 5 meters, or 5 x 6 meters. Simply normal sized rooms, but I can't tell you the exact size. It was too long ago. I can't remember.

Question: Were they as large as this courtroom?

Brack: No. They were just normal rooms.

Question: Well, a man of your intelligence must have some idea about the size of these rooms. The assertion "normal size" doesn't mean anything in particular.

Brack: By that I mean the size of the normal room in a normal house. I didn't mean an assembly room or a cell either. I meant a room, but I can't tell you the exact size because I really don't know it. It might have been 4 x 5 meters, or 5 x 6 meters, or 3.5 x 4.5, but I really don't know. I didn't pay much attention to it.

Question: Have you ever visited a concentration camp or a military camp of any kind?

Brack: I visited a concentration camp, and I was once in a military camp as a soldier.

Question: Have you ever seen a shower room or shower bath built into a camp of that kind where the inmates of concentration camps, or where soldiers in a military barracks, can take showers?

Brack: Yes, I have. In my own barracks.

Question: And would you say that this euthanasia room at the various institutions was about that dimension?

Brack: I think it was much smaller.

Question: Well, perhaps we can get at it this way. I thought perhaps you knew something about the mechanical construction that I supposed everybody knew something about. This room of yours that you talk about, how many people would it

accommodate?

Brack: Yesterday I said that according to my estimate it might have been twenty-five or thirty people.

Question: And that is still your estimate today? I remember yesterday that you said that, and that is still your estimate today, it could comfortably take care of twenty-five or thirty people?

Brack: Yes. That's my estimate.

Question: Now, the carbon monoxide gas that was used for the purpose of euthanasia where did it come from? I know you said yesterday that it came out of tubes very much like oxygen came in, but where did the tubes come from? Do you know?

Brack: I don't know. They were the normal steel containers which can be seen everywhere.

Question: Do you know how they reached the camp?

Brack: That I don't know.

Question: Do you know whether any department of the government was responsible for furnishing the gas to the camp?

Brack: No. They were probably bought.

Question: You think then that perhaps the superintendent of the institution, if he wanted some carbon monoxide gas, would just walk down town and walk into a store and buy a steel tube of it and put it under his arm and carry it on back to the camp; pay for it out of his pocket?

Brack: No, not out of his own pocket but through the institution. The institutions bought them, I mean.³⁷⁷

Therefore, in the case of Viktor Brack, we have the ready confession of someone who claimed to be deeply involved in the euthanasia program, someone whose name indeed was supposed to be synonymous with gassing, but who at the same time was unable to recall anything about it.³⁷⁸

Given the chronological order of these testimonies and the context of the evolution of the shower-gas-burning sequence it seems clear that these descriptions of euthanasia shower-gassings represent a clear case of concept

transference: that is, the shower element from the camps has been retrofitted onto another situation, with a correspondingly poor fit.

A similar case occurred in the First World War propaganda. At that time, the legend arose that German soldiers were cutting off the hands of Belgian children.³⁷⁹ The claim was of course false, and furthermore no logical reason was ever advanced for the procedure. However, if we go back to the turn of the century we can find the likely source of the story. In 1903, Roger Casement published an expose of the brutal treatment which King Leopold's concessionaires were carrying out in the Belgian Congo.³⁸⁰ This included the use of bounty hunters, who were supposed to provide proof of their kills. The proof consisted in the hand of the victim. Hence, the claims of sacks of hands, taken as bounty, figured prominently in this scandal. The practice, as grotesque as it was, makes some sense in the context in which it is said to have occurred. It seems likely that this claim was simply transposed from the Belgian Congo to Belgium proper in 1914 and the identities of the malefactors were changed, but in the process of transference the concept acquired a certain telltale illogic.

Since there was a euthanasia program, and since it antedated the mass gassing program, the acceptance of the shower-gas-burning sequence for the euthanasia program provides strong support for the chronologically later, but earlier reported, claim of mass gassing.³⁸¹ Yet the description of the sequence for the euthanasia program comes after, and is clearly influenced by, the establishment of the canonical shower-gas-burning sequence, and furthermore has no material, documentary, or physical support.³⁸²

There are, however, elements in the euthanasia rumors which may have influenced subsequent developments. The stench and smoke from the crematoriums, and the "murder wagons" are two such elements.³⁸³ It is significant that within days of Bishop von Galen's protestations about the euthanasia program, rumors of gassings were alleged in Poland, both of these followed Shirer's gassing rumor, published in June.³⁸⁴ There is also the possibility that the disease control measures supposedly invoked to conceal the operations of the euthanasia program, as well as to justify its cremations, inspired rumors analogous to the disinfection rumors from the turn of the century.³⁸⁵ But, here again, it is clear that the invocation of disease control for the sake of secrecy and cremation would have been applied to the outside world: there would have been no reason to continue such an elaborate charade for the victims of the program itself. The presence of the showering element in the euthanasia program thus makes no sense.

This observation leads us back to the presence of the gassing element in

the euthanasia program. We know that gassing had been alleged as far back as the fall of 1940 in the context of the euthanasia rumors because it was conceived as causing disfiguration, which would then require cremation to hide the traces. Gassing is not being claimed for any other reasons, or based on any other evidence. This simply means that the suspicion of cremation, and fear of disfiguration caused by poison gas, were the real source of the gassing claim at that time. Therefore we must now turn and consider the social and cultural attitudes about cremation and poison gas in the 1930's.

11. The Fear of Cremation and Poison Gas

Cremation still relatively modern in the 1930's and 1940's. Resistance by many social elements, gives rise to bizarre ideas of concealing crimes and corpse recycling. -- National Socialism advocates cremation because of overcrowding and disease control. -- Cremation fears mirrored in many instances of Allied fear about German secret weapons, technological abilities -- Fear of poison gas and its disfiguring effects common in Interwar culture. -- Vicki Baum. -- Pabst's *Kameradschaft*. Poison gas and mass hysteria: Israel, 1991; Florida, 1971; D-Day, 1944; The "War of the Worlds" panic of 1938. -- Disfigured bodies, from fire or putrefaction, are conceived as victims of poison gas: Germany, Cassell bombing raid, 1943, concentration camps, 1945. -- Poison gas often conceived as air-borne: German civil defense.

THE MODERN ADVOCACY OF CREMATION was only about sixty years old by the time the National Socialist dictatorship began.³⁸⁶ Two factors tended to support the procedure: a chronic lack of burial space, and hygienic requirements, including disease control.³⁸⁷ On the other hand, the procedure inspired sometimes violent opposition, largely because it conflicted strongly with both Christian and Jewish conceptions of body disposal and the hopes of the afterlife.³⁸⁸ As a result, the development of the procedure in the twentieth century was slow.³⁸⁹

Advocacy of the process increased throughout the late 19th and early twentieth century, especially in Germany, where it was associated with rationality, modernity, and public health.³⁹⁰ By the beginning of the 1920's, less than 2 percent of the deceased in Germany were cremated, but by 1930 that number had increased to over 7 percent.³⁹¹ The National Socialist government gave its support to the process by the law of 1934, placing cremation on the same level as more traditional burial practices.³⁹² Many have commented subsequently on the rapid development of the practice, and have noted that it represents the "full mechanization" of modern life,³⁹³ and, as such a strong rupture with traditional life. What needs to be appreciated, however, is that rapid changes in how people live also affects how they perceive the life they are living: no doubt many of the fearful perceptions of cremation were related to that rapid cultural change which shook traditional faiths³⁹⁴ -- "The modern world is an anti-Christian world," so wrote the leader of German Social Democracy, August Bebel, in 1884, who, in accordance with his Will, was cremated in 1913.³⁹⁵

Probably as a result of these anxieties about cremation, the procedure became the focus of a number of strange ideas. One of these was that cremation was suspicious, because, by burning a body a post mortem on the cause of death

would be next to impossible to carry out.³⁹⁶ Under such conditions, all manner of murder, poisoning, and other activities could be carried out secretly.³⁹⁷ It was this element that clearly excited the German people, especially after the National Socialist government not only endorsed cremation for an overcrowded Germany but also made it mandatory in all concentration camps.³⁹⁸

A second aspect of cremation concerned utopian and futuristic ideas of recycling. Aldous Huxley would clearly articulate the idea in his negative utopia "*Brave New World*" in 1932:

Following [the train's] southerly course across the dark plain their eyes were drawn to the majestic buildings of the Slough Crematorium. For the safety of night flying planes, its four tall chimneys were flood-lighted and tipped with crimson danger signals. It was a landmark.

"Why do the smoke-stacks have those things like balconies around them?" enquired Lenina.

"Phosphorous recovery," explained Henry telegraphically. "On their way up the chimney the gases go through four separate treatments. P₂O₅ used to go right out the chimney. Now they recover over 98 percent of it. More than a kilo and a half per adult corpse. Which makes the best part of four hundred tons of phosphorous from England alone." Henry spoke with a happy pride, rejoicing whole-heartedly in the achievement, as though it had been his own. "Fine to think that we can go on being socially useful even after we're dead. Making plants grow."³⁹⁹

Cremation was not only associated with recycling and various sinister motivations. Some of the claims made about the process can be compared to various other fantastic claims made about German technological and even medical innovations which were typical during the war and in the immediate postwar period. For example, it was claimed by the Soviets at Nuremberg that German doctors had perfected a method of infecting people with cancer⁴⁰⁰, and General Patton, in his memoirs, seemed to take seriously a claim that a German doctor had been able to keep a brain alive, separated from its host.⁴⁰¹ When plans for a German space station were uncovered -- a development which made sense in terms of the German space program -- it was reported in the American press as a plan for a platform that would use a giant mirror to reflect the sun's rays back to the earth in concentrated form in order to incinerate cities or boil "part of the ocean."⁴⁰² Speculation about the development of the so-called "Sun Gun" was matched by the hysteria of Allied pilots beginning in the Fall of 1944, who began

to report small balls of fire tracking their aircraft over Germany -- these "Foo Fighters" or "Kraut Balls" were said to be remote controlled flying objects sent up by the Germans to sabotage the electrical systems of Allied planes; although they appear to have been nothing more unusual than St. Elmo's fire.⁴⁰³

In our opinion, the attitudes about German crematoriums in the 1930's and 1940's clearly reflect this kind of technological hysteria, largely because of the fantastic burn rates attributed to German crematoriums or other techniques in the realm of body disposal. It was not uncommon during the immediate postwar period to hear testimonies asserting that German cremation ovens could burn thousands of people in a single day⁴⁰⁴, or that the Germans had devised a "special procedure" for burning thousands of bodies in the open air without fuel,⁴⁰⁵ just as one could hear testimonies arguing that thousands of people could be packed into a space for gassing which normally would scarcely contain hundreds by use of "the German method."⁴⁰⁶

Notwithstanding the attributed rates of cremation, which according to one document, suggest that bodies could be burned to ash in fifteen or twenty minutes,⁴⁰⁷ the facts, developed by the Italian researcher Carlo Mattogno, are simply otherwise. The cremation of a body has a thermal barrier of about 40 minutes for the reduction of body proteins and about 20 to 30 minutes more to reduce the bones to ash.⁴⁰⁸ Bearing these facts in mind, derived in empirical tests by British cremationists in recent years,⁴⁰⁹ we are forced to conclude that the daily capacity of German crematoriums is more realistically measured in the several dozens or possibly hundreds rather than the several thousands.⁴¹⁰ It follows also that the existence of crematoriums cannot be cited as evidence of an intent to exterminate, as was argued then, and even though that claim is still encountered from time to time to this day.⁴¹¹

To a certain extent the German leadership is responsible for encouraging the Allies to make exaggerated claims about German technological prowess. The constant talk of wonder weapons that would turn the tide of war helped maintain homefront morale. On the other hand, such claims, coupled with the very real German innovations in weapons technology, including jet aircraft, rocket planes, cruise missiles, guided missiles, and many others, were bound to lead the Allies to believe that the "latest word in fascist technology"⁴¹² would have no limits and thus any claim became plausible: even crematoriums that could defy the laws of nature, or which were in fact "gas ovens".⁴¹³ The undercurrents of fear and anxiety in these superstitious attributions of diabolical skill to one's enemy are, we believe, easily seen.

There were also cases where the Nazi leadership, and specifically Adolf

Hitler, would attempt to gain a psychological advantage by exaggerating German technological capabilities. For example, when the Germans invaded Belgium in May 1940, they seized the fortress of Eben Emael in 24 hours, much to the astonishment of the Allies. In a speech, Hitler attributed the success to a special weapon or *Angriffsmittel*, whose character he would not divulge. His coy announcement immediately created apprehension among the Allies, as well as speculation about the nature of the wonder weapon: bombs containing liquid oxygen as well as a paralyzing and non-lethal nerve gas were both suggested as possibilities.⁴¹⁴ In fact, the legendary *Angriffsmittel* turned out to be nothing more complicated than a shaped explosive charge, but that does not mean that these other contemporary speculations are valueless to the historian. On the contrary, because they represent almost pure projection, they tell us a great deal about the widely-held beliefs in German technological and scientific prowess as well as about then common concerns with specific types of weapons, including poison gas.

Even more than cremation, poison gas excited great fears. Doubtless much of this was directly due to the extensive use of gases in the First World War, which injured over a million men.⁴¹⁵ A number of gases were used in that war, but two appear to have particularly excited the popular imagination. The first of these were the blister gases, or vesicants, commonly called mustards, which were notorious for scarring and disfiguring their victims.⁴¹⁶ It was clearly this kind of gas that the German people were thinking of when the euthanasia rumors developed.

The second gas was hydrocyanic acid, or cyanide gas, whose usage in the war was not very successful, but which nevertheless created a very odd optimism about the use of this odorless, invisible, almost instantly lethal and therefore painless gas.⁴¹⁷ A practical side effect of this optimism was the appropriation of cyanide gas for executions in the United States in 1924.⁴¹⁸

A brief perusal of inter-war culture makes it clear that poison gas, and the effects of its use, were very much a part of the cultural landscape. The Austrian Vicki Baum's novel, *Grand Hotel*, later made into a widely popular film in 1932, featured events in a Berlin Hotel, the narrator of which was a doctor, whose face had been hideously scarred by mustard gas in the Great War.⁴¹⁹ Pabst's *Kameradschaft* (1931), a film that describes a group of German miners who bravely tunnel across the border to rescue their French comrades, features at its climax the hallucination of a wounded Frenchman, who sees the German trying to save him suddenly as a soldier, in gas mask and coal scuttle helmet, emerging from a cloud of gas. The film also juxtaposes the gas explosion in the mine that traps the Frenchmen to the communal shower room of the German miners:

perhaps already here we have the popular image of showering and gas combined.⁴²⁰

In one of his better known assaults on the German bourgeoisie, the *Weltbühne* critic Kurt Tucholsky would casually mention gassing his opponents, sardonically describing the gas that would seep into the houses and kill children, women, and men alike.⁴²¹ And Ernst Krenek, in his opera, *Der Diktator* (1926), which tells of a dictator that controls a nation with hypnotic powers, features a character blinded by poison gas who sings a lyric describing the horror of a poison gas attack, emphasizing disfiguration and discoloration.⁴²²

This constant awareness of poison gas increased after the Italians made a much publicized, but perhaps overstated, use of aerial mustard gas attacks against the Ethiopians in 1935. H. G. Wells' *Things to Come*, in the 1938 film version, also would feature such an aerial gas attack.⁴²³

At the same time, in the fall of 1938, Europe was gripped by the threat of war as the Munich crisis unfolded. Fear of bombing was great, but so too was the fear of aerial poison gas attacks. The British government had prepared to distribute some 38 million gas masks, and after the Fleet was mobilized on "Black Wednesday", panic became a feature of gas mask distribution.⁴²⁴ Two other aspects of public attitudes during the crisis are worth noting: the proliferation of rumors such that, for example, a clouds of autumn mist might be interpreted as poison gas,⁴²⁵ and psychosomatic reactions, as when the rumor of a squadron spraying chlorine gas in East London caused the physical illness of several.⁴²⁶ Indeed, a government committee of psychiatrists estimated that, in the event of war, the two million estimated dead by bombing and gassing would be joined by some five to six million victims of panic and hysteria.⁴²⁷

The generalized fear of poison gas inarguably played a role in one of the most notorious episodes of mass hysteria in modern times: *The War of the Worlds* radio broadcast of October, 30, 1938.⁴²⁸ Following directly on the heels of the Munich crisis, and the popularity of a play that described aerial warfare, the fictionalized and updated account featured a Martian invasion of New Jersey that caused panic among tens of thousands nationwide.⁴²⁹ Two points about the broadcast are noteworthy: the initial destruction, at the precise point when most people would have tuned in, discussed the discovery of bodies that had been horribly disfigured and burned, and the fact that the broadcast contained a lurid description of a cloud of poison gas moving across Manhattan destroying everyone that it touched.⁴³⁰ The accounts in the New York Times the next day are interesting in assessing public reaction.⁴³¹

Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact

Despite the fantastic nature of the reported “occurrences”, the program, coming after the recent war scare in Europe and a period in which the radio frequently interrupted regularly scheduled programs to report developments in the Czechoslovak situation, caused fright and panic throughout the area of the broadcast.

Many sought first to verify the reports. But large numbers, obviously in a state of terror, asked how they could follow the broadcast’s advice and flee from the city, whether they would be safer in the “gas raid” in the cellar or on the roof, how they could safeguard their children, and many of the questions which had been worrying residents of London and Paris during the tense days before the Munich agreement.

“They’re Bombing New Jersey!”

Jersey City police received similar calls. One woman asked Detective Timothy Grooty, on duty there, “Shall I close my windows?” A man asked, “Have the police any extra gas masks?” Many of the callers, on being assured the reports were fiction, queried again and again, uncertain in whom to believe.

The incident at Hedden Terrace and Hawthorne Avenue, in Newark, one of the most dramatic in the area, caused a tie-up in traffic for blocks around. The more than twenty families there apparently believed a “gas attack” had started and so reported to the police. An ambulance, three radio cars, and a police emergency squad of eight men were sent to the scene with full inhalator apparatus.

They found the families with wet cloths on faces contorted with hysteria. The police calmed them, halted those who were attempting to move furniture on their cars and after a time were able to clear the traffic snarl.

East Orange police headquarters received more than 200 calls from persons who wanted to know what to do to escape the “gas.”

The role of the radio in propagating the *War of the Worlds* broadcast was duly noted in the contemporary media. Thus the New York World Telegram would editorialize on November 1:

It is strange and disturbing that thousands of Americans, secure in their homes on a quiet Sunday evening, could be scared out of their wits by a radio dramatization of H. G. Wells' fantastic old story, *The War of the Worlds*.

Mr. Welles did not plan deliberately to demoralize his audience. But nerves made jittery by actual, though almost incredible, threats of war and disaster, had prepared a great many American radio listeners to believe the completely incredible "news" that Martian hordes were here.⁴³²

While columnist Hugh Johnson opined:

... the incident is highly significant. It reveals dramatically a state of public mind. Too many people have been led by outright propaganda to believe in some new and magic power of air attack and other development in the weapons of war.⁴³³

Columnist Dorothy Thompson was even more emphatic:

The immediate moral is apparent if the whole incident is viewed in reason: no political body must ever, under any circumstances, obtain a monopoly of radio.

The second moral is that our popular and university education is failing to train reason and logic, even in the educated.

The third is that the popularization of science has led to gullibility and new superstitions, rather than to skepticism and the really scientific attitude of mind.

The fourth is that the power of mass suggestion is the most potent force today and that the political demagogue is more powerful than all the economic forces.⁴³⁴

The reminiscences of the "survivors" of the Martian invasion also tell us a great deal about common attitudes about Germans, poison gas, and other subjects. One recalled:

The announcer said a meteor had fallen from Mars and I was sure he thought that but in the back of my head I had an idea that the meteor was just a camouflage. It was really an airplane like a zeppelin that looked like a meteor and the Germans were attacking

us with gas bombs.⁴³⁵

And a Californian remembered:

My wife and I were driving through the redwood forest in Northern California when the broadcast came over our car radio. At first it was just New Jersey but soon the things were landing all over, even in California. There was no escape. All we could think of was to try to get back to LA to see our children once more. And be with them when it happened. We went right by gas stations but I forgot we were low on gas. In the middle of the forest our gas ran out. There was nothing to do. We just sat holding hands expecting any minute to see those Martian monsters appear over the tops of the trees. When Orson said it was a Halloween prank, it was like being reprieved on the way to the gas chamber.⁴³⁶

These fears were clearly carried over to the Second World War itself, especially around the time of D-Day. The Allies, in their dress rehearsals at Slapton Sands, were clearly concerned about the possibility of gas attacks,⁴³⁷ and this fear appears to have had something to do with the disaster at Omaha Beach, when a brush fire was taken as a cloud of poison by pinned down American soldiers.⁴³⁸ Within a month, Winston Churchill would dictate a memorandum discussing these very matters, as well as the possibility of drenching the German cities and armaments centers with mustard gas.⁴³⁹

There is no question then that the fear of poison gas was very much a part of the inter-war consciousness. But we should also note that poison gases, like poisons generally, are well suited to paranoid and hysterical reactions, because by definition the substances tend towards the impalpable.⁴⁴⁰

If, for example, gas is conceived as having an odor, then any unfamiliar odor could be attributed to a deadly gas. Berton Roueche provided a case study of such a hysterical reaction that occurred in 1971 in a Florida school: a new carpet had been laid, leaving an unfamiliar smell, a young woman fainted, because she had the flu, and within an hour dozens of students complained of being poisoned.⁴⁴¹ This association of odor with poison, by the way, is particularly deeply rooted in Western culture, in the sense that it ties into the miasmatic theory of disease,⁴⁴² as well as with the Victorian belief in "vapours" which were the supposed source of hysteria among women.

On the other hand, if a gas is conceived as a cloud of smoke or mist, then any cloud of smoke or mist may be perceived as a poison gas, and this is apparently what happened at Omaha Beach.

Again, if the gas is conceived as both odorless and invisible, then we have a case where simply the suggestion of poison gas can lead to the claim of its use: this occurred during the Gulf War, when a Iraqi SCUD missile landed in Israel.⁴⁴³

Finally, if the gas is conceived as disfiguring -- and this is what most people had in mind during the Second World War -- then the result is that any decomposed or otherwise disfigured body would be attributed to poison gas usage, and this happened in Germany following an Allied raid.⁴⁴⁴ Since the Americans and British found similar scenes in the Western camps when they liberated them, there is little reason to doubt that they suspected poison gas usage for the same reasons.⁴⁴⁵

The fear of poison gas usage in the West was pervasive even before the Second World War. It was variously believed that it would come in a visible cloud, or be dropped from the skies, or be both odorless and invisible, and would kill instantly with terrible disfiguration. Thus the culture was primed for accusations of poison gas usage. But, since the main fear was that such gas would be delivered from the air, we would also expect gas protection to be a prominent feature of German civil defense. And indeed it was.

12. German Civil Defense and the Specter of Gas Warfare

German air raid shelters meant to serve also as anti-gas shelters. -- Therefore equipped with gastight doors. -- Air raid shelter doors also equipped with peepholes, to allow inspection without breaking the gastight seal. -- The doors at Majdanek are air raid shelter doors, the bathing facility meant to double as a decontamination center. -- The main fear is from disfiguring mustard gases, therefore Germans equipped laundries and public baths to serve as decontamination centers in the event of a gas attack. -- Fears of the belligerents about poison gas use -- German testing of war gases on camp prisoners -- The Bari incident -- No military use of poison gas in the Second World War -- Bombing assault on Germany killed perhaps 3/4 million people, most perished from gas poisoning (CO) and were at least partially cremated by dry heat. -- But this event would be inverted into an accusation against the German people after the war.

THE GERMANS INVESTED hundreds of millions of dollars in the preparation of air raid shelters.⁴⁴⁶ From the beginning, all German air raid shelters were designed to protect against poison gas as well as against bombs. As a result, special air raid shelter doors were developed, usually made of steel. The doors would feature a round peephole covered with a perforated steel plate to prevent breakage, the peephole meant to facilitate visual inspection without having to break the gas-tight seal by opening the door.

Because there was a particular concern about aerial poison gas attacks, a number of other measures were adopted. For example, part of every municipal air raid crew was designated as a decontamination squad, whose uniforms and equipment would come in handy for other sanitation procedures, including corpse disposal. Because of the particular fear of mustards, municipal disinfection centers, bathhouses, and laundries, would all be adapted for decontaminating people and their belongings in the event of a gas attack. The Germans devised a number of different shelters, including an emphasis on above-ground air raid and anti-gas shelters that the Western Allies never matched. Every basement or *Keller* was also supposed to serve doubly as a gas-proof bomb shelter if needed.

In the beginning of the war, the greatest emphasis was placed on constructing shelters in the north-west areas of Germany, that is, the areas that were believed to be most likely bombed by the Allies. For that reason, air raid protection measures tended to be more lax in the east and south. This is probably part of the reason that Dresden failed to construct the dedicated public shelters that were common in cities like Hamburg. However, beginning in the summer of 1942, a general awareness began to grow that the allies were serious in their attempts to bomb German cities and this meant that even territories to Germany's

east were put on alert.

An indication of this heightened awareness comes from a directive dated August 6, 1942, entitled "Guidelines for the Construction of Air Raid Shelters in the Area of the Military Authority in the Government General", meaning occupied Poland. The document stressed the need to build air raid shelters, and described how these were to be constructed such that the entire occupancy of a building was accommodated, in accordance with German policy. In addition, the guidelines directed that existing basements were to be used, and in the absence of basements, ground floors, for the establishment of *ad hoc* bomb shelters. The document further stated that attention should be paid to anti-gas measures.⁴⁴⁷

Further indications of air raid and gas protection activities in Poland comes from the diary of Hans Frank, which specifically discussed gas protection in two notes,⁴⁴⁸ documents from the Majdanek camp to the Auert firm in Berlin requesting gastight doors with peepholes,⁴⁴⁹ and second-hand information pertaining to the construction of bomb shelters in Warsaw,⁴⁵⁰ all of these from the fall of 1942.

There is a curiosity about the Frank notes concerning gas protection. Not only is there a description about the extension of gas protection to parts of the native population but there is also a discussion of code words to signal the implementation of these measures. This suggests a belief that gas attacks might be imminent. One of the entries concerning gas attacks follows with remarks from Frank about "laying to rest the specter of atrocity propaganda" (*mit dem Spuk der Greuelpropaganda ... aufräumen*).⁴⁵¹ Bearing in mind that Frank spoke a few months after the June, 1942, gassing claims were broadcast by the BBC, and noting also that Frank's remarks came just a few days before Thomas Mann would reiterate claims about mass gassings in Poland, his comment suggests two other things. First, it seems likely that Frank was aware of the claims being made about mass gassing in Poland. More importantly, the context suggests the Germans were aware of the gassing accusations and that perhaps on some level were concerned that the broadcast of such claims might be part of a conditioning campaign to justify the "retaliatory" use of poison gas.

Such a possibility not only helps explain the pursuit of air raid and gas protection measures in the east at this time, it also draws attention to the comparative preparedness of the combatants to engage in chemical or even biological warfare, and the way the threat of such use might have affected the thinking and conduct of the combatants. It is known, for example, that the English and the Americans developed impressive arsenals of chemical and biological weapons.⁴⁵² It is also known that the Germans developed large stocks of chemical

weapons, including a whole class of chemical weapons -- the nerve gases -- the knowledge of which was kept from the Allies throughout the war.⁴⁵³ It is hard to say to what extent the secret preparations for chemical warfare could have contributed to generalized fears and speculation about poison gas.

The threat of poison gas attacks would also have necessitated tests on the effects of such gases. Both sides conducted such tests, the Germans using concentration camp prisoners. The German tests generated a certain amount of correspondence whose references to "gas" are sometimes offered as proof of the mass gassing claim.⁴⁵⁴

The potential use of poison gas, shrouded in secrecy, led to at least one tragedy. In December 1943, the Luftwaffe carried out a raid on a number of American merchant ships in the southern Italian port of Bari. Unbeknownst to virtually everyone, one of the ships sunk contained large stores of mustard gas bombs that leaked into the flaming harbor. Hundreds died as a result of this incident, largely because a proper diagnosis could not be arrived at, and the entire incident spurred rumors of German first use as well as plans for a "counter-strike" that were luckily abandoned.⁴⁵⁵ Probably the incident also spawned quite a bit of speculation of poison gas usage on both sides.

The possibility of poison gas usage in a military context generated large stocks of weapons, as well as tests, correspondence, and contingency plans. Moreover, as the incident at Bari as well as Hans Frank's diary indicate, both sides were very anxious about the other side's use. These things should be kept in mind when reviewing the gassing claims.

One could conceivably argue that the Germans were especially careful not to record anything about the mass gassings precisely because of the fear of chemical warfare retaliation, but there are several problems here. The first is that the German records concerning chemical weapons development and testing largely survived the war, which contradicts the idea of an embargo on documentation about gassing. Second, and moreover, according to the gassing claim chemical weapons were not used. Therefore one is again confronted with the absence of documentation concerning mass gassing, and mass gassing alone. A third problem is that, since the Germans were indeed concerned about the retaliatory use of poison gas, they would have been foolish to carry out mass gassings especially since they were simultaneously being accused of doing so by Allied media. A fourth problem is even more mysterious: for while the allies accused the Germans of mass gassings from 1941 onwards, they never used these accusations as a pretext for using poison gas themselves. This suggests that the allies did not believe their own reports.

Our discussion of the implementation of civil air defense and gas protection measures in occupied Poland has led us into a discussion of the potential for chemical weapon usage in the Second World War. But there is one more respect in which such a discussion of civil defense measures in Eastern Europe may help clarify an issue in the run of atrocity accusations made against Germany. We recall that in March 1943, a refugee from Poland penned a document describing the "*Hammerluft*" system, in which prisoners at Auschwitz were supposedly killed with a "hammer of air." No one has ever explained the source of this claim, which appears to have emerged in occupied Poland at about the time civil air defense measures were first being implemented there. We are reminded that the German word for civil air defense is *Luftschutz*, literally, air protection. One wonders if a non-German speaker might have misconstrued *Luftschutz* as *Luftschütz*, which could have been interpreted to mean "to shoot with air."⁴⁵⁶

As noted, neither side used poison gas in the Second World War. Yet, in one of the strange ironies of history, the Allied bombing campaign, that killed perhaps 3/4 of a million German civilians, gassed and burned most of its victims. Most of the victims, trapped in the basement shelters of their buildings, could not escape the carbon monoxide generated by the bombs and fires, whose small molecular size was almost impossible to filter, and so were in effect gassed. Meanwhile, the tremendous heat from the fire-storms, which often exceeded 1,000 degrees Celsius, would effectively cremate their bodies with dry heat. But in the aftermath of the war this destruction of the German people with gas and fire was completely overlooked in the Allied prosecution of Germans on charges of gassing and burning.

13. Civil Defense in the Concentration Camps

Concentration camps important to war industry. -- Therefore require air raid and anti-gas protection, according to German guidelines. Review of evidence for air raid shelters and gas protection in the concentration camp system. -- Himmler Order of February 8, 1943, directly precedes flood of work orders for gastight fixtures at Auschwitz Birkenau -- Extensive documentation indicates the presence of gastight bomb shelters for prisoners by the Spring of 1944 -- Reference to *Bomb Shelters at Birkenau*.

THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS also featured extensive civil defense paraphernalia. There are at least five reasons why this would be so. In the first place the Guidelines for air raid shelter construction from the fall of 1940 mandated that all new constructions, particularly in the armaments industry, should be equipped with (gastight) air raid shelters.⁴⁵⁷ Secondly, it is well known that the concentration camp system was regarded as crucial as a source of labor for the armaments industry. Third, a directive from Heinrich Himmler dated February 8, 1943, makes it clear that the SS was very concerned about the possibility of air attacks on the concentration camp system.⁴⁵⁸ Fourth, it is known in the case of the Auschwitz camp, for example, that it received civil air defense directives throughout the war. Fifth and finally, the concentration camps were indeed the target of Allied bombs, the first bombing of Auschwitz taking place in early May 1943.⁴⁵⁹

The main shelters found in the concentration camps were covered trenches dug out of the ground. But given the concerns among the civilian population, we should expect similar adaptations in the camps, especially for gas warfare. A cursory inspection of contemporary photographs and documents further support the inference of widespread air raid and gas protection in the concentration camps. The dwelling of the Auschwitz Commandant, for example, clearly shows a gas-tight shutter or *Blende* attached to the right front of the building, along with a ventilation pipe, while the blueprints for the Central Sauna at Birkenau indicate that its basement was equipped with an emergency exit.⁴⁶⁰

The hypothesis concerning air raid shelters at Auschwitz was strengthened by the 1998 discovery of three documents from the Moscow archives that prove that the Germans were concerned with developing an extensive network of air raid shelters at Auschwitz Birkenau starting from the summer of the 1943, that is, at the same time that the building office of that camp was flooded with work orders for gastight fixtures.⁴⁶¹

The hypothesis concerning air raid shelters at Auschwitz as well as at

Birkenau was effectively proved in June, 2000, through the publication of a daughter article of the present study, *Bomb Shelters at Birkenau: A Reappraisal*. Limited almost entirely to the records of the Central Construction Office, and with full documentation, the study showed

- That Auschwitz, and in particular its construction office, was in receipt of high level civil air defense memoranda, directives, and instructions throughout the war,
- That these documents spelled out the manner in which civil air defense measures were to be implemented, including recommendations involving the use of new and existing buildings for auxiliary bomb shelter use,
- That Auschwitz received high level directives on air raid shelter measures in February and March of 1943, that is, simultaneous with the completion of the crematoriums and the fitting of gastight doors and shutters at those locations,
- That the planning of dedicated trench shelters began in the summer of 1943, only weeks after the last of the gastight fittings had been delivered to the crematoriums,
- That these trench shelters were meant for the SS, the workers, and for the prisoner population both at Auschwitz, Birkenau and all of the other sub-camps,
- That the building of more shelters at Auschwitz and Birkenau was frustrated by overcrowding, lack of space, and the high water table at Birkenau,
- That even so several trench shelters were built or planned at Birkenau,
- That all of these trench shelters were to be equipped with gastight doors, and such trench shelters were being completed as early as March, 1944,
- That it was assumed existing buildings would also be used for civil air defense, including their basements,
- That the preparation of existing buildings for civil air defense was satisfactorily advanced by the end of 1943, and had been -- at least with respect to blackout preparations -- for a long time by then,

- That the basements of the buildings in Auschwitz were specifically allocated to the prisoners for civil air defense,
- That camp security was an important element in the civil air defense measures applied at Auschwitz.⁴⁶²

A number of subsidiary conclusions may be arrived at on the basis of the previously ignored cache of Auschwitz documents concerning gastight bomb shelters. However, in terms of the thesis argued here, it is sufficient to note that there is no doubt that there were such gastight bomb shelters at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Turning to other camps, we find that the Bath and Disinfection Complex II at Majdanek has a number of features, including gastightness, that support an air raid shelter interpretation. Clearly, the gastight doors with peepholes are air raid shelter doors, constructed by the Auert firm in Berlin. Other doors in the complex appear to be rudimentary air raid shelter doors constructed of wood.⁴⁶³ The CO gas mask filter found on site were also produced by Auer, which was a major supplier of air raid shelter equipment in Germany throughout the war.⁴⁶⁴ In addition, the gas mask filter was specifically constructed according to air raid shelter specifications.⁴⁶⁵ The overhead openings in the drying room (Room "A"), discussed earlier, were constructed simultaneous to the delivery orders for the gastight bomb shelter doors,⁴⁶⁶ and furthermore meet German industry standards (DIN) for the construction of emergency exits from air raid shelters.⁴⁶⁷

Of course, as we have seen, other features at the site point to a disinfection use. These include the overall construction of the building and its location, the external boilers, the piping, the tanks of carbon dioxide, and the positioning of a thermometer in one of the peepholes. However, these features could be squared with air raid shelter usage in the context of decontamination, inasmuch as hot air was a recommended form of decontamination, required gastight doors, as well as openings for thermometer consultation.⁴⁶⁸ Furthermore, a wartime pamphlet of the German Gas Protection Service of the Wehrmacht specifies that existing structures can be adapted for decontamination use.⁴⁶⁹

The simplest explanation is that the Bath and Disinfection Complex II at Majdanek was modified in the fall of 1942, such that it could continue its use as a delousing station while in addition being available for air raid and gas protection as well as decontamination.⁴⁷⁰ Support in the surrounding context lies in the fact that these modifications to the Majdanek camp in occupied Poland occurred at the same time as the Germans were providing the Jewish inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto with materials for air raid shelters, materials that were used instead to

construct a network of defensive bunkers that were used against the Germans in May, 1943.⁴⁷¹

By analogy we could also compare evidence of other showers in the German concentration camp system that were equipped with gastight doors. For example, it is known that the Germans would erect showers in their crematoriums: the thermal energy of the ovens provided a cheap and economical source for hot water.⁴⁷² Hence, the crematoriums at Natzweiler and Mauthausen were both equipped with working showers,⁴⁷³ Dachau today has a non-working shower in its crematorium, and showers were installed in one of the morgues of Crematorium III at Birkenau in May, 1943, in order to provide hot showers for the prisoners during a typhus scare.⁴⁷⁴ The Mauthausen shower room is equipped with a bomb shelter door,⁴⁷⁵ while the Dachau shower has been equipped with a disinfection chamber door, perhaps from one left over from the four disinfection cubicles nearby.⁴⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the hand over documents indicate that the basement shower room of Crematorium III at Birkenau was also equipped with a gastight door. In sum, we have showers at five camps -- Majdanek, Mauthausen, Dachau, Natzweiler, and Birkenau -- that are equipped with gastight doors, and in at least three cases, identifiable bomb shelter doors. The global explanation would see this juxtaposition as clear evidence of the implementation of known German civil air defense measures for chemical warfare decontamination. On the other hand a selective interpretation would see this as evidence of homicidal cyanide gas chambers: however this explanation then has to account for the working showers in four out of five cases, the fact that air raid shelter doors can be opened from inside, and the fact that no one claims today that anyone was gassed in the shower rooms of either Majdanek, Natzweiler, or Dachau, or even, arguably, Mauthausen.⁴⁷⁷

Another possible explanation concerns the deliberate use of civil air defense fixtures for disinfection purposes. This seems the most likely explanation for the fact that the three outside gas chambers at Majdanek, which were originally separate from the disinfection complex, but which have since been extensively altered,⁴⁷⁸ are all equipped with Auert bomb shelter doors. Support for this interpretation comes from incidental claims made at the Tesch-Weinbacher trial that the gas chambers at Lublin (Majdanek) were adapted in 1944 for the use of other gases besides Zyklon B, specifically, Areginal, a gas which, like T-Gas and others, points to the need for heating, careful temperature monitoring, and carbon dioxide use.⁴⁷⁹ But in this case it would mean that the camp simply used air raid shelter doors that had been acquired two years previous for this new purpose. Certainly there would have been no point in 1942 to order bomb shelter doors from Berlin, 400 miles away, to construct *ad hoc* disinfection gas chambers in 1944.

14. Pressac's "Criminal Traces" and the Number of Victims

Material or documentary evidence in the present day rests almost entirely on the "criminal traces" of J. C. Pressac, developed by the Polish communists for their Auschwitz trials in 1946 and 1947. -- But this evidence, when viewed in the light of civil defense literature, does not indicate gas chambers, but rather gastight bomb shelters and delousing chambers. -- Since most of this evidence clearly argues for gastight bomb shelters, but was developed, and has been presented, as proof of gas chambers, it follows that there is no material or documentary evidence for gas chambers at all, and it follows further that there is a strong likelihood of a Polish and Soviet communist hoax in developing this particular evidence. -- Questions concerning the overall death toll at Auschwitz, or at the other alleged extermination camps, with or without gassings -- Distinct from the broader question of the overall total of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

THE ISSUE OF AIR RAID SHELTERS and gas protection at the concentration camps leads directly to the purported evidence of gas chambers in the Birkenau crematoriums, which have been the subject of an important study by the Frenchman, Jean Claude Pressac.⁴⁸⁰

Pressac's study represented an attempt to prove that the four Birkenau crematoriums were equipped with gas chambers, strictly on a material and documentary basis. The centerpiece of Pressac's massive tome was a list of some three dozen "criminal traces" which represented the totality of material and documentary evidence that can be offered in support of the thesis that mass gassing occurred at the Birkenau crematoriums. (There is no material or documentary evidence for gassings at any other locations at Auschwitz.)

We have not yet had occasion to review this part of the documentary evidence because almost all of it was produced at the time of the Polish run Auschwitz trials in 1946 and 1947 after which it was filed away.⁴⁸¹ With one or two exceptions, these documents were never used to support the claim of mass gassing in the West. Only in the late 1980's, after the revisionist critique had cast major doubts on the veracity of the gassing claim, were these documentary traces unearthed and offered as authoritative and final proof of the mass gassing claim.

But when we review the "criminal traces" we do not find evidence of gas chambers after all. Indeed, looking at the "criminal traces" in the light of German civil defense literature, we find instead that Pressac has unwittingly made a convincing argument that each of the Birkenau crematoriums was equipped with a gas-tight bomb shelter, and that these shelters also included decontamination facilities in the form of showers and baths. In this respect it is important to note

that the crematorium at the base camp was known to have been used as an air raid shelter, although its poison gas protection features have rarely been commented on.

We should emphasize that all of the material and documentary evidence, when placed in a larger context, points to gastight air raid and anti-gas shelters, although it is likely that at least two of the traces -- the gas detectors, and possibly the term "*Vergasungskeller*" -- are rooted in other benign procedures, including disinfection.⁴⁸² There is no direct material or documentary support for the claim that these spaces were designed, let alone used, as extermination gas chambers.

Since all of the criminal traces at Auschwitz Birkenau can be explained in terms of civil air defense literature, disinfection literature, and other technical literature, it means, first, that there is no longer any documentary or material evidence that mass gassings took place at all. This is important because, as we have already noted, no documents pertaining to gas extermination have ever been offered for the other camps, for example, Sobibor, Treblinka, or Belzec. Second, these documents, which the context shows clearly concern either disinfection or civil air defense procedures, were just as clearly used out of context by the Polish communists who conducted the original Auschwitz trials. One can possibly suggest that they were used out of context unwittingly, but the fact that documents pertaining to civil air defense and disinfection were so clearly misused strongly indicates that there was never any merit to the extermination gassing claim in the first place.

In other words, civil air defense literature, along with disinfection literature, does more than explain all of the alleged documentary and material for mass gas exterminations. Shown in their proper context, these documents, now clearly seen as having been misused, bring us face to face with the possibility of a deliberate Polish and Soviet communist fraud.⁴⁸³

At this point it seems only fair to address the critical comment that, if fraud surrounded the gas chambers at Auschwitz and Majdanek, and perhaps other camps, this does not explain away the huge death tolls attributed to these camps, or the apparently very large losses experienced by the Jewish people in the Second World War. If, as is argued today, more than one million persons perished at Auschwitz, it would make little difference whether they died from poison gas or bullets, or whether, as Princeton professor Arno Mayer has argued, from "natural causes" like disease.⁴⁸⁴

All of this is true, and it should be stressed that disputes about the total of Jewish victims of German persecution lies outside the scope of this study. However, there are a number of ways in which the existence of gas chambers is

essential to other claims about the Holocaust. For example, the mass gassing claim is part and parcel of the argument, advanced by Shermer and many others, that whatever process of destruction the Jewish people were subjected to involved "systematic", "technically advanced"⁴⁸⁵ procedures and "purpose-built" "extermination facilities."⁴⁸⁶ Furthermore, the mass gassing claim carries over into other areas, including the argument over the alleged intention of the Nazi leadership to physically exterminate the Jewish people (because otherwise gas chambers and crematoriums would not have been built, as the argument goes), as well as the assessment that the western allies were somehow complicit in the destruction of the Jewish people because they failed to "bomb the gas chambers" at Auschwitz.⁴⁸⁷ However, this last claim implies that if the gas chambers had been bombed the death toll at Auschwitz would have been dramatically lower, and this simply underlines the fact that most people consider the existence of gas chambers inextricably bound up with the overall number of victims. Therefore a few comments on the case of Auschwitz seem necessary.

For several decades after the Second World War it was popularly claimed that four million had perished in the gas chambers and crematoriums at Auschwitz, and, as we have seen, this number ultimately led back to faulty Soviet calculations. True, ever since the 1950's there has been a minority view that puts the Jewish death toll at Auschwitz in the range of one million. This conclusion was formally stated in November 1989, and forms the main conclusion of F. Piper, the current curator of the Auschwitz State Museum.⁴⁸⁸

However, the reduction of the Auschwitz death toll creates a marked imbalance in the apportionment of the victims. If, as Höss declared again and again, about one million Jews were sent to Auschwitz,⁴⁸⁹ it is equally true that as many as two-thirds of these people arrived only after April 1944, about a year after the completion of the Birkenau crematoriums. This circumstance alone calls into question the allegation that the crematoriums were planned and built for mass murder, since it requires that the architects at Auschwitz not only could foresee the future course of the war but also the future course of deportations.

Moreover, the deportation of over half a million Jewish prisoners to Auschwitz coincided with an explosion of growth in the concentration camp system as a whole. For example, the overall population of the concentration camp system -- including, presumably, Auschwitz -- is given as approximately 250,000 by April 1944.⁴⁹⁰ By February, 1945, on the other hand, this population had increased to over 700,000:⁴⁹¹ in other words, the population of the concentration camp system practically trebled at a time when similarly huge numbers of Jewish people were being incarcerated. The most likely explanation is that this population increase of the camp system is directly attributed to the influx of

Jewish prisoners, which means that the majority did not face any program of mass extermination, let alone mass gas extermination, at Auschwitz.

This hypothesis can be tested by comparing the numbers for the Hungarian Jews, of whom it is generally conceded, beginning with Höss, that about 400,000 were sent to Auschwitz.⁴⁹² There is abundant evidence that many Hungarian Jews -- Jews capable of work and Jews incapable of work -- were widely distributed throughout Himmler's concentration camp empire.⁴⁹³ Himmler's speeches from the spring of 1944 specifically reference the Hungarian deportations for labor purposes,⁴⁹⁴ his memoranda specifically discuss the use of Hungarian women for forced labor,⁴⁹⁵ there are documentary indications that there was a desperate need for the forced labor the Hungarians could provide,⁴⁹⁶ there is further documentation that Hungarian Jews were pressed into precisely such kinds of labor,⁴⁹⁷ and there are plenty of anecdotes, including numerous survivor testimonies, that describe the wide distribution of the Hungarian Jews throughout the concentration camp system after their arrival at Auschwitz.⁴⁹⁸ Jürgen Graf has found evidence that tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews were sent to labor camps in the Baltic region,⁴⁹⁹ other documents indicate that thousands of Hungarian Jews were sent to other camps such as Gross-Rosen from the very beginning of the Hungarian action,⁵⁰⁰ and Hungarian historians, notably Szabolcs Szita, have noted that Hungarian Jewish forced labor was used in no less than 386 camps, including all of the main concentration camps in Germany and hundreds of their subcamps.⁵⁰¹

The point, in terms of our thesis, is that there is plenty of evidence to argue that only a fraction of the Hungarian Jews deported to Auschwitz could have perished there, from which it follows that the death toll at that camp was correspondingly lower.⁵⁰² Yet as the death toll at Auschwitz is lowered, the less likely the implementation of a mass gassing program becomes. The same argument can be applied to the other extermination camps, that is, the "Reinhard" camps,⁵⁰³ none of which were equipped with crematoriums similar to Auschwitz, and for which forensic study indicates mass graves in no way commensurable to the mass gassing claim.⁵⁰⁴

We should stress that by making this long detour on the connection between the mass gassing claim and the overall number of victims at Auschwitz we are not attempting to make any claims regarding the rate of survival among European Jews in the Second World War. Our general assumption, which admittedly we have never tested, is that probably millions of Jews perished during the war, since, after all, there were tremendous civilian casualties throughout eastern and central Europe both before, during, and after the Second World War, and the Jewish people bore the additional onus of being persecuted. However the

point is that the mass gassing claim is not proved by any overall estimate of victims at any given location, and furthermore these estimates amount to little more than guesses.⁵⁰⁵ On the other hand, the mass gassing claim has a lot to do with sustaining the claim that there was any intended policy of Jewish extermination.

15. The Gas Chamber of Sherlock Holmes

Gassing narratives from the Second World War reflected in literature prior to the war, including Sinclair Lewis (1936), and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1924). -- Analysis of the shower-gas-burning concept in its parts: disinfection procedures (Mayakovsky), poison gas usage (H.G. Wells, Sax Rohmer, M. P. Shiel, Georg Kaiser, E. R. Burroughs, *et al.*). -- Elements of the gassing claim directly pertinent to Jewish traditions: longstanding conceptions of "extermination" and its meanings, "six million", and the concept of a secret central conspiracy to destroy the Jewish people. -- The conclusion is that the cultural script for the shower-gas-burning sequence as well as the extermination-six million-central conspiracy concepts are all very old and deeply rooted.

WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR in our traversal of the mass gassing claim that the concept of shower-gas-burning underlay the accusation of gas exterminations in the Second World War, and we have also seen that no material or documentary evidence in support of the accusation has surfaced. This leads us naturally to the question as to whether the claim is entirely fictitious.

Here are some excerpts from a gassing narrative:

And then we stopped in front a large barrack marked Bad und Desinfektion II. "This," somebody said, "is where large numbers of those arriving at the camp were brought in." The inside of this barrack was made of concrete, and water taps came out of the wall, and around the room there were benches where the clothes were put down and afterwards collected. [...] Anyway, after the washing was over, they were asked to go into the next room: at this point even the most unsuspecting must have begun to wonder. For the "next room" was a series of large square concrete structures, each about 1/4 the size of the bathhouse, and unlike it, had no windows. The naked people (men one time, women another time, children the next) were driven or forced from the bath-house into these dark concrete boxes -- about five yards square -- and then, with 200 or 250 people packed in each box -- and it was completely dark in there, except for a small skylight in the ceiling and the spyhole in the door -- the process of gassing began. First some hot air was pumped in from the ceiling and then the pretty pale-blue crystals of Cyclon were showered down on the people, and in the hot wet air they rapidly evaporated. In anything from two to ten minutes everybody was dead. There were six concrete boxes -- gas chambers -- side by side. "Nearly two thousand people

could be disposed of here simultaneously," one of the guides said. [...] At first it was all very hard to take in, without an effort of the imagination. There were a number of very dull-looking concrete structures which, if their doors had been wider, might anywhere else have been mistaken for garages. But the doors -- the doors! They were heavy steel doors, and each had a heavy steel bolt. And in the middle of the door was a spyhole, a circle, three inches in diameter composed of about a hundred small holes. Could the people in their death agony see the SS-man's eye as he watched them? Anyway, the SS-man had nothing to fear: his eye was well protected by the steel netting over the spyhole. And like the proud maker of reliable safes, the maker of the door had put his name round the spyhole: "Auert, Berlin". Then a touch of blue on the floor caught my eye, it was very faint, but still legible. In blue chalk someone had scribbled the word "vergast", and had drawn above it a skull and crossbones.⁵⁰⁶

and here are some excerpts from another:

I was ordered by Brack to attend the first euthanasia experiment in the Brandenburg asylum near Berlin. I went to the asylum in the first half of January 1940. Additional building work had already been carried out especially for the purpose. There was a room similar to a shower room which was approximately 3 by 5 meters and 3 meters high and tiled. There were benches round the room and a water pipe about 1 inch in diameter ran along the wall about 10 cm off the floor. There were small holes in this pipe from which the carbon monoxide gas poured out. The gas cylinders stood outside the room and were already connected up to the main pipe. [...] There were already two mobile crematoriums in the asylum with which to burn the corpses. There was a rectangular peephole in the entrance door, which was constructed like an air raid shelter door, through which the delinquents could be observed. The first gassing was carried out by Dr. Widmann personally. He turned the gas tap and regulated the amount of the gas. [...] For this first gassing about 18-20 people were led into this 'shower room' by the nursing staff. These men had to undress in an anteroom and they were completely naked. The doors were shut behind them. These people went quietly into the room and showed no signs of being upset. Dr. Widmann operated the gas. I could see through the peephole that after about a minute the people had

collapsed or lay on the benches. There were no scenes and no disorder. After a further five minutes the room was ventilated.⁵⁰⁷

and here is are excerpts from a third:

Then came the idea of a room such as you see here with iron door and shutter -- a hermetically sealed room. Put those two facts together, and whither do they lead? [...] Observe what I found. You see the gas-piping along the skirting here. Very good. It rises in the angle of the wall, and there is a tap here in the corner. The pipe runs out into the strong room, as you can see, and ends in that plaster rose in the center of the ceiling, where it is concealed by the ornamentation. That end is wide open. At any moment by turning the outside tap the room could be flooded with gas. With door and shutter closed and tap full on I would not give two minutes of conscious sensation to anyone shut up in that little chamber. By what devilish device he decoyed them there I do not know, but once inside the door they were at his mercy. Now, we will suppose that you were shut up in this little room, had not two minutes to live, but wanted to get even with the fiend who was probably mocking at you from the other side of the door. What would you do? ... Now, look here! Just above the skirting is scribbled with a purple indelible pencil, 'We, we --' That's all.⁵⁰⁸

What is the difference among these accounts? They all sound similar. The first is from Alexander Werth, and fairly represents the kinds of arguments he and others made in September 1944 in describing the operation of the Majdanek gas chamber. As we have seen, the gastight door, which he found so incriminating, is merely an air raid shelter door. The second account comes from testimony about a euthanasia gassing, which we have seen involves a probable retrofitting of the shower-gas-burning concept. The final excerpts come from a Sherlock Holmes story, *The Adventure of the Retired Colourman*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, written in 1924 or 1925.

The Holmes story reminds us of two things. First, that a clearly fictional -- but meant to be realistic -- depiction of a gassing could antedate any gassing stories by almost 20 years. Indeed, we are almost inclined to think that Conan Doyle's adventure -- bearing in mind the universal popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories back then -- contributed some detail to the other two later accounts.

The second thing that comes to mind is the ultimate origin of these concepts. That is, we are not merely interested in the idea of poison gas, but also

the concepts of delousing and burning, and how they evolved and were associated in the Western mind. In addition, we should also take note of those concepts that we specifically associate with the Holocaust, namely, an extermination program, carried out by higher orders in a secret fashion, and consuming a predetermined number of Jewish victims. What we are proposing is no longer a simple history of what happened, but how what happened was interpreted by those who experienced it on the basis of their expectations and beliefs.

Such an investigation takes us far from mere literary analysis and almost into a kind of literary archaeology that would take years to unravel. Nevertheless it is still possible to adumbrate some of the roots of these various concepts.

From the nineteenth century "gas" seems to have conjured up above all the firedamp of coal mines which engendered several terrible disasters.⁵⁰⁹ Alternatively, gas was related to medicine because of its use as an anesthetic for surgery and dentistry.⁵¹⁰ Finally, coal gas was harnessed at the beginning of the nineteenth century for illumination purposes, and was widely distributed throughout Europe by the early twentieth century.⁵¹¹ This largely impure gas was potentially lethal because of the carbon monoxide it contained; there are several references to its use in the popular press and literature as a means of suicide,⁵¹² accidental deaths,⁵¹³ and even murder.⁵¹⁴ In our opinion, the idea of a painless death through gassing, of a death without premonition, as well as the idea of lethal "gas ovens" were all largely derived in the popular mind from the deaths caused by coal gas.⁵¹⁵

However it was probably the mining concept of gas as an explosive that inspired H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* from 1898 where exploding gases provide not only propulsion for the Martian craft but also a potent weapon.⁵¹⁶ Gas usage again would figure in the Martian stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs, from 1913, although here the association clearly seems to have been with nitrous oxide, which frequently is known to cause out of body experiences.⁵¹⁷ Probably the Holocaust researcher should be familiar with as many associations of gas as possible when reviewing the construction of gassing claims.

Gas warfare in terms of air power also figures in the European mind earlier than we might think. Already in 1912, a Leipzig correspondent, reviewing the political scene in the Balkans, spoke of the need to develop "poison gas bombs"⁵¹⁸, and, as far back as 1932 the author of a novel about the coming war would provide a vivid description of the bombing of Paris, ending with a gas attack.⁵¹⁹ Again, H. G. Wells is a prominent figure here, for his *War in the Air* from 1908 featured air battles between huge airships or zeppelins who were kept aloft by their "gas chambers", and, since gas was essential for the maintenance of

air superiority, part of the action of the novel involved the destruction of the opponents' gas plants.⁵²⁰

A further literary synthesis of "gas" themes may be found in the expressionist "Gas" trilogy (1917-1920) by the German playwright Georg Kaiser,⁵²¹ in which gas assumes the role not only as the primary engine of social and industrial development but also as the weapon that has the potential for destroying mankind, rather as many have regarded nuclear power in our own time.

When looking for literary references to gas in order to define what the word conjured up in people's minds, it is interesting in this regard that Conan Doyle is a veritable fount of references to poison gases of various kinds but also cyanide.⁵²² Particularly interesting in this respect is *The Poison Belt*, from 1913, which describes Planet Earth entering into a celestial cloud of poison gas that apparently kills all, the only hope for the five survivors is to turn the Madame's boudoir into a kind of "anti-gas shelter" complete with bottled oxygen.⁵²³ This novel, in turn, probably borrowed the motif of a world-wide gassing from M. P. Shiel's *Purple Cloud* (1901) in which an explorer returns from the North Pole to find that the world has been destroyed by "another Krakatoa" which belched huge clouds of cyanide gas which destroyed mankind.⁵²⁴

The writings of Shiel, probably best known for his "Yellow Peril" novels,⁵²⁵ suggests further connections, concerning not only science fiction, anti-Asian paranoia that may have been grafted onto other contexts in the twentieth century (the use of poison gas in the 1915 Sax Rohmer novel, *The Return of Fu Manchu* comes to mind)⁵²⁶, the fear of secret weapons, and more generally what is known as the "Future War" sub-genre of science fiction.⁵²⁷ In this respect we find all manner of secret weapons discussed in the tense atmosphere of the 1930's, including poison gas.⁵²⁸ On the other hand, the idea that the Germans were using their dominance in the chemical industry for developing secret weapons was a common idea even in the first years after the First World War, as is attested by the 1921 book, *The Riddle of the Rhine*.⁵²⁹

Most remarkably, we find already in the 1930's references to gas killings remarkably similar to those that arose in 1940. A Jehovah's Witness publication from 1937 already reported on the alleged use of poison gas in German camps,⁵³⁰ and Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* from 1936 features an episode in which twenty Jews are asphyxiated in the basement of their synagogue with bottled carbon monoxide.⁵³¹

We have already touched on delousing procedures and cremation in the popular culture, as shown in Huxley and the memoirs of Mary Antin and even the

short fiction of Sholom Aleichem. Doubtless there are many more. The Soviet poet Mayakovsky used the motif of a delousing station in his futurist play *The Bathhouse* (1926) to describe a process of exclusion, cleansing, and as it were "ideological delousing".⁵³² It is interesting to note that there are at least two claims from the Second World War that allege that the Germans used showers to kill people, but not with poison gas.⁵³³

Turning now to the concepts important to the Jewish perspective on the Holocaust, the usage of the term "extermination" is deserving of further excavation. In this respect the researcher is surprised at how easily the term is employed to describe the persecutions and hardships of the Eastern Jews since the early 1880's. Thus, in 1882, a speech in the United States House of Representatives concluded "The Hebraic-Russian question has been summed up in a few words: 'Extermination of two and one-half millions of mankind because they are -- Jews!'"⁵³⁴ Meanwhile, in a letter written in 1939, the legendary Jewish historian Simon Dubnow would write of conditions in Germany: "Hitler's 'system of extermination' is simply a translation of Haman's plan to 'destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews.' [...] Hitler has almost realized his plan. One million Jews in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia are destroyed, plundered, mutilated [...]."⁵³⁵

Further evidence of various uses of the word "extermination" and its German form "*Ausrottung*" comes from the 1936 compilation *Der gelbe Fleck*, edited by Lion Feuchtwanger, where the subtitle refers not to physical killing, but simply to the intent to enforce German Jewish emigration, resulting in the "*Ausrottung*" of German Jewry.⁵³⁶ While "*Ausrottung*" in this case is probably best rendered as "*extinction*", when the book was published in England later that year, the subtitle was now rendered as "The outlawing of half a million human beings", suggesting that the use of "extermination" in this context was too much even for the Jewish socialist publisher of the tract.⁵³⁷

With due regard to the frightful excesses of the initial wave of Russian pogroms and the effects of *Kristallnacht*, to use the term "extermination" seems either hyperbole or irresponsibility, certainly in the sense in which we construe the term today. But then the obvious conclusion is that "extermination" did not have quite the meaning it has today in the 1930's and the Second World War.⁵³⁸

These remarks also refer back to the concept of "six million" Jews endangered with "extermination" a construction which has been traced back to a speech by the governor of New York in 1919, in the context of the Russo-Polish war and typhus epidemics.⁵³⁹ As Arthur Butz was perhaps the first to note, the final figure for Jewish losses as a result of National Socialist persecution seems to

have been firmly set early in the war, certainly long before any accurate accounting could be done.⁵⁴⁰ One has to inquire on the fixation with this number, especially in light of both traditional and revisionist studies that indicates the loss of life -- if not the loss of community -- was rather less.⁵⁴¹

Finally, it seems to be worthwhile to study Jewish historians to grasp their vision of historical causality. Simply put, the explanations put forward by Jewish historians for the pogroms, as for any of the other misfortunes of Jewish history, is almost always expressed in terms of the conspiratorial plotting of members of the ruling elite.⁵⁴² Rarely does there seem to be an appreciation of the social tensions that could give rise to largely spontaneous episodes of violence, or that the interests of Jewish people could conflict with those of non-Jews, thus generating tensions which would lead to tragic upheavals.

This last factor appears to be particularly instrumental in the tendency to view the Holocaust in a rather simple and monocausal way, as the personal pursuit of the Hitler-Haman, driven by unnamed demons to utterly destroy the Jews. But aside from the biblical resonance of such an explanation it does not fit the patterns we normally associate with any other upheavals in history. Nor does such an explanation account for the complexity of the time, or for the nature of the very real persecutions and dissolution effected by the Stalinist regime, the pre-war Polish regime, or other East European governments.⁵⁴³ To put the onus for the Holocaust solely on Hitler the Man, is merely to brandish a caricature of Hitler the Devil, and certainly such historical perception is useless in preventing future holocausts. Instead, all too often, such approaches to historical judgment merely descend into a vein of highly colored condemnations, first of Hitler, then the Nazis, and finally the German people.⁵⁴⁴ Such moralistic diatribes may soothe the suffering soul, but they contribute nothing to our understanding, nor, it must be said, do they contribute anything to reconciliation.

16. Conclusions

There is no material or documentary evidence that unambiguously supports the gassing claim. -- The evidence put forward overwhelmingly refers to either disinfection or civil air defense, including gas protection. -- Furthermore, fictional accounts of gassing antedate the gassing claim by many years. -- The gassing claim as a mass delusion. -- As a rumor, compare urban legends -- As a legend. -- As a hoax. -- Analogy to UFO abductions. -- The gassing claim as a cultural construct. The need for nationalities to perceive their history as unique. -- The general nature of twentieth century history in Eastern Europe. -- The Jewish ordeal along the continuum of war, revolution, collectivization, dekulakization, and the German expulsions. -- The gassing claim created by, and reinforced by, delusional pressures of social and cultural change as well as by censorship.

THE AIM OF THIS ESSAY was to trace in a rudimentary form the evolution of the gassing claims from the summer of 1942, when they began in the form of wartime propaganda, until the end of the Nuremberg Trials, by which time they had assumed the stature of facts. Our main assumption was that in tracing the development of these stories we would be able to define precisely where and how the various story elements evolved. Of course, if the evolution of the stories had ended up in a solid documentary or material base, that would have strongly corroborated the factuality of the mass gassing allegations. But in our traversal, we have found two things:

(1) There is no unambiguous material or documentary basis for the gassing claims: what has been put forward as indirect evidence of mass gassings turns out, in context, to overwhelmingly pertain either to German disinfection procedures or German civil air defense measures.

(2) Gassing claims similar to those from the Second World War were made on several occasions long before the Germans are supposed to have embarked on the project.

We conclude that since the gassing claims were able to evolve and develop independent of any reliable material or documentary evidence, and indeed were able to evolve to a high degree even before the war began, the gassing claim should be recognized as a delusion, indeed, as one of the greatest delusions of all time.

The critical response could be twofold. First, the critic could say that the hundreds (really, dozens) of eyewitnesses and confessors could not be lying, they must be telling the truth in describing gas chambers, because if they were lying

one would have to hypothesize a massive amount of collusion among them in order to make their stories converge.

There are several problems with this rejoinder. The most serious is that it absolutely ignores the context of the testimonies and confessions, all of which were generated in an atmosphere saturated with rumors of the shower-gas-burning sequence. The so-called "convergence of evidence" as it applies to testimonies and confessions could just as easily be attributed to a ground of generalized rumor as to one of empirical fact. Nor is this reliance on testimonies and confessions very convincing when we have seen that testimonies (e.g., Bendel, Bimko), memoirs (e.g., Lengyel, Vrba), and confessions (e.g., Grabner, Höß) are all liable to be inaccurate and untruthful, even if we were to grant that, of course, no one would ever be untruthful about these events on purpose.

As we have seen, the essentials of the gassing legend as embodied in the shower-gas-burning model was widely disseminated during the war, including via radio broadcasts to Europe. Literally anyone in 1945 or thereafter could have devised, or imagined, or attested to, a mass gassing scenario. And in fact we find further that the testimonies and confessions frequently contradict on almost all details, but only have the shower-gas-burning sequence in common.

It is probably no coincidence that the three predicates of the sequence indicate things that prompted widespread anxiety and fear in the early twentieth century: disease and disease control measures, poison gas usage, and cremation. Looked at from this angle, the shower-gas-burning scenario, along with the vacuum chambers, the electrocution plates, the lampshades, the soap, the medical experiments, and the films of executions and mass murders that were purportedly the delight of the Nazi leadership, are all, at least on some level, simple expressions of a myth of a twentieth century Inferno.⁵⁴⁵

Excuse me, please go on drinking. Are you better now? Or do you have progressive ideas about hell and keep up with the reformists? I mean, instead of ordinary cauldrons with sulfur for poor sinners there are quick boiling kettles and high pressure boilers. The sinners are fried in margarine, there are grills driven by electricity, steam rollers roll over the sinners for millions of years, the gnashing of the teeth is produced with the help of dentists with special equipment, the howling is recorded on gramophones, and the records are sent upstairs for the entertainment of the just.⁵⁴⁶

Returning to the objection that the many witnesses and confessors could not be wrong, such an objection sounds eerily similar to claims made by those

who assert the reality of alien abductions: "All the major accounts of abduction in the book share common characteristics and thus provide a confirmation of one another," wrote David Jacobs, "Even the smallest details of the events were confirmed many times over. There was a chronology, structure, logic -- the events made sense and the displayed an extraordinary internal consistency."⁵⁴⁷ Yet Elaine Showalter, in her book *Hystories* has a ready response for those who see in such narrative similarity something more than spectral evidence:

Literary critics, however, realize that similarities between two stories do not mean that they mirror a common reality or even that the writers have read each other's texts. Like all narratives, hystories [Showalter's term for hysterical narratives - SC] have their own conventions, stereotypes, and structures. Writers inherit common themes, structures, characters, and images; critics call these common elements intertextuality.⁵⁴⁸

To the extent that we can see traces of the gassing claim in the popular culture in the decades before the Second World War simply strengthens the notion that it arose out of such "intertextuality", or, less ornately, out of the common sense of the time.

That the mass gassing claim can be explained as a cultural construct leads us naturally to consider whether it can be successfully explained by recourse to other approaches borrowed from psychology, crowd and social psychology, and sociology.

One approach would be to look at the gassing claim in the context of the "conveyor belt of death" imagery that is frequently crops up in the Holocaust literature.⁵⁴⁹ From a sociological point of view, such imagery is above all a hypostasis and rejection of the industrialization and modernization process that at this moment in historic time was completely transforming Eastern Europe. It is a truism of sociology and the sociology of knowledge that such transformations destroy the "plausibility structures", or belief structures, of the previous craft-based or agricultural-based societies, and above all their legitimizing structures in religion.⁵⁵⁰ No doubt the emotion, verging on religious devotion, that for many imbues this topic and this claim can be linked back to such crises of faith and society.

Then again, there are those who would prefer to characterize the gassing claim as a hoax. A hoax it may well be, especially when, in studying it, we limit ourselves to the cheap and salacious gossip of far too many of the immediate postwar treatments, and, unfortunately, characteristic of most of the widely read ones.⁵⁵¹ Yet, that this great tragedy has over the years accrued a thick silt of

fantasy does not on its own dispute the sincerity or the pain of those who experienced the deportations or lost loved ones during the war. Still, on the other hand, the gassing claim does seem to meet many of the wish-fulfillment and projection characteristics of true hoaxes.⁵⁵² It would probably be better to say that, if the claim is a hoax, then surely a hoax of limited participation, and we should emphasize the number of those deceived, rather than the small number of those deceiving.

Then we might ask ourselves to what extent we may call the gassing claim a rumor, or whether it even qualifies to the status of a legend. That the gassing claim began as rumor seems indisputable: it meets the general criteria of disorientation and anxiety in its formation.⁵⁵³ But on the other hand does it have sufficient value for it to remain in our collective cultural consciousness as a legend?⁵⁵⁴ This brings us to the fundamental value of the Holocaust to the Jewish people.

Our general position is that the Holocaust can only be understood in the wider context of the two wars between the Slavic states and the Germanic states for East European hegemony from 1914 to 1945 and thereafter. That conflict, in turn, can only be understood in terms of the social, economic and demographic transformation of the region over the previous several decades. Such a putting into context certainly does diminish the Holocaust, because then it is placed between the horrors of collectivization in Russia on the one hand, and the expulsions of the Eastern Germans on the other. But while such a putting into context is probably apt for a more global and inclusive concept of twentieth century European history, it is not going to satisfy the identity needs of the individual communities in Europe, nor can it satisfy those needs for the Jewish people. To put it another way, every group is entitled to regard their history and their trials as unique, although some mischief undoubtedly begins when one group seeks to make its group judgment the regnant judgment in a pluralistic society.

Therefore we may ask: how must the Jewish people perceive the Holocaust? From a long perspective, the erosion and gradual destruction of the Eastern European Jewish communities had been going on ever since the Polish partitions, but there is no doubt that in the twentieth century those communities not only came to an end, but were extirpated in scenes of terror and horror. Yet, given the long history of the pogroms from 1881,⁵⁵⁵ the extent of pre-war Polish anti-Semitism,⁵⁵⁶ the non-German participation in many of the massacres,⁵⁵⁷ the massive Soviet deportations of 1940,⁵⁵⁸ and the anti-Semitism and persecutions of the Soviet Union,⁵⁵⁹ it seems naive to insist, "No Hitler, No Holocaust."⁵⁶⁰ Given the predilection for ruthless transformations among the leaders and theorists in the region, it seems likely that had Hitler never lived someone else from some other

country would have devised some other Final Solution. It should be clear, on empirical grounds alone, that to focus solely on Hitler, or National Socialism, or the German people, is to seek a simple answer and a convenient scapegoat for a process of destruction that is still difficult to grasp or reconcile with the will of the Lord of the Universe.

The rational traditions of Judaism make it doubtful that thinking men and women in the Jewish community will forever endorse claims that have been shown to be lacking empirical foundation. Therefore we should understand that the concept Holocaust, as usually discussed, can be construed and memorialized in different ways. We have noted the emphasis on "extermination" among Jewish historians before Hitler's Russian War: we take this to be above all a reference to the communal and social nature of the Jewish life. In other words, we should be sensitive to the idea that while extermination may not mean death, to the extent that it involves the destruction of a Jewish community it is almost the same thing as death. Therefore, whether the victims are numbered in millions or hundreds of thousands, whether they died from typhus, or bullets, or poison gas, in German ghettos, Soviet camps, or gas chambers, and whether it was done by plan or occurred as plans unraveled, the Jewish people undoubtedly experienced a terrible bloodletting and a virtually complete loss of community in the Second World War. Whether we wish to call this "Holocaust", realizing that to do so brings one to the endorsement of a very particular vision of Jewish-Gentile relations and a very specific political ideology, namely, Zionism, lies outside of the province of historical analysis. But whether we call it Holocaust or Judeocide⁵⁶¹ the general outlines of the destruction are clear and inarguable. We should respect this first, just as we should insist on the humanity of the German people in this troubled period, and then the facts will take care of themselves.

Returning to the objections of a would-be critic, we could imagine that our interpretation of the facts could be called into question: that in our analysis we have wrongfully explained the meager documentary or material data, that in fact the buildings really were gas chambers, and the documents really were references to mass gassing. There are three ways to respond to this argument.

The first is to note that, because of their inaccuracy and variability, the testimonies and confessions absolutely require corroboration with reference to material, physical, or documentary data. Moreover, due to the fact that delousing paraphernalia was inarguably misconstrued both after the war and during the postwar trials as being related to gas extermination means that skepticism is indeed called for and that the threshold of proof must be kept to a high standard.

The second point to make is that, if it is true that the documents usually

offered do indeed have the sinister meaning attributed to them, such an interpretation cannot stand without contextual corroboration. In other words, it is not enough to impose a gas extermination interpretation on a few dozen documents. The effort must be made to place the documents not only within the full context of the documentary record, but also in the context of alternate interpretations. Over the past several decades, revisionists have offered a number of different contexts in which these documents can be explained, including disinfection, camp hygiene, crematorium construction, and civil air defense, and these alternate explanations are backed up by large contemporary literatures. No such literature -- large or small -- buttresses the gas extermination interpretation of these documents. The onus is therefore on the traditional interpretation to explain in detail why these alternate explanations for the documents are unsound. But instead, the general trend of the traditional school has been to ignore these other contexts entirely, preferring to support their out-of-context interpretations by recourse to the same testimonies and confessions whose authority in turn depends on the gas extermination interpretation of the documents in question. The circularity of the argumentation is manifest.

The third response to the critic concerns the concessions that must be made to the standard narrative, if it is to stand. Those now wishing to claim that the mass gas extermination campaign took place must begin their analyses by acknowledging that the claim is traceable to a process -- delousing and disinfection -- that gave rise to similar claims in the First World War. They must further admit that accusations of mass gassing, clearly rooted in cultural anxiety about poison gas use but not in reality, were current in Germany in the 1930's and before the invasion of the Soviet Union. They must grant that rumors, specifically of poison gas, have contributed to cases of mass hysteria, before, during, and after the Second World War. Finally, they must concede that the common reaction of Allied liberators in the West was also hysterical, resulting in several false allegations of gassing.

Holocaust historians in the future must also acknowledge that the Allies, and, in particular the BBC, broadcast rumors about mass gassings back to Europe, including at least one in Yiddish, thus compounding the rumors that went back to the 1930's and giving them legitimacy. In spite of all this they must insist that the mass gassings took place, that the Nazis sought to carry out these gassings in utter secrecy even after they had been accused of them over the radio, with such success that no material or documentary trace of the operation remains. One can, by straining credulity, accept the proposition that a conspiracy would carry out a wicked deed without leaving any trace. But, in our opinion, it is simply impossible to assert that a conspiracy of such size and scope would have been organized and carried out after receiving public instruction on how it was

supposed to be carried out from enemy radio broadcasts.

That brings us to the second point, which is the verdict of posterity. Historians may be gullible, but they are not permanently gullible. Historians are natural storytellers; hence they will often repeat historical details because they find them illustrative or colorful. But even historians will have to engage the details of the gassing legend some day, and when they do they will realize that there is little or no empirical substance to the claim. At that point the historian will be bound to look to the documentary record, and, finding it non-existent, will step away from the gassing claim. It makes no difference, therefore, whether revisionists are declared right or wrong on the gassing issue at this time. The point is that future historians will certainly reject the gassing claim. Those who would propose censorship, and have a care for posterity, should re-think their steps.

The gassing claim of the Holocaust derives from a complex of delusion and censorship. We are now in a position to encapsulate how both tendencies reinforced the other. The gassing legend seemed to have been endemic in Europe for several years before the outbreak of the Second World War. At that time, and in conjunction with the National Socialist euthanasia program, conducted in secret, the rumor of gassing developed more widely. Once the Germans began large-scale deportations in the spring of 1942, the typical disinfection rumors arose, as they had in previous decades, but this time they tended to focus on the gassing claim. These rumors passed through the BBC, which gave the rumors authority and in turn created the feedback loop for their further development. In this respect the growth of the gassing rumors should be distinguished from such phenomena as the *War of the Worlds* panic, because in the latter case official denunciation of the claim was immediate. But in this case there were no official pronouncements about the extermination rumors at all, but simply the repetition of these claims.

The combination of frightful epidemic scenes in the Western camps combined with a series of Soviet Special Commissions, including the Auschwitz report, set the seal on the story, providing the Canonical Holocaust, which, in its function was scarcely distinguishable from one of the manuals of interrogation from the days of the great witch hunts or the Inquisition. The evolution of the Canon continued at the postwar trials, where the presentation on the alleged mass gassings and exterminations was in the hands of a state which had already demonstrated its schizophrenic tendencies in its approach to handling various internal crises while following a path of rapid and forced industrialization and modernization in the previous two decades. The residue of such rapid change is furthermore well understood to be anomie, disorientation, and other social pathologies, and these also profoundly affected the Jews of Eastern Europe, who

were themselves not only subject to almost continuous persecution during this time but also to the disorientation and social disintegration characteristic of grand socio-economic transformations.

The claim of mass gas extermination arose and found its fulfillment in this context.

With some imagination and sensitivity we can see how the gassing legend arose, but the decisive factor in all cases was the impeded flow of information, characteristic of censorship, along with the silence of responsible voices of reason that could have destroyed destructive rumors before they created a hysterical reaction.

In this sense we can see how Germany, falling sway to a dictatorship which carefully monitored public information, created its own resistance. The German people, excluded from the unvarnished truth by the censor, sought to fill in the gaps of their knowledge by guessing: in this way they were like any other people. When the threat of war became prominent in the late 1930's, when the concentration camp system began to expand, and, finally, when the Third Reich embarked on its saddening experiments in euthanasia, the German people could now include fear along with ignorance in their speculations. The result was the gassing claim in embryo.

In 1942, when the Germans followed up on their avowed aim to deport all of Europe's Jews to the East, the gassing rumor reemerged with new virulence, now by a clear reference backwards to the anxiety that delousing and disinfection procedures had long engendered. The rumors thus produced filtered their way back to the West, to the dozens of prominent Zionists overwhelmed in their impotence and their concern for their people. They had no way of knowing, of course, precisely what was happening, no more than the German people knew what was happening in the Euthanasia centers. The rumors of gassing were plausible, and fit the cultural script. Their acceptance by the Western Zionists and particularly by prominent American Jews and US officials is not especially surprising.

Towards the end of the war in the east, the claims of mass gassing went hand in hand with emerging political interests. It was useful for the Soviet Union, stung by the revelations of Katyn, to ascribe even more monstrous crimes to its enemy, and it was also useful for the United Kingdom and the United States, who pretended to honor human rights, to have the Soviet Union portrayed as a progressive force. But this last could only be achieved by a completely monochromatic depiction of German evil. From the late spring of 1944 also it seems that even Zionists, while no doubt accepting the general validity of the

extermination claim, began to manipulate it for political purposes.

When the war was over, the gassing claim gradually died out in the West, asserting itself only in the East, shielded by the Iron Curtain of censorship. And later, as relations with Eastern Europe thawed, and as revisionists began putting hard challenges to the truth of the gassing claim, one by one the governments of the free world began to censor their voices in turn.

Two conclusions should be obvious. The first is that the Holocaust gassing claim arose because of censorship. The second is that today the Holocaust gassing claim can only be maintained by censorship. But censorship does more than perpetuate false belief. Because it separates and divides people from access to information, it encourages conspiratorial thinking, and hence mistrust, stereotyping, prejudice, and hatred of other groups. Because censorship involves the government in suppressing the rights of individuals, it encourages individuals to feel helpless, impotent, resentful, and bitter. But precisely because the State, in its arrogance, would prevent free people from speaking their minds, there is then no more outlet for their frustrations, except a slow, constant, and alienated simmer. And having been thus separated from the State, which is supposed to exist to serve their interests, individuals turn their backs on society, which in turn leads to the gradual erosion of civil society, leaving only atomized individuals at the mercy of the State.

The Holocaust gassing claim may have been the false fruit of censorship, but certainly the holocaust of the common people in Europe in the twentieth century was a direct result of too much state intervention, and too little respect for the rights of ordinary people. By upholding censorship of Holocaust revisionists, we duly uphold false beliefs. And we also invite the very real holocausts of the future.

Notes

¹The present essay in its research phases has given rise to several specialist articles. Principle among these are "Technique and Operation of German Anti-Gas Shelters: A Refutation of J. C. Pressac's 'Criminal Traces'" (March, 1997; hereinafter *Technique*), "Defending Against the Allied Bombing Campaign: Air Raid Shelters and Gas Protection in Germany, 1939-1945, Parts 1 and 2" (July, 1997; hereinafter *Defending*) and "Bomb Shelters in Birkenau: A Reappraisal" (June, 2000; hereinafter *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*). The last of these articles tends to summarize and clarify the previous ones, and also references a few minor articles, all of them pertain to the importance of German civil air defense in understanding the mass gassing claim. All may be found on the Internet site of the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) at <http://www.codoh.com>. *Technique* was published in German, in a version edited by Germar Rudolf, for his journal *Vierteljahrshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung* (VHO), v. 1, 1997/4, and also on the VHO website at <http://www.vho.org>. *Technique* was also published in English, in a version edited by Mark Weber, in *the Journal of Historical Review* (JHR), v. 18/4, Jul-Aug 1999, which is the journal of the *Institute of Historical Review* (IHR), and may also be found on its website, at <http://www.ihr.org>. Some of the leading conclusions from these articles will be discussed or amplified later in the present study.

²The first revisionists include the Frenchman, Paul Rassinier (d. 1967), active from 1948, a former inmate of Buchenwald (see his collected writings, *Debunking the Genocide Myth*, Institute of Historical Review (IHR), Newport Beach, CA: o. p.), and the Rumanian Jew, Josef Ginzburg (d. 1990), whose family was persecuted and deported during the Second World War, writing under the pseudonym, J. G. Burg, from 1962. There is no easily available precis of revisionist historiography, Arthur R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, IHR, Newport News, CA:1983 contains some information, pp. 10-12; pp. 317-334.

³Some descriptive matter is found in Butz, *op. cit., loc. cit.*, and consult also *cum grano salis* Shermer, *Why People Believe Weird Things*, W. H. Freeman, NY:1997, pp. 173-252. After Rassinier and Burg, "Holocaust revisionism" essentially begins with Arthur R. Butz, whose book was first published in 1976 (1977 in the US): Robert Faurisson in France and Wilhelm Stäglich in Germany emerged almost simultaneously along with others. The end of the '70's witnessed the debut of the *Journal of Historical Review* (JHR) the primary English-language organ of revisionist writings. The 1980's found important writings by James G. Martin, Friedrich Berg, and Mark Weber, they were joined in the 1990's by, among others, Carlo Mattogno and John Ball. The 1988 Zündel trial also witnessed the entrance of the British historian David Irving into the revisionist fold, although to this date his writings have not heavily engaged the topic of the Holocaust as such, but see his *Goebbels* (1996) and *Nuremberg: The Last Battle* (1996),

both issued by Focal Point in London, as well as the extensive discussion of revisionism during the Irving v. Lipstadt libel trial in 2000, copiously documented on Irving's website at <http://www.fpp.co.uk>.

⁴⁴ Shermer, Michael, *op. cit., loc. cit.*, provides a definition of revisionist positions, or as he calls it, "Holocaust Denial": revisionism is disposed to denying (1) intentional genocide on racial grounds; (2) "highly technical, well-organized" program, using gas chambers and crematoriums, (3) between five and six million dead. Shermer is to be credited for not demonizing revisionists, although his treatment leaves much out. His recent *Denying History*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London:2000, written with Alex Grobman of the Simon Wiesenthal Center of Los Angeles, is also rather narrow in its scope and involves much personal matter not directly relevant to the subject. In terms of the overall stance of Shermer, *et al.*, we do not know of any other historical event where the facts are set as preconditions to the concept, furthermore, not all revisionists give equal weight to each of the three "conditions". In the present case, while we have doubts about the extent of (1) and (3), we do not consider them historiographically interesting. On the other hand, we are certain that (2), at least as stated, is false.

⁵⁵ Typical are the descriptions of revisionists that one finds in Lipstadt, Deborah, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, Penguin Books (Plume), NY:1994, we note in particular the introduction where revisionist "deniers" are characterized as plague-spreading rats.

⁶⁶ Revisionism is thus outlawed in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Israel, among other countries.

⁷⁷ Two trials were carried out against Ernst Zündel, in 1985 and 1988; Barbara Kulaszka prepared a digest of the transcripts of the second trial, printed as *Did Six Million Really Die?* and his available on the Zündel-site on the Internet [hereinafter, DSMRD].

⁸⁸ Tony Blair's promises in news reports, 16 Oct 96, and 30 Jan 97.

⁹⁹ This is evident, for example, in Raul Hilberg's *Destruction of the European Jews*, Quadrangle, Chicago:1968, which, on the subject of gas exterminations restricts itself to heavily edited testimonies of two Nazis (Rudolf Hoess and Kurt Gerstein), taken under vastly different circumstances, two ambiguous documents (the *Vergasungskeller* note and the *gasdichte Türme* letter, both discussed at length in *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*) and a number of postwar memoirs of former concentration camp inmates (Gisella Perl, Olga Lengyel, etc.).

¹⁰¹⁰ The forensic approach is largely the brainchild of Robert Faurisson who already in the 1970's sought to compare the arrangement of gassing facilities in Poland with known gas execution technology in the United States. In the late 1980's, while preparing for the 2nd Zündel trial, an expert in US execution technology, Fred Leuchter, was commissioned

to write a report on the gassing sites in Poland. The resulting *Leuchter Report* (1988) was a milestone in Holocaust forensics, although its main conclusion, that the crematoriums at Birkenau could never have been used for gassing, has been hotly disputed. Leuchter's main scientific conclusions, that the crematoriums bore unexpectedly low cyanide traces, considering their supposed use, have been reproduced in several studies by both sides, but the interpretation of these low to non-existent traces has been variously argued and appears inconclusive. The most thorough and rigorous study of forensic issues related to cyanide residues remains the *Rudolf Report* (*Gutachten*), but the German chemist Germar Rudolf, published in 1992 and subsequently revised. Rudolf's conclusions about gas traces have been disputed by Polish chemists of the Jan Sehn Historical Institute of Krakow (Jan Sehn was the presiding judge at the postwar Auschwitz trials) as well as by the American chemist Richard J. Green. Those interested in the ongoing debate should consult the numerous exchanges at Rudolf's website, <http://www.vho.org> and <http://www.holocaust-history.org>, which features Green's contributions.

Germar Rudolf, under the pseudonym, Ernst Gauss, has also edited the important collection of studies, *Grundlagen zur Zeitgeschichte*, Grabert Verlag, Tübingen:1994 (hereinafter *Grundlagen*), published as *Dissecting the Holocaust* in 2000, with some valuable supplementary articles.

In related areas, the American engineer Friedrich Paul Berg, since 1983, has written extensively on the capability of diesel engines to produce lethal amounts of carbon monoxide gas, while the Italian scholar Carlo Mattogno, among several other contributions, has done the most thorough analyses of real-world crematoriums capacities. For Rudolf, see "*Die 'Gaskammern' von Auschwitz und Majdanek*", for Berg, "*Die Diesel-Gaskammern: Mythos im Mythos*", and for Mattogno see "*Die Krematoriumsofen von Auschwitz-Birkenau*" all in *Grundlagen*. Further on Mattogno's work on crematoriums, his analyses have been subjected to rebuttals by John Zimmerman of the University of Las Vegas, to which Mattogno has contributed counter-rebuttals. For Mattogno's contributions, see the website of Russ Granata at <http://www.russgranata.com>, for Zimmerman's, see <http://www.holocaust-history.org>. Finally, Mattogno has written two critiques of our own work relative to German civil defense procedures in the concentration camps, consult Russ Granata's website, as well as *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau* which summarizes Mattogno's criticisms and responds to same.

¹¹ Walter Laqueur's *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's 'Final Solution'*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston:1980, which sought to respond to the question of why the Allies failed to interdict the operation the "extermination camps" by showing that, while information about the camps was freely available throughout the war, it was not generally believed. However, in reconstructing the scope of Allied "knowledge", Laqueur is compelled to accept every rumor as a reflection of fact, although the factuality of any of these rumors could only have been established by the late summer of 1944 at

the earliest when the Majdanek camp was liberated. This is not only anachronistic but makes it impossible for Laqueur to critically evaluate any of the claims he repeats.

¹²12 In writing these words, we had in mind the year 1959-1960, which featured the publication of *Madness and Civilization* by Michel Foucault and *Truth and Method* by Hans-Georg Gadamer, but of course the proper grounding of the underlying issues of what we might call "perspectivism" in criticism would take us far afield. Lest it be felt that such considerations are not germane to the present discussion, it is important to understand how Holocaust revisionism has been portrayed by some critics. For example, both Deborah Lipstadt and Richard Evans have taken the position that "Holocaust Denial" is a reflection of "post-modernist" trends in academia, and that these trends involve nothing less than "relativism" with regard to the past, which rather clearly reveals that they are confusing historical understanding with moral instruction, in addition to not understanding the course of western intellectual history over the past two centuries. The melodrama such critics evoke could almost be summed up in the title "The Killing of History", were it not for the fact that Windschuttle's summary of current historiographic fashions is much more reasonable than his title. If anything, however, the skepticism of Holocaust revisionism is hyper-empirical in nature, and owes nothing to "relativistic" currents derived either from linguistic theory, hermeneutics or Hegelian/Marxist analysis let alone the modified sociology of knowledge and traditional literary criticism we have employed here. For the attempt to link revisionism with post-modernism, see Evans, Richard J., *In Defense of History*, WW Norton & Company, New York & London: 1996, p. 208f.

¹³13 Laqueur, Walter, *Fascism: Past, Present, Future*, Oxford UP, New York:1996, p. 141.

¹⁴14 Soviet Special Commissions and contemporary reports had established death tolls as follows: Treblinka, 3-3.5 million, Auschwitz Birkenau, at least 4 million, Majdanek, 1.5 million, Sobibor, Chelmno, several hundreds of thousands, Belzec, 600,000. For a survey of death estimates as of early 1946, including some even higher than the above, consult Aroneanu, Eugene, *Inside the Concentration Camps*, translated by Thomas Whissen, Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT: 1996, pp. 143-144.

¹⁵15 Ibid., The implication may not be correct: according to one of Aroneanu's witnesses the Jewish component always comprised 90 percent of the total, whatever that might be, *loc. cit.* This seems illogical. It also seems illogical to attribute to the Nazis a policy of exterminating non-Jews if, in the interval of 50 years, it has been accepted that in fact something on the order of seven millions were not exterminated at these six camps.

¹⁶16 Cf. Butz, Arthur R., *op. cit.*; Gilbert, Martin, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, Henry Holt & Co., NY:1982. Also useful to this section are: Gilbert's article, "What Was Known and When", in Gutman, Y. & Berenbaum, M., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, Indiana UP, Bloomington:1998; Martin, James J., *The Man Who Invented 'Genocide'*,

Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, CA: 1984; Dawidowicz, Lucy, ed. *A Holocaust Reader*, Behrman House, West Orange, NJ: 1976; and Laqueur, Walter, *The Terrible Secret*, Little, Brown, Boston: 1980.

¹⁷ The deportations generally involved, in 1942, moving Jews from Western Europe to Poland, and, also starting in 1942, deporting the Jewish population from Poland into occupied Russia. The dispute between revisionists and non-revisionists generally concerns the motive and the result of these deportations. The traditional school holds that the deportees were sent to three (or four) camps on a North-South axis of easternmost Poland (Sobibor, Treblinka, Belzec and sometimes Majdanek) as part of "Aktion Reinhard" an action supposedly named after Himmler's deputy Reinhard Heydrich (assassinated in the summer of 1942). This interpretation further holds that the deportees were gassed and burned at these three or four camps, and that the sole purpose of the deportations was to kill them. This school further maintains that beginning in 1943 all subsequent deportations were sent to Auschwitz Birkenau for the purpose of exterminating the deportees with poison gas at that facility.

The revisionist position is that while the Korherr Report (April, 1943) makes it clear that close to two millions were sent through the "Reinhard" camps by the end of 1942, the purpose of these camps was for the delousing and disinfection of the deportees, their division into labor groups, and above all the seizure of their wealth and other belongings. Afterwards, the revisionists hold, the deportees continued on to ghettos, camps, and work camps in occupied Russia where doubtless many died or were killed. In this interpretation there was no "Aktion Reinhard" but rather "Aktion Reinhardt", named after the German Minister of Finance, Fritz Reinhardt, whose policies of appropriating deportee belongings were established even before the war.

In our opinion there is no doubt that "Aktion Reinhardt" is the correct spelling and that it reflects the wealth seizure aspect of the deportations. This fact tends to be obscured for a few reasons. One is that while the existing correspondence usually refers to "Aktion Reinhardt", there are occasional misspellings as "Reinhard" or even "Reinhart" -- probably due to the fact that final voiced consonants (which is the distinction between "d" and "t") are unvoiced in German. Another factor is that advocates of the "Reinhard" interpretation, and thus the extermination interpretation, routinely "correct" the spelling of "Reinhardt" documents to "Reinhard" in their books, see for example the East German communist compilation, *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord* (1958), as well as Arad, Yitzhak, *Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN: 1987. A further factor that prevents understanding in this area is that, having committed themselves to an extermination interpretation, historians ignore the wealth seizure interpretation, although it is rather clearly revealed in the testimony and documents presented at the Nuremberg Military Tribunal (NMT) from 1946 through 1948: see Case 4, the "Concentration Camp Case" and Case 11, "The Wilhelmstrasse Case", the latter at which Fritz Reinhardt testified. A further relevant document may be found in *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, document 16, which clearly

shows (a) that Reinhardt was frequently misspelled, (b) that it referred to the wealth seizure aspect of the deportations, and (c) that it was applied to contexts outside of the three or four "*Reinhardt*" camps. Consult also the expert report of the American historian Christopher Browning, prepared for the Irving v. Lipstadt libel trial, and his immediate recantation under cross examination, <http://www.fpp.co.uk>.

¹⁸18 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 40. For reasons that will become more clear, it does not seem absolutely certain that the entirety of the Bund Report was composed in Warsaw. The entire text is reproduced in Dawidowicz, *Reader*, pp. 316-318. Priority claims for the first gassing story antedate this appearance: Robert Faurisson has referenced a report of the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Bulletin*, from Stockholm, December 22, 1941, as follows: "More than 1,000 victims of spotted fever [i.e., typhus] in the densely crowded Warsaw ghetto have been put to death by gas [...], it is learned today from reliable sources," quoted in *Grundlagen*, p. 10n. However this account is no longer credited by the traditional narrative. Laqueur, *Terrible, passim*, cites many other reports from early 1942 that circulated in Poland in various underground newspapers, in letters, etc.

¹⁹19 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, pp.40-42

²⁰20 Cf. Ohlendorf's testimony in the Einsatzgruppen Trial, excerpted in Harris, Whitney R., *Tyranny on Trial*, Barnes & Noble, NY:1995 (orig. SMU Press, Dallas, TX: 1954), p. 352ff

²¹21 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 43. This rumor is clearly indebted to the claim from December, see note 18 above.

²²22 Dawidowicz, *Reader*, p. 215

²³23 *op. cit.*, p. 216

²⁴24 *op. cit.*, p. 294f for the complete text of the front page editorial. It is worthy of note that an analysis of the original text indicates that the atrocities are enumerated by way of justifying the recalcitrance of the Bund to the German occupation, and condemning the cooperation of the Jewish Councils. On these last, consult especially Trunk, Isaiah, *Judenrat*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln: 1996 (originally published in 1972); and Ringelblum, Emanuel, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War*, Northwestern UP, Evanston, IL: 1992.

²⁵25 *Ibid.*, the 700,000 figure appears to come from a 1916 article, see Laqueur, *op. cit.*, p. 9, and Faurisson, note 112 below.

²⁶26 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 43, *passim*. The aim of the Bund Report, by the way, was not to elicit a Zionist *quid pro quo*, but rather to call for reprisals against Germans held by the Allies. This tends to support the idea that the gassing claims were generally believed by Polish Jews in exile.

²⁷27 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 44

²⁸28 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 43

²⁹29 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 44

³⁰30 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 46

³¹31 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 44

³²32 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 45

³³33 Ibid.

³⁴34 The inference derives from the fact that Oswiecim (Auschwitz) is not mentioned in the Bund Report; however, it is mentioned in the underground appeal of 16 March, cf. Dawidowicz, Reader, pp. 215-216, however the details concerning Auschwitz in the 1 July article of the *Fortnightly Review* are not present in that earlier communication.

³⁵35 On *Himmelfahrt*, see Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 334 for an example.

³⁶36 The inference derives from the fact of the Yiddish language broadcast, the BBC's claiming priority in announcing atrocity claims, and the fact, to be discussed later, that the BBC was widely listened to in occupied Europe. An analysis of BBC broadcasts is very much needed, but see Eric A. Johnson's discovery of the BBC program files, discussed in note 153 below. More evidence of this feedback loop will be discussed further below, cf. Shermer, *op. cit.*, p. 100f for an elucidation of the concept. The concept under different words should be familiar from the study of cybernetics or Foucault ("discursive loop").

³⁷37 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 51

³⁸38 Ibid.

³⁹39 Perhaps the text was rewritten in London for the sake of an Anglo-American audience whose association with poison gas would more readily conjure up the idea of execution: poison cyanide gas had been used for executions in the United States since 1924, see *Technique*.

⁴⁰40 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58

⁴¹41 the "gas oven" formula is attributed to a Dr. Sommer, although it is not exactly clear if he composed the message that was eventually passed on to the West, Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 56, 58n.

⁴²42 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, repeated arguments that a single source existed for both

messages, credit for identifying the "prussic acid" component as being derived from a Mr. Schulte belongs to Richard Breitman.

⁴³43 The current version holds that cca. one million people were exterminated with cyanide gas evolving from Zyklon B, a common pesticide, see further discussion below. The other two million gassed are said to have been killed with exhaust gases, specifically carbon monoxide from diesel engines.

⁴⁴44 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 64f

⁴⁵45 quoted by Stäglich, Wilhelm, *Auschwitz: A Judge Looks at the Evidence*, Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, CA: 1990, p. 112f (an English translation by Thomas Francis of *Der Auschwitz Mythos*, Grabert Verlag, Tübingen: 1979)

⁴⁶46 The inference is supported in Frank, Anne, *Diary of a Young Girl* (Definitive Edition), Bantam Books, NY:1997, p. 53, where for the entry of October 9, 1942 she describes hearing rumors of gassing over the "English radio", and see further discussion below.

⁴⁷47 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 93f

⁴⁸48 cf. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 40. In The New York Times the following day, that is, 26 November 1942. The details are clearly the same.

⁴⁹49 Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 94

⁵⁰50 Ibid.

⁵¹51 Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 41

⁵²52 cf. the communication of 16 March 1942, discussed above, also Rothschild, Sylvia, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust*, New American Library, NY:1981, where a Polish Jewish survivor recalled his fear of going to the bath house at Sachsenhausen already in 1942, p. 159, and habitual BBC listening by others, p. 129, 153. This testimony also indicates the very wide dispersion of the shower-gassing claim/rumor at this time, which inferentially supports the concept of the BBC feedback loop.

⁵³53 The nadir of this claim may be found in the *Black Book of Polish Jewry*, published in 1946, quoted by Porter, Carlos Whitlock, *The Holocaust: Made in Russia*, Historical Review Press, n. p.:1988, p. 381.

⁵⁴54 cf. Weber, Mark, "Jewish Soap" in *JHR*, vol.11, no 2. Also compare Hilberg, Raul, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago:1968, pp. 331, 470. Rejection of the wartime soap-making rumor should be distinguished from the claim made at the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg by the Soviet Union that the Germans conducted soap-making experiments at Stutthof ca. 1944. This last claim is

not explicitly rejected, but see Weber's article above. The reader is directed to the complete affidavit in support of the claim, reproduced in Porter, *Holocaust*, pp. 368-376, with the recommendation that they read it and decide for themselves.

⁵⁵ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 46

⁵⁶ Hilberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 331, German propaganda division reports October, 1942, and NO-1660.

⁵⁷ Hilberg, *op. cit.*, p. 331

⁵⁸ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 44

⁵⁹ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 130

⁶⁰ on "Kugel Decree" see Harris, *op. cit.*, on the real meaning of the term, see Porter, Carlos Whitlock, *Not Guilty at Nuremberg*, Historical Review Press, Brighton, Sussex, UK:n. d., pp. 15-16, on the "pedal-driven brain-bashing machine" see Porter, *Holocaust*, p. 15, 378-380.

⁶¹ Porter, *Holocaust*, p. 408

⁶² cf. Hahn, Fritz, *Waffen und Geheimwaffen des deutschen Heeres, 1933-1945*, Bernard & Graefe Verlag, München:1992, "Windkanone", vol. 2, p. 136f

⁶³ Paul, Allen, *Katyn*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis: 1996; p. 210, the Germans broke the story April 13, 1943

⁶⁴ Paul, *op. cit.*, p. 254, the length of the Soviet report is given as 38 pages.

⁶⁵ On Allied response, see Paul, *op. cit.*, p. 222, and especially pp. 301-315, Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-69

⁶⁶ On German handling of Katyn, see Paul, *op. cit.*, p. 208-210, 228-231, 270-273

⁶⁷ The German production, *Amtes Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*, Berlin:1943, is approximately 350 pages in length, including 60 pages of photos, about 80 pages detailing the 4,000 corpses exhumed, extensive autopsy reports, other analyses (e.g., dendrochronological analyses) along with all relevant documents, reports, and a chronology. It cannot be compared to anything prepared by the allies either during or after the war, it can only be compared to an archaeological study.

⁶⁸ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 149. The trial took place from July 14 to July 17, 1943. See *The People's Verdict: A Full Report of the Proceedings at the Krasnodar and Kharkov German Atrocity Trials*, Hutchinson & Co., London:1944. *Dushegubki* is the feminine substantive plural from the neuter noun *Dushegubstvo*, meaning murder, literally,

destroying or crushing of the spirit (from the verb "to breathe"). The cognate derivation of suffocation is therefore innate.

⁶⁹ Weckert, Ingrid, "Die Gaswagen -- Kritische Wurdigen der Beweislage" in *Grundlagen*, provides a detailed analysis of this claim. A review of the testimonies in *The People's Verdict* finds that the confessions of the German defendants and other witnesses on the gas vans are almost word for word identical, but these descriptions have never been correlated with any drawing or physical object. Other noteworthy themes developed, beginning at the Krasnodar Trial and particularly at Kharkov in December, include the claim that the Germans became obsessed with secrecy once they found out that the Soviets had obtained "gas van" documents, that Hitler personally ordered the suppression of "gas van" information in July, 1943, and that the bodies were burned to "wipe out the traces" of the crimes. The file PS-501 from the Nuremberg trial -- apparently based on documents originally put into evidence by the Soviets at Kharkov, see Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 198 -- contains most of the documents in support of the claim, the most important one, and the only document that explicitly discusses gassing, being a copy of a letter purportedly written by Becker to Rauff concerning the operation of "gas vans."

⁷⁰ Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 82

⁷¹ Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 89, compare also the critique, "Babi Yar: Kritische Fragen und Anmerkungen" in *Grundlagen*, by Herbert Tiedemann

⁷² The question of the number of Jews shot by the Germans or their auxiliaries is hotly debated by revisionists, as is also the reasons for these shootings. There seems little reason to disbelieve the extensive documentary records, which indicate a minimum of several hundreds of thousands of Jews slain. The next question pertains to the reason for these shootings: in some cases it appears tied to anti-partisan activity, or to retaliation, or simply punitive measures, or to the ideological commitment of some Nazi commanders to the killing of all Jews, and even, in a few instances, to anti-epidemic measures. On the other hand, there are other documents, too varied to discuss here, that strongly suggest that children and others unable to work were executed as a matter of official policy. The traditionalist claim, supported by the judgment of the IMT and NMT, is that 2 million Jew of all ages and conditions were shot, and that they were shot because of their Jewish identity alone. The actual totals one can derive from the existing documents -- assuming 100 percent reliability -- seems to lie in the neighborhood of about one million.

Many revisionists dispute the claim of shooting exterminations, largely, one thinks, because it is traditionally linked to the gassing claim, although it must be said that the evidence for the mass shootings is of a completely different order of magnitude and verisimilitude than the evidence for gassing. In general, we do not dispute the shooting claims, but there may be factors in terms of exaggerated numbers, or rationales, or how the practice evolved, that may affect our understanding of what these mass killing

represented. However, we do not believe that they represented an "extermination policy."

⁷³ *The People's Verdict*, p. 90.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90, 91f

⁷⁵ The Soviet prosecution at Nuremberg in the course of its presentation stressed elements of sexual shame and dishonor among Ukrainian deportees during this time-frame, viz [quote] Turning to Page 5 of the same document, Paragraph 12 in the German text it appears at Page 6, Paragraph 1: "The following abuses were reported from the delousing stations: "In the women's and girls' shower rooms, services were partly performed by men, or men would mingle around or even help with the soaping, and vice versa there were female personnel in the men's shower rooms. Men also for some time were taking photographs in the women's shower rooms. Since mainly Ukrainian peasants were transported in the last months, as far as the female portion of these are concerned, they were mostly of a high moral standard and used to strict modesty, they must have considered such a treatment as a national degradation. [endquote], "Eighteenth Day, Wednesday, 12/12/1945, Part 10", in *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*. Volume III. Proceedings: 12/1/1945-12/14/1945. Nuremberg: IMT, 1947. pp. 437ff.

⁷⁶ It is also remarkable that Gilbert, in *Auschwitz and the Allies*, completely ignores Heinisch's testimony about Auschwitz, even though he references the Kharkov trial, references *The People's Verdict*, and sought to present in that book a complete narrative of how information about Auschwitz was acquired. It is also remarkable that Heinisch's narrative precedes the 1944 constructions of the Auschwitz narrative, discussed below. A review of other sources, primary and secondary, initially showed no references to Heinisch or Somann concerning Auschwitz, however it is appears that Somann was already notorious to the Polish underground from November, 1940, due to his role in the reprisal execution of Poles at Auschwitz, see Czech, Danuta, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939-1945*, Henry Holt & Co., NY:1997, p. 19, 34. There appear to be no further references to Somann: according to most accounts, regular gassings did not begin at Auschwitz until 1942.

⁷⁷ Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 146

⁷⁸ Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 147. This narrative, like the other Auschwitz narratives for 1944, appears to have come from the Weissmandel circle in Bratislava (cf. Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader*, pp. 318-327) but given the testimony of Heinisch six months previous its derivative nature is easily argued.

⁷⁹ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, passim

⁸⁰ e.g., Butz, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8 Butz' meaning of the word "hoax" is rather more subtle than his use of the word implies, compare a later discussion in *Hoax*, p. 320-321 The other

revisionist most closely associated with the Hoax concept is Robert Faurisson.

⁸¹ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 66, and esp. 67, 135, 136 [Ziegelboym's suicide], Morgenthau, Henry III, *Mostly Morgenthau*, Ticknor & Fields, NY:1991, p. 366, [Henry Morgenthau Jr.'s comment]

⁸² Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 56-58

⁸³ Trombley, Stephen, *The Execution Protocol*, Anchor Books, NY: 1993, for further discussion of American execution techniques and their origins.

⁸⁴ Gellermann, Günther W., *Der Krieg, der nicht stattfand*, Bernard & Graefe Verlag, München:1986, p. 186f

⁸⁵ The preeminent revisionist work on the subjects discussed here are two articles by Friedrich Paul Berg, "Zyklon B and the German Delousing Chambers" and "Typhus and the Jews," both originally published in the *JHR* and now available on the CODOH website at <http://www.codoh.com/gcgv.html>

The following texts on epidemic diseases and their role in history were found useful: Marks, Geoffrey and Beatty, William K., *Epidemics*, Scribners, NY: 1976; Cartwright, Frederick F., *Disease and History*, Barnes & Noble, NY: 1996; McNeil, William, *Plagues and Peoples*, Anchor Books, NY:1976; Rosenberg, Charles E., *The Cholera Years*, University of Chicago, Chicago:1962; Zinsser, Hans, *Rats, Lice, and History*, Black Dog & Leventhal, NY: 1963; Dixon, Bernard, *Magnificent Microbes*, Atheneum, NY:1979; Schimitschek, Erwin, & Werner, G. T., *Malaria, Fleckfieber, Pest*, S. Hirzel Verlag, Stuttgart:1985, Hobhouse, Henry, *Forces of Change*, Arcade, NY:1990.

⁸⁶ Carwright, *op. cit.*, inter alia, discusses the water-borne diseases in detail.

⁸⁷ Schimitschek, *op. cit.*, p. 90

⁸⁸ To a large extent Rosenberg's book, *op. cit.*, is expressly concerned with the development of prophylaxis without a clear comprehension of etiology, and see Evans, cited below.

⁸⁹ enumerated in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, [hereinafter, EB] 12th Edition (1922), *Typhus*, vol. XXXII, p. 825-827, and Evans, cited below.

⁹⁰ consult Zinsser, *op. cit.*, Marks *op. cit.*, Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, also Goodall, cited below.

⁹¹ Note important characterization of typhus quoted in Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 201f.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Also Goodall, cited below.

⁹³ This very important concept involves the manner in which recrudescence typhus, which

can recur many years after infection, can lead to a mild case of fever. However, if the person so afflicted with "Brill-Zinsser Disease" lives in a louse-ridden community, infection can then be transmitted to the louse and then to the louse matrix of the community with epidemic and lethal effect. Compare the comments by Zinsser, *op. cit.*, p. 235, 235-239, in which he sketches the outlines of two species of the louse-borne disease. For typhoid fever, it is well known that about 1 percent of victims (female only) can become permanent carriers of the microbe in their gall bladders, compare "Typhoid Mary." ("Typhoid Mary" was an American woman of Irish background who was discovered to be a carrier of typhoid early in the twentieth century. She was a cook, and wherever she took work her customers would soon be stricken with typhoid. The health department told her several times to find another line of work, she refused, ultimately she was confined to one of the quarantine islands by Manhattan.)

⁹⁴ Starkenstein, E., "Hygienische und sanitäre Verhältnisse Polens. Ein Beitrag zur Ostjudenfrage" in *Archiv für Soziale Hygiene und Demographie*, 1 & 2 Heft, 12.VI.1917, pp. 19-38, is characteristic; gentile populations had similar problems, consult EB, article on Typhus, *loc. cit.*

⁹⁵ This is a truism of Russian history, due to the short growing and harvesting season, and other factors, such that grain yields rarely exceeded 3:1. Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, discusses in greater detail.

⁹⁶ These are the "pogroms" which will continue until the end of the Russian Civil War; the roots of these anti-Jewish actions seem variable; partly attributed to religious anti-Semitism (i.e., Blood Libel accusations), partly due to the "Russification" tendencies of the Empire, which affected all minorities, not just the Jewish people, partly due to economic competition with other ethnics (Greeks, Germans), partly due to the peculiar position the Eastern Jews occupied vis-a-vis the peasantry, which was newly emancipated and striving to adapt, as well as other social, economic, and demographic conditions, some of which are adumbrated by Hobhouse, *op. cit.* In short, the circumstances that could contribute to anti-Jewish violence at this time and in the examined period were quite complex, what they all seem to have in common is the tremendous and radical changes taking place in the Empire, which will become even more rapid subsequent to the Revolution of 1917. To anticipate a later note, we register here merely the tendency of many Jewish observers to regard these causes as united only by hatred of the Jewish people, we note as well as the tendency of Jewish historians to regard these outbreaks by and large as the product of official instigation.

⁹⁷ Discussed in, inter alia, Howe, Irving, *World of Our Fathers*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, NY: 1976, pp. 29-38.

⁹⁸ Antin, Mary, *The Promised Land*, Penguin, NY: 1997, p. 138f, the book was originally published in 1912, and was based in turn on From Plotzk to Boston, from the 1890's, which in turn was based on an epistle Mary wrote in Yiddish to an uncle in Russia shortly

after her arrival in Boston in the spring of 1893. The text is given in truncated form in Howe, *op. cit.*, Markel, cited below, and Jan Van Pelt and Deborah Dwork, *Auschwitz: 1270 to Present*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York: 1996..

⁹⁹ Mary Antin's account of disorientation, and, in particular, fear of disinfection showers, was not uncommon, cf. Sanders, Ronald, *Shores of Refuge*, Schocken Books, NY:1988, which references several complaints about the Hamburg baths in particular (p. 245, 231, and especially 243) and who also quotes a short story by Sholem Aleichem which also discusses the dreaded Hamburg bath (p. 143-144) and see for other hysterical reactions (p. 155)

¹⁰⁰ On Hamburg, see Evans, Richard J., *Tod in Hamburg*, a magnificent social history of the Free City (in German translation from the English), Rowohlt, Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1996; for New York, see Markel, Howard, *Quarantine!*, Johns Hopkins UP, Baltimore and London: 1997.

¹⁰¹ Markel, *op. cit.*, p. 52, 50

¹⁰² Markel, *op. cit.*, p. 54, p. 44f. A case of typhus causes the rickettsia to course in the patient's bloodstream, where it can be communicated to lice and from the lice to others people. Hence, in a lice-ridden environment, and it must be stressed in 1892 that lice were not understood as the vector, refusal to comply with quarantine certainly would facilitate the spread of the disease.

¹⁰³ Markel, *op. cit.*, p. 63

¹⁰⁴ Markel, *op. cit.*, p. 65

¹⁰⁵ Becker, Helmut, *Äskulap zwischen Reichsadler und Halbmond*, Helmut Becker, n. p., 1990, provides an extensive survey including many extracts from primary sources and memoirs.

¹⁰⁶ Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 3, and compare discussion of *Badeanstalten* to control typhus, p. 126, Use of petroleum, p. 191, discussion of *Apparat*, p. 361-362, etc.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ cf. "Ihm lagen zugrunde die Erfahrungen, die ich bei der Typhus- und Ruhrbekämpfung in Nordchina und bei der Genickstarrebekämpfung in München gemacht hatte. Sie lautete kurz: Heraus aus den versuchten Häusern, in weit angelegte, gesund gelegene, womöglich weit entfernte, auf Bergen gelegene Lager, vorher aber energische Reinigung aller Personen, Desinfektion aller Kleidungs- und Wäschestücke, die neuen Lager nur mit völlig gereinigten und neu gekleideten Truppen betreten lassen. Einschränkung des Dienstes, aber doppelte Rationen. So geschah es auch. Die Desinfektionswagen führen vor die Kasernen, Truppenteil für Truppenteil wurde gebadet.

Dann die neue Kleidung empfangen, und sofort nach dem Zeltlager abgerückt. In der Kaserne wurde dann die alte Kleidung, Wäsche, Bettzeug desinfiziert, die Zimmer mit Formaldehyd und gegen die Läuse mit schwefelige Säure vergast." quoted from Meyer's memoirs, Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 38

¹⁰⁹ Becker, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ EB, article Typhus, *loc. cit.*

¹¹¹ Becker, *op. cit.*, inferred from the description of heightened procedures in the European portion of Turkey during this period, pp. 368-388, note also discussion of railroad delousing tunnels, p. 374.

¹¹² "Request for Additional Information on the Myth of 'Gassings' of Serbs in The First World War", Robert Faurisson, *JHR*, vol. 11, no. 2

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ The use of such vehicles in the Second World War is well attested, consult *Technique* for references.

¹¹⁵ For German disinfection procedures in the First World War, titles include: Blumberg, Dr., "Über behelfsmäßig herstellbare Anlagen zur Entlausung und Desinfektion im großen" in *Öffentliche Gesundheitspflege*, Heft 10, 1918, pp. 353-364; Wolf, Dr. "Das Desinfektionsverfahren mit Blausäure" in *Öffentliche Gesundheitspflege*, Heft 2, 1919, pp. 54-66; Wolf, Dr. "Das Desinfektionsverfahren mit Blausäure (Zusammenfassende Übersicht II)" in *Öffentliche Gesundheitspflege*, Heft 4, 1922, pp. 126-130; For British procedures, see Goodall, below, for Americans in the Typhus Relief Expedition of 1919, see Cornebise, Alfred E., *Typhus and Doughboys*, University of Delaware Press, Newark, NJ:1982

¹¹⁶ e.g., Celarek, Dr., "Über die unter der Zivilbevölkerung Lublins im Jahre 1915/16 herrschende Fleck-fieberepidemie und ihre Bekämpfung" in *Öffentliche Gesundheitspflege*, Heft 11, 1917, pp. 597-602; articles by Starkenstein above, and Frey, below.

¹¹⁷ Frey, Dr. "Die Bekämpfung der Fleckfieber-epidemie in der Zivilbevölkerung des Generalgouvernements Warschau in den Jahren 1915/16", in *Öffentliche Gesundheitspflege*, Heft 1, 1917, pp. 12-30, [the Yiddish instruction appears on pp. 21-25, phonetically in German script, cf. Fig. 11, and the article contains many excellent photos; the following Heft contains the continuation of the article]

¹¹⁸ cited in Goodall, E. W., "Typhus Fever in Poland" in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, vol. 13, April 23, 1920

¹¹⁹ Goodall, *loc. cit.*, Cornebise, *op. cit.*, Zinsser, *op. cit.*, and several others.

¹²⁰ Goodall, *loc. cit.*, Cornebise, *op. cit.*

¹²¹ Cornebise, *op. cit.*, p. 96 The selection of Auschwitz as a site for such centralized facilities was due to the surrounding open country and the excellent railway connections (p. 97), factors which probably influenced its selection in the Second World War as well.

¹²² Goodall, *loc. cit.*, Cornebise, *op. cit.*, *passim!*, but see p. 94, p. 96, [the complaint of the Jews is characterized by Cornebise as "anti-Semitic"] p. 122., however, Isaac Bashevis Singer's historical novel, *The Family Moskat*, (Fawcett Crest, NY:1950, p. 376) includes an instructive description of the situation at the time:

"An epidemic of typhus threatened, and even cases of cholera had been reported; the authorities hastily assigned a barrack for the disinfection of the civilian population. Orthodox Jews were compelled to shave off their beards and earlocks, and girls had their heads shorn. Immediately there sprang up a group of "fixers," who, for a bribe, obtained forged disinfection certificates for those who would not submit to these indignities."

¹²³ Cornebise, *op. cit.*, p. 93, 96-97, 98-100, 115, note in particular the quoted message, "Am looking forward with anticipation to the gas-squad with HCN that you promise sometime.", p. 96f

¹²⁴ Berg, Friedrich, "Zyklon B and the German Delousing Chambers"

¹²⁵ Berg, *op. cit.*

¹²⁶ We say "slowly" here, but originally the development of the gas was rather rapid, this caused problems with the shelf life of the can and frequently caused danger, insofar as the liquid would then be de-stabilized within the can even before opening. Germar Rudolf's researches have found that gypsum was added in the 1930's to protract the evaporation,

¹²⁷ This is indicated by the article of R. Irmscher from 1942, which shows a 100 percent evaporation of the cyanide from the gypsum ("ERCO") composite pellets after three hours at 59 degrees Fahrenheit. For this and the preceding point consult the most recent version of the *Rudolf Report*, at <http://www.vho.org>

¹²⁸ Berg, "Zyklon B"

¹²⁹ Berg, *op. cit.*

¹³⁰ Berg, *op. cit.*

¹³¹ Berg, *op. cit.*

¹³² Berg, *op. cit.*

¹³³ Handloser, Siegfried, ed. *Wehrhygiene*, Springer-Verlag, Berlin:1944, in the article by

B. Schmidt, "Desinfektion, Sterilisation, Entwesung", lists several, including Zyklon, Ventox, Tritox, Cuprex, Formaldehyde.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 193f

¹³⁵ Kalthoff, u. a., *Die Händler von Zyklon B*, VSA, Hamburg:1999, provides extensive details of these other gases, as well as the history of disinfection materials particularly as these touch upon the activities of the Hamburg-based Tesch & Stabenow.

¹³⁶131 Kämper, "Die Umgestaltung und Vergrößerung der Desinfektionsanstalt der Stadt Dortmund" in *Gesundheits-Ingenieur*, 27.IX.41; Stangelmeyer, Josef, "Genormte, zerlegbare Rohrleitungsnetze für die gesundheitstechnischen Anlagen der ortsveränderlichen Unterkünfte des Reichsarbeitsdienstes" in *Gesundheits-Ingenieur*, 25.VI.42; Konrich, Friedrich, "Über die Sanierungsanstalten der deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlager" in *Gesundheits-Ingenieur*, 19.VII.41; Puntigam, Franz, "Die Durchgangslager der Arbeitseinsatzverwaltung als Einrichtungen der Gesundheitsvorsorge" in *Gesundheits-Ingenieur*, Heft 2, Jahrg. 1944, pp. 47-56; other references of relevance to the Second World War include:(articles): Ruppert, Joseph, "Gesundheitsverhältnisse und Seuchenbekämpfung im Generalgouvernement", in *Der praktische Desinfektor*, June, 1941, pp. 61-74; Finger, Georg, "Grundsätzliches zur Läusebekämpfung mit Imprägnierungsmitteln" in *Der deutsche Militärarzt*, June, 1944, pp. 295-297. Relevant titles include Haag, Friedrich Erhard, *Lagerhygiene*, J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, München-Berlin: 1943; Walbaum, Jost, *Kampf den Seuchen!* Deutscher Ärzte-Einsatz im Osten, Buchverlag "Deutscher Osten", Krakau:1941.

¹³⁷ Kämper, *loc. cit*

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Stangelmeyer, *loc. cit*.

¹⁴⁰ Walbaum, *op. cit.*, is one source for this, Trunk, *Judenrat*, describes the general reluctance to submit to these procedures, as do other Holocaust authors, including Browning, Christopher, *The Path to Genocide*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 145-168.

¹⁴¹ Discussed in Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 165, and the whole of chapter 7 is very valuable and apt here. Unfortunately, Trunk follows the tendency among Jewish historians which we will discuss later, whereby all misfortunes that occur are viewed as part of someone else's conspiratorial designs, thus the diseases that occurred in the ghettos are said to have been part of the Nazi's "diabolical plan." [p. 143]. The enormous expenditure that the Germans made for controlling diseases tends to make this interpretation unsupportable.

¹⁴² Buchner, Alex, *Der Sanitätsdienst des Heeres, 1939-1945*, Podzun-Pallas, Wölfersheim-Berstadt: 1995

¹⁴³ Discussed in Rothschild, *op.cit.*, also Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, Stein & Day, NY: 1981, both *passim*.

¹⁴⁴ Vonnegut, Kurt, *Slaughterhouse Five*, Dell, New York:1988, p. 84

¹⁴⁵ Compare Rothschild, *op. cit.*, p. 159, also Trunk, *Responses*, p. 162; Trunk has several more of these, in Yiddish testimonies most of which were given soon after the war.

¹⁴⁶ Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 212, Hilberg, *op. cit.*, p. 619

¹⁴⁷ Puntigam, "Durchganglager", *loc. cit.*

¹⁴⁸ Novitch, Miriam, *Sobibor: Martyrdom and Revolt*, Holocaust Library, NY:1980

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ The standard work on the subject of Treblinka as well as Belzec and Sobibor remains Arad, *op. cit.* Steiner's novelistic treatment from the 1960's remains influential. Articles by Andrew Allen and Mark Weber, and, in particular, the article by Arnulf Neumaier in *Grundlagen*, "Der Treblinka-Holocaust" discuss the details with greater rigor, and attempt put the workings of the camp in a wider context.

¹⁵¹ Consult and compare floor plan of Majdanek Bath and Disinfection complex, in *Grundlagen*, p. 276

¹⁵² Trunk, in *Responses* (see citation below) as well as Novitch, *op. cit.*, contain testimonies whereby the Westerners (chiefly Dutch) arriving at Sobibor welcomed the showers, the implication, sometimes explicit, being that the Polish Jews knew better.

¹⁵³ For example, the Jewish population of Warsaw definitely heard the BBC broadcast of June, 1942, because its reception is described in the diary of Emanuel Ringelblum (*Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emanuel Ringelblum*, edited and translated by Jacob Sloan, Schocken Books, New York: 1974, p. 296ff). In addition, there are several references to gassing rumors heard over the radio in the diary of Viktor Klemperer (quoted in Johnson, Eric A., *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans*, Basic Books, NY:2000, pp. 437-441), which suggests widespread knowledge of such rumors by the population in Germany from 1942. Finally, Johnson succeeded in locating the program logs of the BBC and found numerous references to gassing in all kinds of German-language radio programming, beginning in December, 1942, *op. cit.*, pp. 441-450

¹⁵⁴ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-264, where it is described as a summary. The changes involved with this document, which will culminate in the War Refugee Board (WRB) Report, are detailed by Miroslav Karny, "The Vrba and Wetzler Report", in Gutman, Y. & Berenbaum, M., *Anatomy*, pp. 553-568.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., Although the July Report is described as a summary, it contains errors of detail (e.g., "Megacyclon") that are absent from the November WRB Report, as well as an important omission (i.e., the peephole at the inaugural gassing) that is included in the later report. Karny's article suggests that the report was revised throughout the year, it is difficult to check exactly how because he further notes that the original manuscript has not survived. (Karny, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 564n5.)

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 145

¹⁵⁸ That is, Zyklon does not come in a powder, and the optimum temperature is not liable to be reached in a packed underground cellar. It should be noted that some cyanide products do come in powdered form, but these are not the substances alleged.

¹⁵⁹ This was Operation Bagration, timed to coincide with the third anniversary of Barbarossa and the Western Allies, who continued to be pinned down in Normandy. An evaluation of precisely what the Soviets encountered during this advance, which surrounded huge amounts of territory, is crucial to settling claims of what occurred here during the war.

¹⁶⁰ Martin, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* The recent book of Jurgen Graf and Carlo Mattogno, *KL Majdanek: Eine historische und technische Studie*, Castle Hill, Hastings:1998 is a thorough and indispensable account of materials for this camp.

¹⁶¹ *Communique of the Polish Soviet Extraordinary Commission for Investigating the Crimes Committed by the Germans in the Majdanek Extermination Camp in Lublin*, Foreign Languages Publishing, Moscow:1944 This document, in the Hoover Library, Stanford, CA, placed on the Internet due to the efforts of Philip Traurig. cf. Also Graf & Mattogno, *op. cit.*, p. 119f for a detailed analysis of Soviet and Polish claims. On contemporary press coverage, consult, e.g., W. H. Lawrence "Nazi Mass Killing Laid Bare in Camp", in *Reporting World War II, Part Two: American Journalism, 1944-1946*, Library of America, New York: 1995, pp. 267-273.

¹⁶² *Communique*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-17

¹⁶³ Shermer & Grobman, *Denying*, pp. 161-167, see esp. Figure 27, p. 164

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ It is important to stress that the three gas chambers that we have sometimes described as attached to the bath and disinfection complex were not attached at the time of liberation, as the analyses of Graf & Mattogno, *op. cit.*, and well as Shermer & Grobman, *Denying*, make clear. In addition, there appear to have been several other reconstructions made on this site. This has led us to errors in interpreting the data not only in earlier

versions of this study but also in *Defending, Part 2*.

¹⁶⁶ noted by Aroneanu, *op. cit.*, but not the text of the communique we are using here.

¹⁶⁷ Graf & Mattogno, *op. cit.*

¹⁶⁸ *Communique, op. cit., loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁹ Graf & Mattogno, *op. cit.*, p.

¹⁷⁰ *Communique, op. cit., loc. cit.*

¹⁷¹ *Communique, op. cit., loc. cit.* The source of the CO and/or function of the boilers is not completely clear from the text, although bottles of CO are described; apparently this led to some confusion subsequently, thus the photograph #0326 on the USHMM Internet website, at <http://www.ushmm.org> describes the boilers as "furnaces" which generated "carbon monoxide".

¹⁷² *loc. cit.*, consult photo of Majdanek "gas chamber" door at the USHMM site.

¹⁷³ *Grundlagen*, p. 278 provides four very interesting photos of features at Majdanek.

¹⁷⁴ David Cole's "Forty Six Unanswered Questions About the Gas Chambers" is important not only for its discussion of Majdanek but also of Auschwitz Birkenau. On CODOHweb.

¹⁷⁵ Graf & Mattogno, *op. cit.*, p. , and see the discussion in Schmidt, in Handloser, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁶ see Crowell, *Defending, Part 2*

¹⁷⁷ That is, humidity and moisture inhibits the evolution of the gas.

¹⁷⁸ compare *Grundlagen*, photos on p. 278

¹⁷⁹ *op. cit., loc. cit.*, p. 277, 129n

¹⁸⁰ Gilbert, *op. cit.*

¹⁸¹ Gilbert, *op. cit.*

¹⁸² Gilbert, *op. cit.*, for coverage in the NY Times, see *Reporting World War II*, John H. Crider, "U. S. Board Bares Atrocity Details Told by Witnesses at Polish Camps", pp. 553-559

¹⁸³ Dawidowicz, *Reader*, p. 119

¹⁸⁴ compare Gilbert, *op. cit., loc. cit.*, or Dawidowicz, *op. cit., loc. cit.*

¹⁸⁵ That the WRB report was combined from various rumors was corroborated at the first Zundel trial in 1985, during which Rudolf Vrba, under cross-examination, admitted that he repeated rumors, and was not an eyewitness to what he described, moreover "He defended 'errors in good faith' n his 1944 Auschwitz accounts, which he made two weeks after escaping, as due to 'great urgency' to warn Jews." "Book 'An Artistic Picture'", Dick Chapman, *Toronto Sun*, January 24, 1985

¹⁸⁶ Novitch, *op. cit.*, passim

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ The standard story is that the Germans dismantled them to hide the traces of their crimes, but under our theory the huts would have been dismantled after use.

¹⁸⁹ All "documentation" pertaining to these camps subsequent to the immediate postwar period has consisted of testimonies, thus, Gitta Sereny's *Into that Darkness*, Henry Holt, NY:1974, contains what are said to be interviews with former commandant Franz Stangl in the early 1970's, but aside from being very scanty on detail, these interviews also offer no proof, simply corroboration of the standard claim.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ball, John Clive, "Luftbild Beweise", in *Grundlagen*, German translation of "Air Photo Evidence" which is rehearsed on Ball's website, at <http://www.air-photo.com>

¹⁹² noted in the Soviet Special Commission, USSR-8, discussed below.

¹⁹³ Stäglich, *op. cit.*, contains several such photos.

¹⁹⁴ This is according to a postwar SS affidavit, but is not corroborated. Interestingly, Czech, noted below, references this for the 26th, but then references for the day before (November 25th) a scrap of paper of unknown origin which refers to the order to dismantle the crematoriums. The juxtaposition would repay careful scrutiny.

¹⁹⁵ The facts behind the "stop the gassing" order are reconstructed in "Himmlers Befehl, die Vergasung der Juden zu stoppen" in *VffG*, I:4 (XII:97), pp.258-259

¹⁹⁶ But see note 368 below, for a description of a conveyor belt in a euthanasia institution from 1941.

¹⁹⁷ Documents of the US government reproduced in Sheftel, Yoram, *Defending Ivan the Terrible*, Regnery, Washington, DC: 1996, p. 378. It should be noted that the Leleko interviews are the earliest recorded in this document, however it is also important to note that the Soviets had already issued their "special commission" that is, had established the facts, of Treblinka, two months before Leleko's interrogations began. See discussion of

"Canonical Holocaust" below.

¹⁹⁸ The two later Leleko depositions played a crucial role in reversing the conviction of Ivan Demjanjuk, hence, they have been widely distributed and widely cited. We reference the versions found on the Nizkor site, at <http://www.nizkor.org>

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Compare, for example, the descriptions established at the various Treblinka trials from 1950, and also the testimony of Franz Suchomel in Lanzmann's *Shoah*.

²⁰¹ Communique, *loc. cit.*

²⁰² Roques, Henri, *The 'Confessions' of Kurt Gerstein*, Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, CA: 1989 is the standard analysis of his depositions and his life, cf. P. 90.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 122f. It is important to note here that Roques is strictly concerned with analyzing the statements of Kurt Gerstein.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., cf. Dawidowicz, *Reader*, in whose anthology it constitutes the sole description of gassing, and the sole document not completely contemporaneous with what it describes.

²⁰⁶ Dawidowicz, *loc. cit.*, for an example, Roques cites several others, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-156.

²⁰⁷ Roques, *op. cit.*, detailed tables describing the elements of the eight (sic!) different versions are found between pages 117-118.

²⁰⁸ The only "corroboration" for Gerstein's testimony, at a camp where 600,000 murders are claimed, is the 1946 book of Rudolf Reder which describes the same lengthy diesel breakdown. That was precisely one of the elements mentioned in French news reports, July 4, 1945 (Roques, *op. cit.*, pp. 108ff reproduces the story in *France-Soir*.) The "confession" of Pfannenstiehl came later, consult Roques, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-309, esp. 302, for an interesting discussion of his interrogations by the postwar courts.

²⁰⁹ Furet, Francois, *Unanswered Questions*, Schocken Books, NY: 1989, Adam, Uwe Dietrich, "The Gas Chambers", 35n, p. 350, 72n, p. 352 pp. 134-154

²¹⁰ Noakes, *op. cit.*, cited below, like most of those who use Gerstein, annotates when he doesn't omit.

²¹¹ This seems clear, although Friedrich Berg believes that the diesel motif goes back to

the gas vans of the Krasnodar trial of July, 1943, if not earlier in Soviet propaganda thinking.

²¹² Werth's account will be given at the beginning of Section 15, below.

²¹³ Roques, *op. cit.*, the document is known as NI-9912. A translation of this document into French was one of the early broadsides in Robert Faurisson's revisionist career.

²¹⁴ cf. *Communique*

²¹⁵ Rassinier summed this up beautifully in *Debunking*, q. v.

²¹⁶ Berg's "The Diesel Myth" has existed in several different versions, consult the version in *Grundlagen*, or one of several articles which cover the same material on CODOHweb.

²¹⁷ Eichmann, in his 1960-61 interrogations, referenced submarine engines as being the source of the carbon monoxide: this is almost certainly a garbling of Gerstein's assertion. It should be noted that the Germans collected hair from German women in both world wars, although the purpose was unclear. In the First World War, a woman's hair was used to strengthen rubber driving belts.

²¹⁸ ref. to effect of the *Communique*, and the WRB report.

²¹⁹ Roques, *op. cit.*

²²⁰ Reilly, Jo, ed., *Belsen in History and Memory*, Frank Cass, London:1997; Gödecke, Monika, ed. *Konzentrationslager Bergen-Belsen: Berichte und Dokumente*, Vendenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen:1995

²²¹ Reilly, *op. cit.*, see especially the article by Paul Kemp, "The British Army and the Liberation of Bergen Belsen April 1945", pp. 134-148

²²² Buchenwald was liberated a few days before Belsen, but the bulk of the camps, including the scenes at Dachau and Mauthausen, came towards the end of the month, see the discussion of the chronology in Hackett, David A., *The Buchenwald Report*, a translation of a contemporaneous US Intelligence Report, translated by Hackett with an introduction, Westview Press, Boulder, CO:1995

²²³ cf. Aroneanu, *op. cit.*, p. 106

²²⁴ Irving, *Nuremberg*, provides a photograph of an American soldier manning a machine gun. The actual number of German prisoners killed, either by American soldiers or liberated prisoners, remains unclear: a wide range between a few dozen and five hundred remains.

²²⁵ cf., Edward R. Murrow, "For Most of it I Have No Words", pp. 681-685, and Martha

Gellhorn, "Dachau", pp. 724-730, in *Reporting World War II*, *op. cit.*

²²⁶ The inference is that such sentiments must have informed the decision to conduct autopsies at Natzweiler-Struthof and Dachau: no autopsy report from any camp has ever yielded a verdict of cyanide poisoning.

²²⁷ Aroneanu, *op. cit.*, p. 129, quoting from American report on Buchenwald.

²²⁸ Kamp article, *loc. cit.*, in Reilly, *op. cit.*, p. 147. Fritz Berg however has suggested that it was followed by a little-known but widespread epidemic in Poland. Indeed, this, like most events between the Bug and the Dniepr between 1944 and 1948, still requires enlightening scrutiny.

²²⁹ This is the standard revisionist view, consult Butz, *op. cit.*, for Commandant Kramer's description, and Berg, "Typhus and the Jews", for material on infrastructure destruction. Nevertheless, traditional Holocaust writers sometimes view these deaths as intentional (see article by Lattek, in Reilly, *op. cit.*), in this regard it is interesting to note that during the epidemics that raged through Bergen Belsen in the spring of 1945, of 18,168 total dead between March 1 and April 6, only 183 were from the "Star Camp" especially set aside for Jewish prisoners, and only 321 from the three main subcamps specifically for Jewish prisoners (the balance were approx. 4 thousand in the Women's Camp and 11 thousand in the Prisoner Camp #2), table cited in Gödicke, pp. 164-165.

²³⁰ Testimony of Dr. Russell Barton, in Kulaszka, Barbara, ed. *Did Six Million Really Die?*, on the Zündel-site.

²³¹ Aroneanu, *op. cit.*, photo, before p. 138, reproduces perhaps the most famous of these photographic hoaxes or misunderstandings, a pensive GI standing before a delousing chamber, with the caption: "An American soldier contemplates the entrance to the control room from which cylinders of Zyklon B were released into the gas chamber." An early post-war documentary, "Nazi Concentration Camps" also simulates a gassing by juxtaposing a shot of a delousing chamber which cuts to a leather-gloved hand which reaches in from the left of the frame to turn a valve to release the gas. This is supposed to have occurred at Dachau: the method described is erroneous.

²³² Martin Broszat's letter was published in *Die Zeit*, 26 August 1960, cf. Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 47

²³³ "Nazi Kultur" the sign put up by the British at Belsen, a photo of which in Reilly, ed. *op. cit.*

²³⁴ The entire text of this document, "The Soviet War Crimes Report on Auschwitz, Nuremberg Trial - 6 May 1945" referenced as USSR-8, itranslated by Carlos W. Porter maybe found at <http://www.codoh.com/trials/triussr8.html>

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Originally, we stressed the importance of the Soviet Special Commission because, unlike the WRB Report, it was the only such report accepted without qualification by the International Military Tribunal (The WRB only had a small listing of victims, about 1.8 million, entered into the record) and because the "four million" was a clear and easily traceable marker. However, further research suggests that the WRB report, along with the original July Report and the Majdanek Special Commission all tended to mutually reinforce and influence each other. The problem is that none of them are based on solid documentary evidence.

²⁴⁰ The main source for this trial is Philips, Raymond, ed., *Trial of Josef Kramer and 44 Others, (The Belsen Trial)*, William Hodge and Co., London: 1949. Also known as volume II of *War Crimes Trials* under the editorship of Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe. On Irma Grese, see Brown, Daniel Patrick, *The Beautiful Beast*, Golden West Historical Publications, Ventura: 1996.

²⁴¹ Brown, *op. cit.*

²⁴² Philips, *op. cit.*, p. 653

²⁴³ Philips, *op. cit.*, pp. 718-737, 738f. Gödecke gives two dates: 2 May, and 22 May. If the latter, the proximity with the death of Himmler is striking. If the former, the weight of the Soviet Special Commission, issued four days later, is increased.

²⁴⁴ Reitlinger, *SS: Alibi of a Nation*, Da Capo, NY: 1995

²⁴⁵ Philips, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Preceded, as we have seen, by the Soviet Kharkov Trial of December, 1943.

²⁴⁸ Butz, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, makes the same arguments about Kramer's confessions, and further on the quality of Kramer's confessions see Robert Faurisson, "Sur la prétendue 'chambre a gaz' homicide du Struthof, les trois confessions successives et contradictoires de Josef Kramer", see <http://www.abbc.com/aaargh/fran/archFaur/RF80xxx4.a.html>

²⁴⁹ Gödicke, *op. cit.*, pp.231-233 provides a list of the defendants for the three Belsen trials (55 defendants in all) and sentences. What is less well known is that a dozen of the

defendants were kapos, that is, prisoners. It should be obvious then that prisoners had a strong incentive to maintain a low profile and an orthodox interpretation: one prisoner was apparently denounced and put on trial because he was in an SS uniform at liberation.

²⁵⁰ Grabner's confession cited in Klee, Ernst, u.a., Hrsg., *"Schöne Zeiten"*, S. Fischer Verlag, p. 228

²⁵¹ Philips, *op. cit.*, p. 68, 740ff, in both direct testimony and sworn affidavit.

²⁵² The general consensus from Reitlinger (1953) through Pressac (1993) that the overall death toll at Auschwitz was less than one million, although there have always been those who have claimed higher totals, e.g., Dawidowicz (1974), Yehuda Bauer (1982), etc.

²⁵³ Carlo Mattogno, "Two False Testimonies from Auschwitz", in *Journal of Historical Review*, Vol. 10, Number One, spring, 1990.

²⁵⁴ quoted in Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, p. 1141

²⁵⁵ We should qualify our remarks here, for two reasons. First, the WRB Report, although erroneous, and with totals much less than the Soviet Report, was still widely available. Second, Robert Jan van Pelt, in his expert report for the Irving v. Lipstadt Trial, made an argument for the superior quality of the Polish Commissions on Auschwitz, however these investigations, published in *German Crimes in Poland. Volume 1. Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland*. Warsaw, 1946, pp. 27-93 do not appear to be appreciably more detailed than the Soviet reports. The narrative contains only a handful of references, while the discussion of the mass gassings occupies all of four pages, pp. 83-87. Doubtless some of this material would have been available in 1945 through the media, indeed our interpretation assumes this, but van Pelt does not explore this avenue. Pressac's *chef d'oeuvre* also contains several photographs of star witness Henryk Tauber: arriving at the camp in civilian clothes, donning a prison uniform, and posing for several photographs. Clearly, Tauber's appearance to testify was not meant to be kept from the public, and it is doubtful if the content of his testimony was concealed. In any case the testimony of eyewitnesses in newspapers -- and both the Soviet and Polish commissions relied on the same individuals -- would not have carried as much authority as an official report.

²⁵⁶ It is understood that an interrogator will seek to elicit information; therefore he must have some kind of focus as to which information is valuable and truthful and which is not: the Canonical Holocaust provided this. Compare the comments in Ruthven, Malise, *Torture: The Grand Conspiracy*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London: 1977, p. 275

²⁵⁷ Reilly, *op. cit.*, in an article provides several references to ways in which the Belsen images were appropriated for other camps, thus, for Buchenwald for the film *Judgment at Nuremberg*; see also *Grundlagen*, p.223 for an example where a photo of a Belsen pit grave is transposed to Auschwitz.

²⁵⁸ This is widely attested, see especially Morgenthau, *op. cit.* Tusa, Ann and John, *The Nuremberg Trial*, Atheneum, NY:1983, pp. 21-28, Irving, *Nuremberg*, discusses the matter extensively in chapter 2, "Lynch Law".

²⁵⁹ The widespread fascination with castrating Germans elicited comments from none other than President Roosevelt himself; see Morgenthau, *op. cit.*, Butz, *op. cit.*, cites Clifton Fadiman and Ernest Hemingway, Irving traces the concept back to a book written by an embittered American Jew, in *Goebbels*, p. 369, 372-373

²⁶⁰ Deighton, Len, *Blood, Tears and Folly*, Harper, NY:1994, pp.194-195

²⁶¹ Cohn, Norman, *Warrant for Genocide*, Serif, London:1996, a study on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, recapitulates much of this material, and also shows the composite roots of that document. Unfortunately, Cohn takes an uncritical and erroneous view of statements derived from the Gerstein Statement, cf. p. 236. The reader will have perhaps already noted that the concept of the National Socialist mass gas extermination program is an inversion of the Protocols concept which many, including many National Socialists, held about Jewish people. Therefore, in this sense, Cohn's choice of quotes is apt: the Gerstein Statement is the mirror image of the Protocols. Further, the reader would note that the wide-spread popularity of the Protocols concept (which nowadays embraces most conspiracy theories) is fundamentally a mythic reaction to certain aspects of modernity; in other words, just like our subject.

²⁶² Collins, Richard, *The Plague of the Spanish Lady*, Atheneum, NY: 1974, p. 83.

²⁶³ Cohn, Norman, *The Pursuit of the Millenium*, also Ruthven, *op. cit.*, Both authors (indeed, most modern authors) trace the witch hunts to social and hence ideological stress.

²⁶⁴ The Reichstag Fire is a classic instance of paranoia striking in both directions; the National Socialists were convinced that the communists had set the blaze, most everyone outside of Germany was convinced of German guilt. Fritz Tobias' study eventually showed that van der Lubbe set the fire by himself; thus the Law of Parsimony eventually gets rid of conspiracy theories, see Tobias, Fritz, *The Reichstag Fire*, Secker and Warburg, London:1962. Because Hitler benefited from the fire, in the sense that it facilitated the Enabling Acts, it was long considered another Nazi plot, cf. Shirer, William L., *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, Simon & Schuster, NY:1960.

²⁶⁵ One theme that is not pursued here but certainly deserves fuller treatment involves the Allied desire to pacify Germany; this meant not only the demilitarizing of the nation by also the discrediting of its military and political elite. Lucius Clay, in his memoirs, *Decision in Germany*, discussed with frankness the result of the Nuremberg Trials: the National Socialist party was thoroughly discredited. [Doubleday, NY:1950, pp. 250-252] At the same time, Clay noted that the attempt to discredit the military leadership was less

successful. [Ibid.] Therefore the reader should understand that one of the reasons that the atrocity charges (including the gassing claim) were pursued with such abandon, and were allowed to be pursued, and have been allowed to propagate unchecked, is because very quickly they became narrowed in function to the simple discrediting of National Socialism. However, noting that these charges have been allowed to stand because they discredit National Socialism, does not constitute an endorsement of National Socialism.

²⁶⁶ The interrogation of Dr. Pfannenstiehl, who Gerstein mentioned in his statement, is characteristic. See Roques, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-308

²⁶⁷ cf. Life Magazine, May 8, 1945, provides some examples, but this is a very common sentiment expressed in GI memoirs and the press.

²⁶⁸ This is the central thesis of Ruthven's book, *op. cit.*, interestingly the notion is recapitulated by the conspiracy of Hitler's resurrection, cf. Life, issue cited above, cf., New Yorker, article cited below, as well as the generalized paranoia about "Werewolves" and the "Alpine Redoubt."

²⁶⁹ Tucker, Richard, *The Great Terror*, is the standard reference, but see also Ruthven, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-278.

²⁷⁰ quoted in Ruthven, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-246

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ruthven, *op. cit.*, p. 265

²⁷³ Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 238, provides a photograph of the Buchenwald exhibition that the German people were forced to view, again, as proof of the moral bankruptcy of the National Socialist regime. The photograph featured various anatomical exhibits, two shrunken heads, and half a dozen strips of human skin, most with tattoos, one of almost the complete frontal torso. Over on the far right of the photo one can see a lampshade on a stand, this was also claimed to have been made of human skin although basic visual inspection indicates that it is of a different material than the others. This lampshade appears to have been made of goatskin, and is the root of all of the rest of the "human skin" stories. Cf. Aroneanu, *op. cit.*, p. 106, quoting Supreme AEF report on Buchenwald. As far as is known, neither that lampshade nor any of the other materials discussed in the text has ever been positively identified. In addition, no one has ever offered any of the other more exotic products for either inspection or examination. If such materials did exist, it is likely that they would still exist today for testing or confirmation, since it is known that the United States government retains human skulls gathered by Americans soldiers and sailors in the South Pacific during both the Second World War and the Vietnam War, Iserson, Kenneth, *Death to Dust*, Tucson, AZ, 1995

²⁷⁴ cited in Porter, *Holocaust*, the reader is reminded that Porter's text simply involves

captioned pages from the trial record that have been photographed and presented in legible format whole, i.e., his book does not comprise interpretation of these affidavits and testimony, other than, of course, in his selections.

²⁷⁵ cited in Porter, *Holocaust*

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Taylor, Telford, *Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials*, Back Bay, NY: 1992, p. 315

²⁷⁹ cited in Porter, *op. cit.*

²⁸⁰ discussed in Irving, *Nuremberg*

²⁸¹ Irving, *Nuremberg*, and see also Harris, *Tyranny*

²⁸² Tusas, *op. cit.*, p. 198

²⁸³ Irving, in both *Goering* and *Nuremberg*, makes references that are keyed to Biddle's private papers, the first gives the impression that it was Shmaglevskaya who was doubted, the second, Vaillant-Couturier. Perhaps Biddle doubted both.

²⁸⁴ quoted in Taylor, *op. cit.*, p.315

²⁸⁵ This ties directly to the judges and lawyers at Nuremberg, and the community of historians, who have failed to oppose censorship today. It is of course one thing for historians to avoid investigating contentious matters. That is not praiseworthy but it is understandable; although we should keep in mind that tenure was not designed to cover minor personal peccadilloes but rather to protect scholars when pursuing difficult questions. It must be said that Dr. Butz, regardless of the merits of his book or his arguments, is the only American academician to have used tenure for the purpose for which it was designed. On the silence of historians in the face of censorship, that is another affair. On the other hand, we are bound to record the statements of professors emeritus Raul Hilberg and Gordon Craig, who have both publicly denounced both censorship and taboo on this subject.

²⁸⁶ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 313, reference to Article 21 of the London Charter.

²⁸⁷ The Majdanek report comes in at 26 pages, the Auschwitz report would be estimated at about 35, the brochure of Katyn introduced in evidence was 56 pages long.

²⁸⁸ Paul, *op. cit.*

²⁸⁹ Harris, *Tyranny*, summarizes the German counter, as well as the 1952 Congressional

Hearings.

²⁹⁰ No mention in judgment, cf. Taylor, *op. cit.*, Generally speaking it seems odd that historians continue to use Nuremberg testimony, especially unattested Soviet-generated testimony, as proof of German atrocities. The Soviet Katyn testimony, that described how the Germans dug up the bodies of the 11,000 Polish officers, transported them to Katyn, went through their pockets and planted papers, then reburied them, and then dug them up again, as part of a plot to discredit the Soviet Union, is just as detailed, cogent, and realistic as that provided by the Soviet Union for the extermination camps.

²⁹¹ Churchill's speech, 6 March 1946, Fulton, Missouri, first stated by Goebbels, [date], Irving, *Goebbels*, but in fact the phrase appears to be very old, going back to the 18th Century at least.

²⁹² The surname of the commandant of Auschwitz is usually rendered as "Hoess" which frequently leads to confusion with Adolf Hitler's aide, and Nuremberg defendant, Rudolf Hess. The proper German spelling is "Höß", but for the sake of clarity for an English-speaking audience we have made a compromise. The main text concerning Höss' career consists of his own writings, Höss, Rudolf, *Death Dealer*, Paskuly, ed., Da Capo, NY:1996, which is the standard English translation. The German original, *Kommandant in Auschwitz: Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen des Rudolf Höß*, edited by Martin Broszat, Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich:1998, is slightly truncated but includes valuable annotations. It is important to keep in mind that all of Höss' postwar statements were made in custody and under juridical suspense.

²⁹³ Höss, Rudolf, *Death Dealer*, p. 179f

²⁹⁴ First developed by Robert Faurisson, "How the British Obtained the Confessions of Rudolf Hoess" in *JHR*, vo. 7, Number 4 (Winter 1986-87), also corroboration in Irving, *Nuremberg*, pp. 240-246, and the relevant footnotes.

²⁹⁵ quoted in part in Klee, Ernst, u.a., Hrsg., *"Schöne Zeiten"*, pp. 242-245, The Bergen refugees who ended up at Auschwitz are also described by Gilbert, *op. cit.* and Czech, *op. cit.*. The story appears to have emerged into the mainstream sometime at the beginning of 1944. The basic feature of the tale is a riot in the undressing room, which requires the "half gassing" of those already in the gas chamber. Another element of the tale, left out of Höß' account, is the woman who tempts the German soldier, acquires his weapon and shoots him, which sparks the riot. Stäglich covers this element of the story in detail, the woman is variously described, *op. cit.*

²⁹⁶ Other affidavits from this period include an affidavit for American psychologist G.[ustave] M.[ahler] Gilbert admitting to the gassing of 2.5 million, and the death of another .5 million, etc. The March 16, 1946 affidavit (NO-1310), as well as other affidavits under American auspices (NI-034, NI-036) have never been published but can be obtained from mimeographs in large document centers in the United States. Irving

remarks, *Nuremberg*, that the transcripts of Höss' interrogations are not yet complete, *op. cit.*, *loc. Cit.* Many of the transcripts, at least those conducted by the Americans, are located on microfilm M 1270, roll 7, at the National Archives, and Irving's notes may be found on his Internet website at <http://www.fpp.co.uk>.

²⁹⁷ A reference to the London Charter, Article 21. As to the "authority" and "reliability" of such affidavits the reader is directed in particular to NI-036, which consists of a lengthy and leading interrogation of Höß in German, followed by the English language affidavit that grew out of the session. A comparison of the two is highly instructive.

²⁹⁸ For example, Faurisson, "How the British ..." goes directly from the German surrender of 8 May 1945 to Höß' capture, preferring to stress the Jewish identity of those he identifies as being instrumental in the construction of what he calls "The Auschwitz Myth."

²⁹⁹ Irving, *Nuremberg*, pp. 236ff

³⁰⁰ Harris, *op. cit.*

³⁰¹ cf. Harris, *op. cit.* These women were the two main witnesses to what transpired at Auschwitz, Vaillant-Couturier's testimony was admittedly hearsay. They were not cross-examined.

³⁰² For Grabner, cf. "*Schöne Zeiten*", *loc. cit.*, and above. For Broad, see *Trial of Tesch, Weinbacher, & Drohsinn*, Public Records Office, London.

³⁰³ that is, bearing in mind the results of the Soviet Special Commissions, the WRB report, the evidence provided at the IMT and the elaboration of same by the Allied prosecutions and the media to that point in time. Thus, for example, there is no reference to euthanasia in the March or April affidavits, the public exposition of that connection with mass gassing would await Konrad Morgen's affidavits and testimony at Nuremberg in July. On the other hand, the euthanasia connection does appear in Höss' affidavit written in November, 1946, that is, after the connection had become public knowledge. See *Death Dealer*, p. 28.

³⁰⁴ Porter, *Nuremberg*, discusses this in detail.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ that is, bearing in mind the results of the Soviet Special Commissions, and the elaboration of same by the Allied prosecutions to that point in time. Thus, for example, there is no reference to euthanasia, the public exposition of that connection would await Konrad Morgen's affidavits and testimony at Nuremberg three months later. On the other hand, the euthanasia connection does appear in Höss' recollections written in November, 1946, that is, after the connection had become public knowledge. See *Death Dealer*, p.

28.

³⁰⁷ NO-1210

³⁰⁸ Ibid., from the same paragraph to the above.

³⁰⁹ M 1270, roll 7

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ NO-1210

³¹² Broszat, ed., *Kommandant*, pp. 8-10 Porter, *Nuremberg*, discusses this in detail. See also Law-Reports of Trials of War Criminals, The United Nations War Crimes Commission, Volume VII, London, HMSO, 1948.

³¹³ Compare the arrangement of Broszat, who carries the essay on the "Final Solution" as an addendum, and Paskuly, *Death Dealer*, who leads with this document. We feel justified in calling these documents affidavits because (a) they were all signed and dated, (b) there were attempts to introduce some of them as bona fide affidavits during the NMT, (c) Broszat claims that they were prepared in "close connection" with the interrogations by presiding judge Jan Sehn.

³¹⁴ Höss, Rudolf, *Death Dealer*

³¹⁵ Höss, Rudolf, *Death Dealer*, compare Paskuly's comments in the Forward, p. 22

³¹⁶ Law-Reports of Trials of War Criminals, The United Nations War Crimes Commission, Volume VII, London, HMSO, 1948.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Höss, testimony entered into evidence for the Eichmann trial, March 17, 1947, see transcripts at www.nizkor.org

³¹⁹ Law Reports, *loc. cit.*

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Höss, Rudolf, *Death Dealer*, p. 171, and, *inter alia*, compare his final letters to wife and children.

³²² For example, on the subject of the Final Solution in Poland, Norman Davies simply transcribes excerpts in his *God's Playground*, vol. 2, Oxford UP, New York: 1982.

³²³ Such studies do not exist, of the dozen or so books on the Nuremberg Trials in the past 50 years that are not strictly memoirs, the majority are concerned either with the

defendants in a biographical format, or concerned with enumerating the actual flow of the trial itself.

³²⁴ Taylor, A.J.P., *The Origins of the Second World War*, Atheneum, NY:1983, p. 13f

³²⁵ Based on a review of the documentary lists provided with the publication of the International Military Tribunal; as reproduced in *Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, volume 1: Aristarchus International Law Database Series* [hereinafter, *Aristarchus*], Aristarchus Knowledge Industries, 1995, POB 45610, Seattle, WA, 98105. This is a CD-ROM which contains all of the proceedings of the IMT and NMT: the production suffered from inaccurate scanning, numerical and spelling errors abound. However, when cross-checked to the original published volumes it is a valuable source. Two obvious exceptions to the statement concerning documents at the IMT would be PS-501, containing a document pertaining to the use of gas vans, and originally discovered by the Soviets in 1943, and various Zyklon invoices contributed by Kurt Gerstein, given the number PS-1553. However, given the wide use of Zyklon for disinfestation, as noted earlier, these last cannot be given any probative weight.

³²⁶ Based on a review of the documents listed in *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10. Vol. 5: United States v. Oswald Pohl, et. al. (Case 4: 'Pohl Case')*, District of Columbia: GPO, 1950, *loc. cit.*

³²⁷ The most obvious of these is the Diary of Dr. Kremer, discussed below, another well-known document concerns a special order from Commandant Höß of Auschwitz dated August 12, 1942, concerning the potential for accidents in airing out spaces that have been gassed (*vergasungen*) due to the lower content of odor agent in the Zyklon B then in use. The document, uncatalogued in the archives of the Polish State Auschwitz Museum [PMO], is reproduced in J. C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, [hereinafter, *ATO*] Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, NY:1989, p. 201.

³²⁸ A major exception concerns the documentation unearthed by J. C. Pressac in the 1980's, and contained in *ATO*. The quality of Pressac's evidence is discussed in Section 14.

³²⁹ document quoted in Klee, Ernst, (hrsg.) *Dokumente zur "Euthanasie"*, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt a. M.: 1997, p. 271f

³³⁰ Such descriptions and floor plans are legion in the German disinfection literature, we cite here the floor plan contained in Stangelmeyer, Josef, "Genormte, zerlegbare Rohrleitungsnetze für die gesundheitstechnischen Anlagen der ortsveränderlichen Unterkünfte des Reichsarbeitsdienstes" in *Gesundheits-Ingenieur*, 25.VI.42.

³³¹ Of course, revisionists never argued the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Riga, but the traditional view did until well into the 1950's, see the response to a critic at <http://www.codoh.com/incon/inconshrcrit.sht>. Fleming, Gerald, *Hitler and the Final*

Solution, UC Press, 1987, makes a connection between this memo and gassing vans, but "huts" are not "vans." The idea that the *vergasungsapparate* were now "gas vans" seemed to originate at the Eichmann trial. It is interesting to note that both Eichmann and his counsel Servatius considered this document a forgery.

³³² Dr. Kremer's Diary was a staple of the first Auschwitz Trial in 1946, Kremer was imprisoned for ten years and then returned to Germany. The relevant portions of the diary have been reproduced Klee, Ernst, u.a., Hrsg., "*Schöne Zeiten*", S. Fischer Verlag, pp. 231-241, as well as in the English translation, *The Good Old Days*, Robert Faurisson has contributed an important discussion of Kremer's Diary, his imprisonment and aftermath, "Le professeur de medecine Johann Paul Kremer devant les horreurs du typhus a Auschwitz en Septembre-Octobre 1942", originally published in 1980. All of Faurisson's writings are available at the website of AAARG at <http://www.abbc.com/aaargh/> The AARGH site ia maintained by the Frenchman Serge Thion.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 233, 234, 237

³³⁴ Originally we had relied on the English translation in *The Good Old Days*, which construed "*nackte um Leben*" to mean "naked women ... begging for their lives", etc. However this is wrong, and furthermore there are other mistranslations in this volume, thus, in a record of Stark's testimony about Auschwitz "*Luftschutz*" is translated as "airtight".

³³⁵ This last appears to be the interpretation of Robert Faurisson, also who believes that the "last bunker" in question is the famous "Block 11" at the *Stammlager*.

³³⁶ Czech, Danuta, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939-1945*, Henry Holt & Co., NY:1997, p. 809

³³⁷ The normal scenario at Auschwitz involved one or two individuals who would empty cans into overhead apertures (for crematoriums I, II, and III), or a single individual (crematoriums IV and V) who would open a can, climb a ladder, and throw the contents through a window.

³³⁸ Stäglich, *op. cit.*, p. 112-113

³³⁹ Frank, Anne, *Diary of a Young Girl* (Definitive Edition), Bantam Books, NY:1997, p. 53

³⁴⁰ E.g., Rothschild, Sylvia, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust*, New American Library, NY:1981, , p. 129, 153

³⁴¹ Stäglich, *op. cit.*, p. 92; quotes Langbein to different effect; but see Faurisson's discussion of the sequel, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, and elsewhere.

³⁴² cf. Hilberg's remark in the first version of his book, *op. cit.*, pp., also Gilbert, *op. cit.*,

who scants references to the toll of the epidemics. According to *Grundlagen*, (p. 168) 300,000 died in the concentration camp system, officially, taking into consideration the Eastern camps (which are not normally counted) an estimate of hundreds of thousands dead seems reasonable for the camps alone.

³⁴³ On the concept of esoteric speech involved here, Dawidowicz has made the most extended arguments, *War Against the Jews*, Bantam, NY:1978. However well put these arguments, they are unconvincing, first, because as she acknowledges esoteric (or "Aesopian") speech is a function of powerless minorities, not empowered ones, second, because under this assumption it presumes a meaning of the code that has never been demonstrated, and third, because she overreaches the thesis and attempts to argue that the Madagascar proposal was also a "code word", a concept which most historians reject, partly because of documents such as Rademacher's 1942 letter, see <http://www.codoh.com/incon/inconmad.html>

³⁴⁴ A communication from the SD of the SS, NO-5156, written 26 June 1942, quoted in Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 260.

³⁴⁵ Another mistranslation, this one became apparent during the Irving trial, the original final phrase reads, "Es ist gut, wenn uns der Schrecken vorangeht, dass wir des Judentum ausrotten" which might be better rendered, "It's good if the word gets around that we are out to destroy Jewry." The original translator, Weidenfeld, simply attempted to explain the meaning of that statement, we believe appropriately, but it would have been better done in an annotation. The document, as well as much else particularly relevant here, may be found on Irving's website at www.fpp.co.uk.

³⁴⁶ Rosenbaum, Ron, "Explaining Hitler" in *The New Yorker*, vol. LXXI, #10, 1 May 1995, pp. 50-73, p. 60; in 1998 Rosenbaum's writings were expanded into book form. Further on the issue of the "Hitler Order" see <http://www.codoh.com/incon/inconorders.html>

The focus that historians of this subject have in attempting to prove Hitler's culpability seems rather tendentious: if no order has surfaced, then there is no reason to presume that one ever existed. This has not prevented historians from going into extended arguments over exactly when this hypothetical order was issued, see Browning, Christopher R., "Beyond 'Intentionalism' and 'Functionalism': The Decision for the Final Solution Reconsidered" in *The Path to Genocide*, Cambridge UP, Canto, NY:1992.

³⁴⁷ Irving, *Nuremberg*

³⁴⁸ Lengyel, Olga, *I Survived Hitler's Ovens* (Five Chimneys), Avon, NY: 1947, Nyiszli, Miklos, *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*, Arcade, NY: 1993

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, passim.

³⁵⁰ Nyiszli, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

³⁵¹ Hilberg uses both Lengyel and Nyiszli, *op. cit.*, extensively to describe camp conditions. Pressac also relies heavily on Nyiszli, see *op. cit.*, pp. 469-480. Controversy of Nyiszli's identity has been a constant since Paul Rassinier first investigated the matter at the time that Nyiszli's memoirs first achieved broad circulation in the West, when published in *Le temps moderne* in 1953, see Butz, *op. cit.*, Rassinier, *Debunking*, *loc. cit.*

³⁵² Nyiszli, *op. cit.*, Lengyel, *op. cit.*

³⁵³ Nyiszli, *op. cit.*

³⁵⁴ Nyiszli, *op. cit.*, and consider Pressac's rationalization of this fact in *ATO*

³⁵⁵ Lengyel, *op. cit.*, p. 68-70. The idea that the holes in the roof were windows appears to derive from the WRB report, which described three holes, or, in the French translation, "*fenêtres*" (windows, openings; the original English language WRB report used the word "traps") The idea of "windows" was later stated as fact by eyewitness Ryba at the NMT Concentration Camp Trial (consult the transcripts for NMT Case 4), although he appeared to back away from this claim in later testimony. In the appendix to Pierre Vidal-Naquet's *Un Eichmann de papier* (1980, at <http://www.anti-rev.org>) there is an appendix by Pitch Bloch in which describes reading in 1944 a Swiss version of what was essentially the WRB report, these described "*trois fenêtres*". We might consider this an object lesson of the way in which false claims develop, as well as of the enduring influence of the WRB report.

³⁵⁶356 The testimony of Henryk Tauber, from May, 1945, reproduced in Pressac, *Auschwitz*, pp. 481-502. Pressac considers this "95 percent accurate."

³⁵⁷357 quoted in Porter, *Holocaust*, Irving, *Nuremberg*, esp. p. 236

³⁵⁸358 Irving, *Nuremberg*, pp. 186-188, and entire discussion of Holocaust, including notes, pp. 235-246.

³⁵⁹359 Main texts on the euthanasia program are Klee, Ernst, *Dokumente zur "Euthanasie"*, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt a. M.: 1997; and Klee, Ernst, "*Euthanasie*" *im NS-Staat*, Fischer Verlag: Frankfurt a. M.:1997. In English, there is a substantial section on euthanasia in Noakes, J. and Pridham, G., *Nazism, 1919-1945: vol. 3: Foreign Policy, War, and Racial Extermination*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter:1995, pp. 997-1048. To these might be added Robert J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, Basic Books, NY: 1986, and Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*, Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill & London: 1995. The first three of these texts are valuable because they represent the sum of the documentary evidence gathered or proffered to prove that euthanasia was carried out by means of poison gas. Friedlander's text is valuable because it is based on the extensive interrogations and trial records in

various postwar euthanasia trials. There are two other ways in which Friedlander's book is particularly valuable. First, because he makes clear the kinds of pressure that was brought to bear in euthanasia interrogations, see for example, *op. cit.*, p. 198f, and 193. Second because his review of interrogations indicates that the first admission of euthanasia gassing occurred during the interrogation of Karl Brandt, September 2, 1945, that is, contemporaneous with the Belsen trial. Friedlander considers many of Brandt's statements as "bizarre" as well they might be, especially if they are taken at face value.

³⁶⁰360 Noakes, *op. cit.*, p. 1006

³⁶¹361 Noakes, *op. cit.*, p. for characteristics of adult prospective victims, p. 998, p. 999

³⁶²362 *New York Times*, referenced by Butz, *op. cit.*, p. 174 Thomas Mann's radio speeches were later collected and published and are still available, Mann, Thomas, *Deutsche Hrer! Radiosendungen nach Deutschland aus den Jahren 1940 bis 1945*, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt a. M.:1995. The broadcasts are keyed to the time they were recorded, not necessarily broadcast, and they indicate that Mann discussed gassing on several occasions, including November, 1941 (thousands of euthanasia victims gassed, p. 45), January, 1942, (hundreds of Dutch Jews experimented upon with poison gas, p. 49), June 1942 (the Dutch Jews are now 800 and were gassed at Mauthausen, p. 66), and September 27, 1942 (11,000 Polish Jews gassed in air tight vehicles (*Wagen*)). The texts of these broadcasts further support the idea of the widespread awareness of the gassing claim throughout Europe at this time, as well as the role of the BBC in this dissemination.

³⁶³363 Noakes, *op. cit.*, p. 1036f

³⁶⁴364 Noakes, *op. cit.*, see copy of the form letter of condolences, p. 1028, and Shirer entry below.

³⁶⁵365 Noakes, *op. cit.*, 1039f

³⁶⁶366 As Butz notes [*op. cit.*, p. 118], cremation had evolved into a relatively clean procedure partly in response to objections such as these, which, in our view, were symptomatic of a broad social condemnation of cremation for other reasons.

³⁶⁷367 Shirer, *Berlin Diary*, Knopf, New York:1941, pp. 570-574. Note that Shirer dismisses the idea that euthanasia would be done for cost, however, Noakes, *op. cit.*, cites a document that suggests just this kind of reasoning, p. 1042; it is interesting to note that this odd and ambiguous document did not make it into Klee's comprehensive collection.

³⁶⁸368 This is the clear import from Shirer's diary from November, 1940. However, we have subsequently found an even earlier rumor of the gassing claim, this one from July, 1940, from a report to Philip Bouhler which indicates that the population believed that the ill were being experimented on with poison gas, see Document 51, Letter from State Secretary Franz Schlegelberger, Reich Ministry of Justice, Berlin, to Reich Leader

Philipp Bouler, Chief of the Chancellery of the Fuehrer (KdF) Berlin 27 July 1940; copy of report, 25 July 1940. described as: "Forwarding copy of report about the T4 euthanasia killing centers that RM Franz Guertner had sent to RM Hans Heinrich Lammers, R22/5021 [the quote comes from the Guertner attachment] in "Archives of the Holocaust: An International Collection of Selected Documents, volume 20. Bundesarchiv of the FRG, Koblenz and Freiberg", Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton, eds., Garland Publishing, Inc., NY & London: 1993, pp. 160-163.

An even more extreme report comes from a judge describing the rumor mills in Frankfurt, in May, 1941: "Meine Lagerbericht vom 3.d.M glaube ich hinsichtlich der Stimmung des Bevölkerung noch zu der Frage der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens ergänzen zu sollen: [...] Wie man mir sagt, rufen schon die Kinder, wenn solche Transportwagen kommen: Da werden wieder welche vergast. In Limburg sollen auf der Fahrt von Weilmünster nach Hadamar täglich 1 bis 3 grosse Omnibusse mit vohängten Fenstern durchkommen, die Insassen in die Liquidationsanstalt Hadamar abliefern. Dort sollen nach den Erzählungen die Ankommlinge sofort nach Eintreffen nackt ausgezogen werden, es werde ihnen ein Papierhemd angezogen and sie würden alsbald in einen Gasraum verbracht, wo sie mit Blausäure und einem betäubenden Zusatzgas liquidiert werden. Die Leichen würden auf einem laufenden Band in einen Verbrennungsraum geschafft, jeweils 6 in einen Ofen, die anfallende Asche würde auf 6 Urnen verteilt and den Angehörigen zugeschickt. Den dicken Rauch der Verbrennungshalle sähe man täglich über Hadamar. Es wird weiter davon gesprochen, dass den Leichen in einzelnen Fällen Köpfe oder sonstige Körperteile abgeschnitten, um sie anatomisch untersuchen zu lassen. Das mit der Liquidation befätsste Personal dieser Anstalten, das von auswärts abgeordnet sei, werde von der Bevölkerung völlig gemieden. Das Personal sitze abends in den Gastwirtschaften und spreche dem Alkohol auffallend stark zu. [...] Abgesehen von dem äusseren Hergang, der die Fantasie der Bevölkerung beschäftigt, beunruhigt sich die Bevölkerung vor allem über die Frage, ob nicht auch alte Leute, die im Leben Tüchtiges geleistet hätten und jetzt im Alter etwas schwachsinnig geworden seien, mit liquidiert werden." See Document 53, Letter from the Presiding Judge of the Circuit Court (Oberlandesgerichts-praesident) Frankfurt, to the RM of Justice, Berlin, 16 May 1941. described as: "Concerns widespread local knowledge about events at the T4 euthanasia killing center at Grafeneck, R22/5021 in "Archives of the Holocaust: An International Collection of Selected Documents, volume 20. Bundesarchiv of the FRG, Koblenz and Freiberg", Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton, eds., Garland Publishing, Inc., NY & London: 1993, pp. 172-174

This document, which provides a full description of a completely erroneous procedure is noteworthy for containing elements -- fantastic cremation events, conveyor belts, use of cyanide gas -- that would normally be assigned to a much later period. With regard to the present discussion note the absence of showers.

³⁶⁹ Morgen's affidavits were offered in defense by way of demonstrating that the SS was not a criminal organization. To that end there are numerous defects in Morgen's

affidavits, such as the assertion that the gas chambers at Auschwitz were located at Monowitz, which was not under SS control. Revisionists have doubts about Morgen, but in our opinion, to the extent that he describes a situation where some individuals in the concentration camp system lost their bearings and engaged in arbitrary behavior he seems credible. With respect to euthanasia, *per se*, Morgen attempted to argue that the "extermination camps" of Aktion Reinhardt were run by Wirth of the Criminal Police, but not the SS, and to that end he was apparently the first to emphasize Wirth's connection to the T-4, or euthanasia, program.

³⁷⁰ Noakes, *op. cit.*, p. 1025

³⁷¹ see photograph of this pipe, in *Grundlagen*, p. 278, note aperture that had been cut through the reinforced concrete; the rebar remained and there is no apparent provision for gas-tightness.

³⁷² Friedrich Berg points out in his article, "Typhus and the Jews", that, given the reluctance that East Europeans had to public bathing, dummy shower arrangements would not be a particularly good way to lull potential victims.

³⁷³ That is, the justification for the use of carbon monoxide in the euthanasia program is that it caused rapid death with no premonition, but that deception has nothing to do with the deception alleged in the extermination campaign.

³⁷⁴ Noakes, *op. cit.*, p. 1019

³⁷⁵ Noakes, *op. cit.*, p. 1027

³⁷⁶ "VII: Extracts From Argumentation and Evidence of Prosecution and Defense: (D) Euthanasia: (d) Evidence: Extracts From the Testimony of Defendant Brack: Examination: Part 4", in *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10. Vol. 1: United States of America v. Karl Brandt, et.al. (Case 1: 'Medical Case').* District of Columbia: GPO, N.D. [1949], n.p.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ Brack's strange statements find a ready explanation when we reflect on the pressure brought to bear on him during his interrogations, cited in part by Friedlander, *op. cit., loc. cit.* Briefly, Brack was implicated by document in plans to sterilize the Eastern Jews, and was confronted with this document during interrogation, along with threats and an amazing tirade delivered by the interrogator. Brack's ready cooperation stems from this point, although he was eventually found guilty and ultimately hanged.

³⁷⁹ Ponsonby, Arthur, *Falsehood in Wartime*, Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, CA:1991, pp. 78-82

³⁸⁰ cf.; Casement, Roger, "Treatment of Women and Children in the Congo States, what

Mr. Casement saw in 1903", n.d., n.p. Hochschild, Adam, *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998) is a recent and relatively even-handed description of the atrocities committed in the Congo.

³⁸¹ That is, there was a euthanasia program and it may have used carbon monoxide in some fashion on some occasions, although the balance of the data indicates injections, both in Germany and in the concentration camps. But if the fact of the euthanasia program, relatively well recorded, can be established as having had the shower-gas-burning sequence, then that provides corroborative weight to the thesis of the shower-gas-burning sequence for the alleged extermination facilities, for which there is no documentary record at all.

³⁸² Klee, *opp. cit.*, provides the closest thing to documentary proof; with regards to the shower-gas-burning sequence, virtually nothing: there is a photograph of a shower, [*Dokumente*, p. 132] for example, which is supposed to have been a gas chamber, but which was later cleverly converted into -- a shower. So in essence we are offered a photograph of a shower. His book also contains a photograph of alleged victims dug up by the Soviets in a mass grave [*Dokumente*, p. 320], the reader is invited to consult the photograph. But in any case it does not support the shower-gas-burning sequence.

³⁸³ The smoke and stench element comes up in Höss' 5 April 1946 affidavit, as we have seen, it appears in many contexts. Butz, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-120. considered this claim prima facie evidence of hoaxing; the "murder wagons" of course are important to the Soviet claims of "gas vans", and see notes 62 and 63, as well as Section 3 above.

³⁸⁴ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 38f. This in turn supports the inference that the mass gassing claim derives not only from the circumstances of delousing and disinfection but also directly from the rumors of the euthanasia program.

³⁸⁵ Reference to Section 3, above, not only disinfection but quarantine itself would give rise to suspicion and rumors.

³⁸⁶ On the subject of cremation's reemergence, see Iserson, Kenneth, *Death to Dust*, Galen Press, Tuscon, AZ: 1995, Fischer, Norbert, *Vom Gottesacker zum Krematorium*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln:1996, and see also Thompson, Sir Henry, "Cremation" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, NY & London: 1910, vol. 7, pp. 403-407

³⁸⁷ Cf. Thompson, *loc. cit.*

³⁸⁸ Thompson explores this theme in particular, but it is something of a truism in writings about cremation.

³⁸⁹ Although Germany built the first modern crematorium, actual use was hindered by social attitudes, consult Thompson, *loc. cit.*

³⁹⁰ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 96f

³⁹¹ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 116, the increase in cremation rates in traditionally Protestant venues was even greater, In Hamburg it climbed from 2.8 percent to 27.8 percent between 1913 and 1930.

³⁹² Fischer, *op. cit.*, p 11

³⁹³ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p 124, and also quoting Siegrfried Giedion, p. 101

³⁹⁴ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p 116, also p. 99ff for typical exaggerations and hostile reactions, particularly from churches, to the process.

³⁹⁵ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 115, his actual words were "Die moderne Kultur ist eine antichristliche Kultur", which Fischer characterizes as anti-clericalism, and probably correctly. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the psychic investment which most people have made in traditional religions, to construe his words as "Modern culture is the culture of the Antichrist" would probably not exaggerate the way in which many regarded such attitudes.

³⁹⁶ Iserson, *op. cit.*, p. , Thompson, *loc. cit.*

³⁹⁷ Iserson, *op. cit.*, p. , Thompson, *loc. cit.*

³⁹⁸ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 126, here we mean "mandatory" in the sense that from 1939 virtually every concentration camp would be equipped with cremation facilities.

³⁹⁹ Huxley, Aldous, *Brave New World*, Perennial, NY: 1991, p. 48f

⁴⁰⁰ The Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz, USSR-008

⁴⁰¹ Patton, George S. Jr., *War As I Knew It*, Bantam, NY:1980, p. 284

⁴⁰² Life Magazine, July 23, 1945, p. 78ff The relationship of German rocket and secret weapons technology to postwar hysterias, and most particularly to science fiction and UFO hysterias, has been the subject of a number of credulous studies, but the theme has not received the mainstream academic exposure that it deserves, perhaps because these hysterical post-war claims flow right back to the kinds of claims repeatedly made about the extermination processes in the camps.

⁴⁰³ Vesco, Renato & Childress, David Hatcher, *Man-Made UFOs 1944-1994*, AUP Publishers Network, Stelle, IL:1994, pp. 77-87, see also Harris, Brad, *Die dunkle Seite des Mondes*, Edition Pandora, Bologna:1996, vol. I, pp. 119-174 for a more extensive discussion of the legend of German secret weapons and Nazi UFO's.

⁴⁰⁴ Specifically, the Soviet Special Commission on Auschwitz claimed that 279,000 people could be cremated by the 56 Auschwitz Birkenau ovens in a month, i.e., 9,300 per day. Some eyewitnesses, e. g., Nyiszli, assert even higher rates of combustion

⁴⁰⁵ Testimony of Dr. Konrad Morgen, August 7, 1946, IMT vol. XX, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁰⁶ Cross-examination of Dr. Bendel, *Trial of Tesch, Weinbacher & Drohsinn*, Public Records Office, London, UK.

⁴⁰⁷ A document of dubious provenance (marked as a copy ("*Abschrift*"), reproduced in one of its forms by J. C. Pressac, *ATO*, p. 244, asserts half that amount. Neither number is credible because neither is possible, as even Pressac admits, *Ibid.* A recent article argues that the document is moreover faked, see "*Schlüsseldokument*" ist Fälschung" by Dipl. Ing. Manfred Gerner in *Vierteljahrshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung*, 1998, vol. III.

⁴⁰⁸ Mattogno, *Die Krematorienofen*, in *Grundlagen*, pp. 288ff, 302.

⁴⁰⁹ Mattogno cites "Factors which affect the process of cremation", Third session by Dr. E. W. Jones, assisted by Mr. R. G. Williamson, *Annual cremation conference report*, Cremation Society of Great Britain, 1975. It should be stressed that all of the surviving documentation on mass cremations in German camps, cited by Pressac, *ATO*, Mattogno, *op. cit.*, and by Pressac (w/ Van Pelt), "The Machinery of Mass Murder at Auschwitz" in Gutman, Y. & Berenbaum, M., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, Indiana UP, Bloomington:1998, pp. 183-246, are of orders of magnitude that support the British conclusions. None support the extravagant cremation rates argued by Pressac, e.g., in "Machinery", p. 199.

⁴¹⁰ Mattogno, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

⁴¹¹ Richard Breitman, in *Official Secrets*, Hill & Wang, New York: 1998, attempted to argue that the Germans had plans to build an extermination camp at Mogilev based on the fact that (a) a crematorium was planned for that Soviet city, and (b) Zyklon B was sent to that location. Breitman was indebted to Christian Gerlach, who originated the idea that the planned crematorium at Mogilev was somehow proof of an intent to establish an "extermination camp", although both ignored the evidence that there were sizable typhus deaths at that location and that the bodies would have required cremation for purposes of public health. Breitman felt justified in rejecting that explanation by contending that Zyklon B was solely an agent of mass murder, as opposed to other Zyklon agents A, C, D, E and F whose existence Raul Hilberg had hypothesized in 1985. However, this is wrong, there were no Zyklon types beyond A (the original gaseous product), B (absorbed cyanide in earthen pellets) and C (from 1943, identical to B but with a different warning agent.) The error comes from Hilberg's misreading of documents concerning the fumigation of belongings seized from Jews in the Riga area which described different concentrations of Zyklon, that is, grams per cubic meter, which were in the industrial jargon referred to as classes A-F.

⁴¹² A phrase from "The Factory of Death at Auschwitz" by Boris Polevoi, *Pravda*,

February 2, 1945, p. 4. The article has been separately translated into English and annotated at <http://codoh.com/incon/inconosven2.html>

⁴¹³ The concept of "gas ovens" has been a particularly venerable one, such that the linkage of cremation, gas, and homicide has been considered well-nigh absolute. It is notable in this respect that, as previously noted, only four prosecution exhibits in the NMT concentration camp case pertained to possible gas chambers, but many more described the construction of crematoriums in the camps.

⁴¹⁴ TIME magazine, May 20, 1940, p. 28

⁴¹⁵ See Crowell, Samuel, "Technique and Operation of German Anti-Gas Shelters", at <http://www.codoh.com/incon/inconpressac.html>

for an introduction to poison gas usage and several references. Also consult Martinetz, Dieter, *Der Gaskrieg, 1914-1918*, Bernard & Graefe Verlag, München: 1996, for the First World War use. For Second World War non-use, consult Crowell, "Technique", also Gellermann, Günther W., *Der Krieg, der nicht stattfand*, Bernard & Graefe Verlag, München:1986, and for groupings of documents and document extracts pertaining to gas warfare throughout the twentieth century see Brauch, Hans Günther & Müller, Rolf-Dieter, *Chemische Kriegführung-Chemische Abrüstung*, Berlin Verlag, Arno Spitz: 1985, also Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-235

⁴¹⁶ Crowell, *loc. cit.*

⁴¹⁷ Crowell, *loc. cit.*

⁴¹⁸ Trombley, *Executioner's Protocol*

⁴¹⁹ *Grand Hotel*, 1932, Edmund Goulding, dir.

⁴²⁰ *Kameradschaft*, 1931, Georg W. Pabst, dir.

⁴²¹ quoted by Stäglich, *op. cit.*, p. 59

⁴²² quoted by Riedel, Johannes, "Echoes of Political Processes in Music During the Weimar Republic", in Hirschbach, Frank D., *Germany in the Twenties: The Artist as Social Critic*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota: 1980, p. 72

⁴²³ *Things to Come*, 1938, William Cameron Menzies, dir. Significantly, the film also features a plague outbreak.

⁴²⁴ Laurence Thompson, *The Greatest Treason: The Untold Story of Munich*, William Morrow, NY:1968, p. 2f

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 210

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p. 3

⁴²⁷ Ibid., p. 5

⁴²⁸ MacDougall, Curtis, *Hoaxes*, Dover, NY: 1966, p. 43f

⁴²⁹ Kuebler, Harold W., ed. *The Treasury of Science Fiction Classics*, "The Invasion from Mars" (radio adaptation by Howard Koch of H. G. Wells' "War of the Worlds"), pp. 417-438, Hanover House, Garden City, NJ: 1954. Interesting to note that the other Martian weapon was a "death" or "heat-ray", cf. Shirer's diary entry, above.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 425 and p 431f

⁴³¹ These and other newspaper excerpts come from Howard Koch's *The Panic Broadcast*, Avon, NY: 1970, which contains between pp. 16-24 and 89-96 reproductions of newspaper clippings.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid., pp. 89-96

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., p. 103

⁴³⁶ Ibid., p. 86

⁴³⁷ Hoyt, Edwin P., *The Invasion Before Normandy*, Stein & Day, NY: 1985. Note especially the photograph of mock casualties in gas masks, section after p. 134

⁴³⁸ Seagrave, Sterling, *Yellow Rain: A Journey Through the Terror of Chemical Warfare*, M. Evans and Company, NY: 1981, pp. 60-62, pp. 80-81, the last quoting Omar Bradley. Michael Shermer provides a war-time home-front episode of gas hysteria, concerning the "Phantom Gasser of Mattoon", *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁴³⁹ Gellermann, *op. cit.*, reproduces a photocopy of the entire document, pp. 249-25

⁴⁴⁰ We are reminded here of the mentality associated with poisons and poisonings, cf. Mackay, Charles, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, Noonday, NY:1970, section on the "Slow Poisoners", pp. 565-592

⁴⁴¹ Roueche, Berton, "Sandy" in *The Medical Detectives*, Pocket Books, NY: 1982, pp. 339-352. The New England Journal of Medicine, January 14, 2000, also carried an article about a similar case of mass gas hysteria, here in Tennessee, following a similar course as above. The article suggests that the term "mass hysteria" be re-termed "psychogenic illness" in recognition of the fact that the former term is demeaning, and indeed tends to

reinforce the symptoms.

⁴⁴² Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, and Evans, *op.cit.*, both discuss this, particularly in connection with the career of Max Pettenkofer. Pettenkofer was so certain that germs were not themselves etiologically decisive that during a cholera epidemic he quaffed a glass of contaminated water to prove his point. He did not contract the disease. His experiment was later repeated by the Russian scientist Elie Metchnikov, with matching results. Indeed, it appears that such daring was the real motivation behind the Russian composer Peter Tchaikovsky's replication of the stunt, during the cholera epidemic of 1892-93. The fact that his attempt followed the premiere of his most maudlin symphony ("Pathétique") by only a few days, and the fact that he died as a result, has led to no end of speculation among music historians.

⁴⁴³ e.g., Showalter, Elaine, *Hystories*, Columbia UP, NY: 1997, p. 23

⁴⁴⁴ cf. Crowell, *Defending Against the Allied Bombing Campaign*

⁴⁴⁵ McCallum, John Dennis, *Crime Doctor*, Mercer Island, WA: 1978, conducted autopsies at Dachau, his comments are ambiguous. Autopsies were also supposed to have been conducted at Natzweiler-Struthof, no results indicating cyanide poisoning have been released.

⁴⁴⁶ This section roughly corresponds to the article, Crowell, Samuel, "Defending Against the Allied Bombing Campaign: Air Raid Shelters and Gas Protection in Germany, 1939-1945, Part 1", at [http:// www.codoh.com/incon/inconabr_1.html](http://www.codoh.com/incon/inconabr_1.html), and consult these sources.

⁴⁴⁷ *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, Document 1

⁴⁴⁸ *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, Document 2

⁴⁴⁹ *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, Document 3

⁴⁵⁰ *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, Documents 4 and 5

⁴⁵¹ *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, Document 2. An examination of American newspapers indicates that charges and counter-charges about poison gas use, and therefore threats of retaliation, were frequent during the war. For example, see (all New York Times): 2/2/41, Germans decline to use poison gas, 7/24/41, Russians accuse Germans of using poison gas, 5/11/42 and following, Churchill threatens to use poison gas on Germany if Germany uses it on the Russians, bases his accusation on supposed German movement of poison gases to the eastern front and the nationwide construction of "gas shelters" (5/12/42, p.5), 1/18/43, "Hitler May Use Gas", 4/23/43 and following, "Britain Warns Nazis on Gas", "Nazis Said to Fear Gas"(4/27/43), 6/9/43, "Third Warning to Axis", 11/30/43, "Nazi Resort to Gas Likely", etc.

⁴⁵² Seagrave, Sterling, *Yellow Rain*, 1974, Harris, Robert, *A Higher Form of Killing*, 1982

⁴⁵³ Harris, Robert, *A Higher Form of Killing*, 1982

⁴⁵⁴ Kalthoff, u. a., *op.cit.*

⁴⁵⁵ Infield, Glenn B., *Disaster at Bari*, 1971

⁴⁵⁶ Similarly, the application of gas protection or "*Gasschutz*" may have fostered another set of rumors.

⁴⁵⁷ This section roughly corresponds to the article, Crowell, Samuel, "Defending Against the Allied Bombing Campaign: Air Raid Shelters and Gas Protection in Germany, 1939-1945, Part 2", at [http:// www.codoh.com/incon/inconabr_2.html](http://www.codoh.com/incon/inconabr_2.html), and consult these sources. There are also important references to Crowell, Samuel, "Bomb Shelters at Birkenau" at www.codoh.com/incon/inconbsinbirk.html.

⁴⁵⁸ Crowell, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁵⁹ Czech, Danuta, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶⁰ compare the photographic evidence in *Defending, Part 2*

⁴⁶¹ The documents, copies of which were transmitted to this author by Germar Rudolf, have been reproduced on the Internet on David Irving's website, at <http://www.fpp.co.uk>, with translations on CODOH at <http://www.codoh.com>.

⁴⁶² *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*

⁴⁶³ Photos in Graf & Mattogno, *Majdanek*

⁴⁶⁴ Foedrowitz, *Bunkerwelt*

⁴⁶⁵ Graf & Mattogno, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ DIN standards

⁴⁶⁸ Kalthoff, u. a., *op. cit.* describes the use of these other gases.

⁴⁶⁹ Described in *Entgiften von Bekleidung und Ausrüstung in ortsfesten Anlagen*, issued by the *Gasabwehrdienst aller Waffen*, dated 1 Jan 43.

⁴⁷⁰ Crowell, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁷¹ Stroop Report, *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, Documents 4 and 5.

⁴⁷² Pressac, *ATO*, Mattogno, *Die Krematorien*, in *Grundlagen*

⁴⁷³ Natzweiler, Pressac, *ATO*; Mauthausen, Shermer & Grobman, *Denying*, p. 168. It is a little unclear which door Shermer and Grobman are referring to, but other photos on the web make it clear that the door on the Mauthausen shower is an air raid shelter door.

⁴⁷⁴ *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*, Section 3.6

⁴⁷⁵ see note 473

⁴⁷⁶ Pressac, *ATO*, contains a famous photo of one of the disinfection chamber doors.

⁴⁷⁷ Shermer and Grobman, *op. cit.*, argue the use of the Mauthausen shower as a gas chamber, p. 168, but this is also in contradiction to Broszat's 1960 declaration.

⁴⁷⁸ Shermer and Grobman, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-168.

⁴⁷⁹ see *Trial of Tesch, Weinbacher, & Drohsinn*, Public Records Office, London., also Kalthoff, u. a., *op. cit.*

⁴⁸⁰ This section roughly corresponds to the article, Crowell, Samuel, "Technique and Operation of German Ant-Gas Shelters in World War Two: A Refutation of J. C. Pressac's 'Criminal Traces'", at [http:// www.codoh.com/incon/incompressac.html](http://www.codoh.com/incon/incompressac.html) and consult these sources.

⁴⁸¹ Crowell, *loc. cit.* This is clear by consulting the manner in which Pressac obtained and used these documents, see his book, *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, NY:1989

⁴⁸² Crowell, *loc. cit.*, and in particular follow the links to the Internet articles of Arthur R. Butz, "*Vergasungskeller*", and "Gas Detectors at Auschwitz". Both Dr. Butz and myself have construed "*Vergasungskeller*" in a civil defense context, however, if anything "*vergasen*" type words are even more firmly rooted in disinfection and delousing procedures. While convinced that we are correct in identifying several civil defense and gas protection features to Leichenkeller 1 of Krematorium II (i.e., the "*Vergasungskeller*") it is conceivable that part of it was intended for the disinfecting or delousing of clothing of the dead or the corpse handlers, but in that case it is doubtful that the entire *Keller* would have been set aside for that purpose: then the use of the word would be an example of metonymy, and the facility itself could well have been used for a variety of purposes: disinfecting corpse handlers, ad hoc disinfection and delousing of camp arrivals, and decontamination. Such multi-purpose use harmonizes with German civil defense procedures in the cities, consult also Section 3 above. Note 11/00: the above 1997 conjecture of dual or even triple use of the crematoriums has been effectively proved, not only on the basis of documents discussed by Carlo Mattogno in 1999, but also on the basis of a series of reports prepared by the head of the Central Construction

Office, Karl Bischoff, in May, 1943, see *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau* for details.

⁴⁸³ This conclusion is, we believe, inescapable. At the beginning of our research we explored the possibility that the Soviets and other communists misconstrued the air raid shelter evidence, and it is certainly at least possible that many individuals did, and probably most Westerners. However, at no point in the historical record, or in the elaboration of these materials since then, has there ever been a recognition of the air raid shelter origins of these gas-tight features. It is beyond belief that the association never occurred to an establishment historian on this subject, particularly in Eastern Europe, where the only extant "gas chamber" facilities are located. Therefore we are forced to conclude that establishment historians in Poland and the Soviet Union failed to point out the implications to their thesis, namely, that the Germans had constructed air raid shelters but had used them for exterminations. This failure can only be understood as a desire to suppress the issue of air raid shelters *per se*, because otherwise it most certainly would have been (and would be!) a valuable addition to our knowledge of the Holocaust. Hence we conclude that the air raid shelter origin of gas-tight features was suppressed because of the questions it would raise, namely, the questions it would raise about the validity of the extermination hypothesis overall. Note 11/00: This 1997 note should be supplemented by the documentation in *Bomb Shelters in Birkenau*.

⁴⁸⁴ Lest Professor Mayer be accused of revisionism, it is best to quote him here, "...from 1942 to 1945, certainly at Auschwitz, but probably overall, more Jews were killed by so-called "natural" causes than by "unnatural" ones." Quoted in Widmann, Richard A., "Auschwitz: A Reevaluation" at www.codoh.com

⁴⁸⁵ Shermer & Grobman, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸⁶ The common usage during the Irving v. Lipstadt trial, see the transcripts and much other supporting documentation at Irving's website, fpp.co.uk

⁴⁸⁷ A frequent accusation ever since Morse, *While Six Million Died*, (1968)

⁴⁸⁸ See Piper's essay in Gutman & Berenbaum *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, *op.cit.*

⁴⁸⁹ In all of his affidavits, as well as in the affidavit of Dieter Wisliceny.

⁴⁹⁰ Widmann, Richard A., *Auschwitz: A Reevaluation*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² The issue has been the subject of serious discussion among revisionists for years, see Matogno's arguments with Pressac, but see also the *Journal of Historical Review*, vol. 19, No. 4, July/August 2000 which features two articles on the subject, one by Graf arguing that about 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz (and thence

elsewhere) and Arthur R. Butz who argues that the figure is highly suspect. One way to square this circle is simply to recognize that most of the "Hungarian Jews" deported were from Ruthenia and Transylvania, that is, territories that were not part of Hungary between 1919-1939 and which were not part of Hungary after 1945.

⁴⁹³ Szita, Halaerod.

⁴⁹⁴ Quoted in Stäglich

⁴⁹⁵ IMT records.

⁴⁹⁶ Milch NMT trial, IMT records.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Various survivor compendia.

⁴⁹⁹ Graf, loc.cit.

⁵⁰⁰ Konzentrationslager Gross-Rosen

⁵⁰¹ Szita, Halalerod, other books, Tamas Stark, etc.

⁵⁰² The death toll for Auschwitz as per Van Pelt's report for the Irving v. Lipstadt trial was about 900,000 Jewish deaths. Revisionists do not generally question about 100,000 of these. Again, Van Pelt accepts that some 400,000 Hungarian Jews go into this total, along with perhaps 200,000 more from other locales, principally Lodz. It follows that, absent an extermination theory, the real difference between the parties is between about 300,000 and 100,000.

⁵⁰³ Stroop's Nuremberg affidavit is relevant here, it records sending the 50,000 Jews to Lublin while the Report in his name claims they were sent to "T 2", i.e., Treblinka, from which it is usually assumed they were exterminated.

⁵⁰⁴ E.g., Excavations at Belzec

⁵⁰⁵ Deak, *Retribution*, p. 70, n 22.

⁵⁰⁶ Werth, Alexander, *Russia at War, 1941-1945*, Avon, NY: 1964, pp. 807-808; the context indicates the Werth is simply quoting his older dispatches here.

⁵⁰⁷ Noakes, *op. cit.*, p. 1019f

⁵⁰⁸ Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, Garden City, NJ: n.d., p. 1120f

⁵⁰⁹ Chambers Encyclopedic Guides, *Catastrophes and Disasters*, NY: 1992, pp. 121-126

⁵¹⁰ Chambers Encyclopedic Guides, *Great Scientific Discoveries*, NY: 1992, p. 16, 17

⁵¹¹ The technical name for the product was "coal water gas" produced by heating coke in the presence of water. This released flammable hydrogen gas but also quantities of poisonous carbon monoxide. The by product of this method of illuminating gas production were large amounts of black goo called "coal tar." Beginning in the 1850's, experiments began to be made on this material which created not only the modern dye but pharmaceutical industries as well. In Germany the various dye companies, Hoechst, Bayer, BASF and others formed themselves into a cartel, the "IG Farben" whose daughter companies still dominate the field, despite German defeat and spoliation in two world wars.

⁵¹² e.g., Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* and O. Henry, "The Furnished Room"

⁵¹³ A common folklore element, compare also the 1880's pamphlet, "Illuminating Water Gas a Poison!"

⁵¹⁴ Schechter, Harold, *Depraved*, which recounts the tortures and murders Herman Mudgett, who called himself "Dr. H. H. Holmes." Among other crimes Dr. Holmes is supposed to have locked two children into a trunk and then gassed them via a rubber hose running from the nearest gas outlet.

⁵¹⁵ the Depression is relevant here. The anecdotal evidence of this is large, but unspecified. Gas as a means of suicide (not merely gas ovens but simply gas lamps that are not lit) appears to have been used in the famine in the German speaking world after the First World War, as well as periodically throughout the West during various economic depressions.

⁵¹⁶ Wells, H. G., *The War of the Worlds*, n. p., n. d.

⁵¹⁷ cf. Burroughs, the Princess of Mars (1913), such gas in the medium of the hero's instantaneous space travel.

⁵¹⁸ Fritzsche, Peter, *A Nation of Fliers*, Harvard UP, Cambridge:1992, p. 41

⁵¹⁹ Fritzsche, Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 229

⁵²⁰ Wells, H. G., *The War in the Air*, Gutenberg e-text

⁵²¹ Kaiser, George, *Gas*, Unger, NY:n.d., and see introduction for discussion of the other plays in the trilogy.

⁵²² Doyle, *op. cit.*, passim. The malefactor in the story cited attempts suicide with cyanide after his capture. Nor are we forgetting the William Gillette play, "Sherlock Holmes" which featured a scene of Holmes with a cigar locked in a basement "gas chamber." A

film version of this, "Sherlock Holmes in the Gas Cellar" followed by 1907 in Denmark.

⁵²³ Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, *The Poison Belt*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco: 1989.

⁵²⁴ Shiel, M. P. *The Collected Writings of MP Shiel*, volume 1, "The Purple Cloud", although in fact it seems more likely that Doyle's immediate influence was the arrival of Halley's Comet in 1910, concerning which there was speculation that Earth would be inundated in clouds of cyanide gas which some scientists had claimed comprised the comet's tail. Consult contemporary news reports.

⁵²⁵ Shiel was apparently the inventor of the Future War subgenre concerning the "Yellow Peril" see "The Yellow Danger" of 1893, with several name changes and subsequent variations. The genre seems to have always been characterized by more than a tinge of hysteria reflecting anxieties about industrialized life (compare the symbolism in *Metropolis*, but perhaps traceable to Melville, as well). Dorrington, Albert, *The Radium Terrors*, 1912, featuring Japanese theft of radium in order to make weapons of mass destruction, etc. must be considered another important contribution to the genre.

⁵²⁶ Rohmer, Sax, *The Return of Fu Manchu*, Gutenberg e-text

⁵²⁷ Clarke, I. F., *Pattern of Expectation*, (1979) summarizes the history of the matter, Clarke has also issued at least two compendia of mostly European authors in the pre-1914 era interpolating modern scientific and technical discoveries into their imaginings of future wars. The genre, focused mostly in Britain, has always had a strong anti-German component.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., many titles could be cited.

⁵²⁹ Lefebure, Victor, *The Riddle of the Rhine*, Chemical Foundation, 1923. Lefebure's main thesis is that German pre-eminence in the chemical industry enables Germany to develop unique weapons for any future war.

⁵³⁰ *Awake!*, August 22, 1995, "The Holocaust Who Spoke Out?", p. 10

⁵³¹ Lewis, Sinclair, *It Can't Happen Here*, Signet, NY: 1993, p. 232

⁵³² See the comments in the introduction by the translator, Andrew McAndrew, in *twentieth century Russian Drama*, Bantam, NY: 1963, pp. 159-162.

⁵³³ One of these comes from the journal of Emanuel Ringleblum, *op. cit.*, where he repeats a rumor that prisoners are forced to go into the shower, from which they contract lung complaints and perish. Another concerns a legend in Mauthausen, in which the prisoners were forced to stand under the cold showers until they were dead, the cold water would take up to 30 minutes to kill them.

⁵³⁴ Dubnow, Simon, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, Jewish Publication

Society of American, Philadelphia: 1912, vol. II, p. 295

⁵³⁵ Dubnow, Simon, *Nationalism and History* (Essays edited by Koppel Pinson), Jewish Publication Society of American, Philadelphia: 1958, p. 355 -- the "one million destroyed and mutilated" are then described as "one half driven out" and the other half held prisoners and hostages.

⁵³⁶ *Der gelbe Fleck: Die Ausrottung von 500 000 deutschen Juden*, Editions de Carrefour, Paris:1936, "mit einem Vorwort von Lion Feuchtwanger".

⁵³⁷ See the discussion in the Irving trial, cross-examination of Christopher Browning, Days 16-17. The publisher was Victor Gollancz whose efforts on behalf of Germany after the Second World War probably saved millions who would have otherwise starved to death.

⁵³⁸ see the comments of David Irving on the term "Ausrottung" in DSMRD, testifying at the Zundel trial in 1988. Irving has other relevant materials on his Internet website, *fpp.co.uk*.

⁵³⁹ In *The American Hebrew*, October 31, 1919; credit for this discovery to the Polish Historical Society. Cited by Irving, *Nuremberg*, Focal Point, London:1996, p.

⁵⁴⁰ Butz, *op. cit.*, in the context of his review of wartime propaganda, also Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 66

⁵⁴¹ Sanning, Walter N., *The Dissolution of Eastern European Jewry*, IHR, Newport Beach, CA: 1983, provides a revisionist analysis, Germar Rudolf's article *Statistisches uber die Holocaust-Opfer* in *Grundlagen* contrasts Sanning with the latest traditional computations of Benz and others. The question of number is not particularly interesting, unless judicious consideration is given to emigrations throughout the 1930's, realistic birth rates that would be reactive to conditions, deaths through war-time conditions, as well as the massive Soviet deportations or evacuations, this last encountered throughout the literature but usually discussed in the context of Holocaust victims, but cf. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 43, p. 47. Furthermore, whatever the number it does not prove a gassing program.

⁵⁴² Dubnow, History, Grayzel, *A History of the Jews*, Meridian, New York:1984. This attitude is especially clear in explanations for the pogroms from 1881 onwards, but Dubnow also invokes the conspiratorial plotting which supposedly underlay medieval violence and "blood libel" accusations. This emphasis on "top down" causality, whereby the common people never acted against the Jewish people without external prompting, seems to be rooted in four concepts: first, biblical thinking of causality, second, the habit of Christian monarchs and nobility to extort Jewish wealth as a guarantee of peace-keeping, and therefore were presumably capable of controlling popular violence at will, third, an unwillingness to credit spontaneous violence especially in times of hardship, dislocation, and change, and fourth and finally, a desire not to recognize that the presence

of an unassimilated minority could naturally create tensions and problems. Of course, to a pre-Zionist mind, Jewish people must have been committed to one of two paths: assimilation, which invariably involved a falling away from the Jewish community, (cf. Dubnow, *History*, vol. 2, p. 211ff) or maintenance of tradition, which in turn involved an acceptance of the Jewish community existing in an unassimilated context in a larger society. (This last was definitely inimical to the interests of the Russian Empire at least from the time of Nicholas I.) In this latter case they would most definitely have to believe that it was normally possible to maintain their customary insular existence without inspiring negative passions among their neighbors. But it is precisely here that there is a dilemma, since the modern nation state has tended to demand homogeneity and uniformity from its members, and has systematically eroded the particularism of communities and minorities: the Tsarist policy of "Russification", which afflicted all of the minorities of the Empire, was analogous to processes carried out by Prussia and in a different degree by the Western states at earlier times. Whether this is "right" or "wrong" is not a historical question; however, we believe that it is inarguable that the ethnic complexity of Eastern Europe, including, but not limited to the unassimilated Eastern Jews, was the central dynamic in evolving extremist policies in Germany, Russia, and among the various nationalities in between.

⁵⁴³ see above, there were no doubt a number of factors that led to widespread anti-Semitism throughout Europe, and particularly Eastern Europe, at this time (we are inclined to the thesis that the continent-wide phenomenon grew out of the ethnic problem in the East.). The usual explanations are ideological (cf. Goldhagen, Daniel J., *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, Little, Brown & Co., NY:1996) that is, anti-Semitism arose from the evolution of untrue and hateful prejudices about Jews, and nothing besides. But this is to some extent an obvious tautology: Jews were persecuted on the basis of hateful ideas -- but why did these ideas arise in the first place? This is where Goldhagen's method, shared, by the way, by most intellectual historians of this period, even if they do not share his conclusions, shows its defects. Racial or national hatreds do not exist and develop independently of human affairs, to put it another way, such ideas always exist, but require some empirical context in order to flourish. To combat the ideas alone is merely to combat the symptom; what is needed is to examine and alter the situation in which such ideas gain adherents, or so it would appear.

Our analysis of nineteenth century anti-Semitism is pointing to the peculiar, almost caste-like, position of unassimilated Eastern Jews, the demographic trends in the region, the dynamic of industrialization, the bureaucratization of nation states, and secularization as being the most important elements in fostering anti-Jewish hatred as a species on "non-Russian" and "unassimilated" hatred. Since these are social, economic, or otherwise empirical factors, this tends to argue that the disappearance of the unassimilated East European communities, Jewish or non-Jewish, was a foregone conclusion, it further suggests that the gradual homogenization of East European communities, involving the large-scale population movements, and including the brutal expulsion and/or absorption of German, Jewish, and other sectarian and ethnic minorities, was also to a large degree

inevitable. This is what we mean by "other Final Solutions" -- modern nationalism, as the symbolic structure of efficiently run modern states, seems to have an innate intolerance of difference; demographic pressures alone, not counting hegemonic competition, made the re-ordering of Eastern Europe a necessity, the grim playing out of this re-ordering, in our opinion, is the true context of the Jewish catastrophe.

⁵⁴⁴ Goldhagen, *op. cit.*, is to our minds a typical example.

⁵⁴⁵ All of these are of course typical descriptions attributed to the German National Socialists.

⁵⁴⁶ Hasek, Jaroslav, *The Good Soldier Schweik*, Penguin, London:1973; from the chapter entitled "A Religious Debate", p. 138. First published in serial form between 1921-1924

⁵⁴⁷ quoted in Showalter, Elaine, *Hystories*, Columbia UP, NY:1997, p. 6

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁹ cf. Aroneanu, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵⁰ cf. Berger, Peter, *The Sacred Canopy*, Anchor, NY: 1969, "plausibility structures" and secularization, *passim*. See also Scheler, Max, *Ressentiment*, Schocken Books, NY: 1961

⁵⁵¹ In our opinion, the memoirs of Lengyel, *op. cit.*, Nyiszli, *op. cit.*, and most others that present similar materials meet this classification.

⁵⁵² MacDougall, Curtis, *Hoaxes*, Dover, NY:1968, especially p. 3-158, which discusses these various motivations in great detail and with a wealth of illustration.

⁵⁵³ Allport, Gordon W. and Postman, Leo, *The Psychology of Rumor*, Henry Holt & Co., NY: 1947, the first part covers the theoretical development of rumor psychology, see especially the statement on p. 43

⁵⁵⁴ see the criteria in Allport & Postman, *op. cit.*, p. 162ff.

⁵⁵⁵ see Dubnow, *History*, and Grayzel, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵⁶ Watt, Richard M., *Bitter Glory*, Touchstone, NY:1982, esp. pp. 356-367

⁵⁵⁷ a standard fact that emerges in the "shooting" literature, cf. Goldhagen, *op. cit.*, and *A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth*, by Norman G. Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn, Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt & Co., New York: 1998, combining two critical reviews, see especially Birn's comments, pp. 121-122 and 131-133, as well as Browning, Christopher R., *Ordinary Men*, NY:1992, probably the most neutral writing on the subject, yet the object of Goldhagen's thesis.

⁵⁵⁸ noted in several places, but not developed, see Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 43, p. 47 for a discussion of magnitudes.

⁵⁵⁹ Rapoport, Louis, *Stalin's War Against the Jews*, The Free Press, NY:1990, very much in the "apologetics" vein, but contains much relevant detail. The issue of the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union is very complex, especially if one fails to make distinctions between ethnic or "racial" Jews who assimilated to Soviet communist society, and traditional Jews who tenaciously held to Yiddish and the Torah. The religious element was persecuted from the early days of the Revolution -- even by assimilated Soviet Jews - - while the Yiddish component was tolerated but not after 1948. Consult Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*, A. A. Knopf, New York: 1993, pp. 362-366

⁵⁶⁰ phrase quoted in Rosenbaum, *loc. cit.*, attributed to Milton Himmelfarb, in a 1984 article in *Commentary* magazine: no doubt the inspiration for Robert Faurisson's "No Holes, No Holocaust."

⁵⁶¹ This last is the term preferred by Arno Meyer (*Why Did The Heavens Not Darken?*) and Norman Finkelstein (*A Nation On Trial*).