

SOBIBÓR

HOLOCAUST PROPAGANDA AND REALITY

In May 2009, 89-year-old Cleveland autoworker John Demjanjuk was deported from the United States to Germany, where he was arrested and charged with aiding and abetting murder in at least 27,900 cases. These mass murders were allegedly perpetrated at the Sobibór “death” camp in eastern Poland. According to mainstream historiography, 170,000 to 250,000 Jews were exterminated there in gas chambers between 1942 and 1943. The corpses were buried in mass graves and later incinerated on an open-air pyre. But do these serious claims really stand up to scrutiny?

In *Sobibor: Holocaust Propaganda and Reality*, the official version of what transpired at Sobibór is put under the microscope. It is shown that the historiography of the camp is not based on solid evidence, but on the selective use of eyewitness testimonies, which in turn are riddled with contradictions and outright absurdities. This book could exonerate John Demjanjuk.

For more than half a century, mainstream Holocaust historians made no real attempts to muster material evidence for their claims about Sobibor. Finally, in the 21st century, professional historians carried out an archeological survey at the former camp site. Their findings—and the findings of many others—are here presented in detail and fatal implications for the extermination camp theory are revealed.

SOBIBOR: HOLOCAUST PROPAGANDA AND REALITY (softcover, 434 pages, indexed, illustrated, #536, \$25 minus 10% for TBR subscribers) can be ordered from TBR Book Club, P.O. Box 15877, Washington, D.C. 20003. Inside U.S. add \$5 S&H. Outside U.S. email TBRca@aol.com for best S&H to your nation. To charge a copy to Visa, MasterCard, AmEx or Discover, call TBR toll free at 1-877-773-9077. Bulk prices available: Email TBRca@aol.com.

ISSN 1529-7748

ISBN 978-0-9818085-4-3
9 0000

9 780981 808543

SOBIBOR: HOLOCAUST PROPAGANDA AND REALITY

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JÜRGEN GRAF • THOMAS KUES • CARLO MATTOGNO

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SOBIBÓR

HOLOCAUST PROPAGANDA AND REALITY



Jürgen H.P. Rieger, * 11 May 1946, † 29 October 2009

The lawyer Jürgen Rieger, one of the most brilliant and outspoken representatives of the national right wing in Germany, courageously and ably defended several revisionists in court (among them Thies Christophersen, Ernst Zündel, Germar Rudolf, Horst Mahler). As he would make no concessions to the Big Lie, he himself was prosecuted twice for revisionist heresy. On 29 October 2009 this remarkable man suddenly died from a stroke at age 63.

He will not be forgotten.

JÜRGEN GRAF • THOMAS KUES • CARLO MATTOGNO

SOBIBÓR

HOLOCAUST PROPAGANDA AND REALITY

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
JÜRGEN RIEGER

PUBLISHED BY THE BARNES REVIEW
P.O. BOX 15877
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003

HOLOCAUST Handbooks Series, vol. 19:

Jürgen Graf, Thomas Kues, Carlo Mattogno:

Sobibór: Holocaust Propaganda and Reality

Washington, DC: THE BARNES REVIEW

P.O. Box 15877, Washington, D.C. 20003, USA

May 2010

Series editors: Germar Rudolf (up to 2005), Aaron Cohen (since 2006)

Partly written in English, partly translated from the Italian and German
by Henry Gardner

ISBN: 978-0-9818085-4-3

ISSN: 1529-7748

Published by THE BARNES REVIEW

Manufactured in the United States of America

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Distribution USA/America: TBR Books, The Barnes Review,
P.O. Box 15877,
Washington, D.C. 20003, USA
1-877-773-9077

Distribution Europe/Africa: Castle Hill Publishers, PO Box 243,
Uckfield, TN22 9AW, UK

Distribution Australia/Asia: Peace Books, PO Box 3300,
Norwood, 5067, Australia

Set in Times New Roman.

www.BarnesReview.com

www.HolocaustHandbooks.com

www.vho.org/GB/Books/Sobibor

If these sites are inaccessible, try it with www.anonymizer.com

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction.....	9
Measurement Conversions	14
2. The Sobibór Camp and its Historiographic Representation.....	15
2.1. Sobibór as Described in the <i>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust</i>	15
2.2. Sobibór as Described in Contemporary Documents	20
2.2.1. Himmler’s Directive of 5 July 1943 and Pohl’s Reply.....	21
2.2.2. Documents about the Sobibór Uprising.....	21
2.2.3. The Höfle Radio Message	22
2.2.4. Provisional Summary	22
2.3. Sobibór in Official Historiography and “Holocaust”	
Literature	23
2.3.1. N. Blumental’s <i>Documents and Materials</i> (1946).....	23
2.3.2. Report by the “Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland” (1947).....	24
2.3.3. Yuri Suhl (1967).....	25
2.3.4. Adam Rutkowski (1968)	26
2.3.5. Stanisław Szmażner (1968)	28
2.3.6. Adalbert Rückerl (1977).....	31
2.3.7. E.A. Cohen (1979).....	31
2.3.8. Miriam Novitch (1980).....	31
2.3.9. Richard Rashke (1982).....	34
2.3.10. E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl <i>et al.</i> (1983).....	35
2.3.11. Yitzhak Arad (1987).....	37
2.3.12. Witold Zbigniew Sulimierski (1993).....	39
2.3.13. Jules Schelvis (1993).....	40
2.3.14. Thomas (Toivi) Blatt (1996)	41
2.3.15. Shaindy Perl (2004).....	45
2.3.16. Michael Lev (2007)	46
2.3.17. Dov Freiberg (2007)	46
2.3.18. Barbara Distel (2008)	46
2.3.19. Jules Schelvis (2008).....	47
2.3.20. Conclusions	55
2.4. A Revisionist Article about Sobibór	56
2.5. Heinrich Himmler’s Visit to Sobibór	58
2.6. Sobibór’s Claimed Number of Victims	60

3. Origins and Evolution of Claims about Sobibór	63
4. Critical Analysis of Eye Witness Testimonies	77
4.1. Alleged Contacts with Inmates in camp III.....	77
4.2. Alexander Pechersky, the Main Witness.....	84
4.3. “The Most Conclusive Evidence”	93
4.4. Miscellaneous Anomalies and Absurdities	98
4.5. Testimonies by Former Camp Personnel	102
4.6. The Value of Eye Witness Testimonies	105
5. Critical Analysis of Material Evidence	107
5.1. The State of Evidence	107
5.1.1. Forensic Post War Survey by Polish Authorities	107
5.1.2. Photographic Evidence.....	108
5.1.3. Kola’s Archeological Research at Sobibór 2000-2001 ..	109
5.2. Mass Graves	112
5.2.1. Mass Graves in Testimony, Verdicts, and Historiography.....	112
5.2.2. The Switch from Burial to Cremation	115
5.2.3. Mass Graves Identified by Kola	118
5.2.4. The Significance of Unincinerated Corpses	120
5.2.5. Area and Volume of the Graves	122
5.2.6. A Note on the Ground Water Level at Sobibór.....	125
5.3. Fuel Requirements	130
5.3.1. The Percentage of Children among the Deportees	130
5.3.2. The Average Weight of the Children	132
5.3.3. Fuel Requirements for the Cremation of One Body.....	133
5.3.4. Decomposed Bodies	136
5.3.5. Emaciated Corpses	138
5.3.6. Factors Influencing the Cremation	139
5.3.7. Wood Requirements for Corpse Cremation at Sobibór..	140
5.3.8. The Duration of the Cremation.....	145
5.3.9. The Ashes.....	148
5.4. Excavated Building Remains	149
5.4.1. The Alleged Second Phase Gas Chambers in Testimony, Verdicts and Historiography.....	149
5.4.2. Building Remains Excavated by Kola.....	152
5.5. Continued Archeological Research 2007-2008.....	162
5.6. The Official “Memorial Map” of the Sobibór “Death Camp” ...	167
5.7. Estimate of the Sobibór Death Toll.....	168

6. The Sobibór Trials	171
6.1. Legal Proceedings as the Basis for Historiography.....	171
6.2. The Trial of Erich Bauer in Berlin in 1950	172
6.3. The Frankfurt Trial of Hubert Gomerski and Johann Klier (1950).....	178
6.4. The Sobibór Trial at Hagen (1965/1966)	182
6.5. The Sobibór Trial that Never Took Place	189
6.6. The Three Sobibór Trials in the Soviet Union	190
6.7. The Brazilian Extradition Proceedings against F. Stangl and G. Wagner	191
7. National-Socialist Policy of Jewish Emigration.....	193
7.1. Emigration.....	193
7.2. The Madagascar Plan	198
7.3. From Madagascar Plan to Deportation to the East.....	201
7.4. First Deportations to the East.....	213
8. The <i>Führerbefehl</i> and the Origins of the “Extermination Camps” in the East	219
8.1. The <i>Führerbefehl</i> and Holocaust Historiography.....	219
8.2. Origins and Significance of “Aktion Reinhardt”	236
8.2.1. The “Generalplan Ost”	236
8.2.2. “Aktion Reinhardt”.....	243
8.3. Alleged Genesis and Organization of the Extermination Camps of <i>Aktion Reinhardt</i>	251
8.3.1. Administration and Financing	251
8.3.2. Construction of the Camps	252
8.3.3. Construction of the Alleged Gas Chambers: General Problems.....	254
8.4. The Alleged First Gas Chamber Building at Sobibór	262
8.5. Euthanasia and <i>Aktion Reinhardt</i>	269
8.6. Himmler’s Cremation Order	281
9. Sobibór: Propaganda and Reality	283
9.1. Fake “Baths” or Real Baths? Sobibór as a Transit Camp	283
9.2. The <i>Ostwanderung</i>	290
9.3. Jewish Transports into the Lublin District in 1942	296
9.4. Evacuations to the East: Höfle Telegram and Korherr Report...	311
9.5. Registration of Deportees in the <i>Aktion Reinhardt</i> Camps.....	331
9.6. Prof. Kulischer on the Expulsion of Jews	333

10. The Fate of the Deportees.....	347
10.1. The Fate of Jews Deported Directly to the East	347
10.2. Number of Jews Moved to the East.....	349
10.2.1. Via the <i>Aktion Reinhardt</i> Camps	349
10.2.2. Via Chełmno.....	351
10.2.3. Via Auschwitz.....	352
10.2.4. Balance	353
10.3. The Dissolution of Polish Jewry in the USSR.....	354
10.4. Western Jews in the Eastern Territories	357
10.4.1. Steffen Werner’s White Ruthenia Hypothesis.....	357
10.4.2. <i>American Jewish Yearbook</i>	360
10.4.3. <i>Judisk Krönika</i>	361
10.4.4. Further Evidence for Western Jews in the East.....	363
10.4.5. The Diary of Herman Kruk	366
10.5. The Fate of Western Jews – a Hypothesis.....	369
11. The Demjanjuk Case	375
11.1. Hunting Down Old Men.....	375
11.2. The OSI	379
11.3. Demjanjuk’s Extradition to Israel and His Trial	380
11.4. Demjanjuk’s Extradition to Germany	387
11.5. The Run-Up to the Munich Trial.....	389
12. Conclusions.....	391
12.1. The Moral Responsibility of the Camp Personnel	391
12.2. “I am a Portion of that Force...”	393
12.3. The Emperor’s New Clothes	394
12.4. The Moloch	395
13. Appendix.....	401
13.1. Documents and Photographs.....	401
13.2. SS Ranks and U.S. Army Equivalents	413
13.3. Bibliography.....	414
Media Items.....	414
Monographs, Anthologies, Published Document Collections...	415
Documents.....	425
Internet Sources.....	426
Judicial Documents	429
13.4. Abbreviations	429
13.5. Index of Names	430

1. Introduction

On 12 May 2009, John Demjanjuk, 89 years of age, born in Ukraine, and erstwhile citizen of the United States, was deported to Germany where he was immediately jailed at Stadelheim prison in Munich and presented with an arrest warrant charging him with “aiding and abetting murder in at least 29,000 cases.” Five years earlier, the U.S. authorities had stripped him of his U.S. citizenship.

The leftist German news magazine *Der Spiegel* described the background of the matter as follows:¹

“As a guard in the extermination camp at Sobibór in 1943, Demjanjuk is said to have aided the Nazis in the mass murder of thousands of Jews. [...] Several documents suggest that Demjanjuk belonged to a unit of some 5,000 foreign helpers – Balts, Ukrainians, ethnic Germans – trained by the National Socialists at the Trawniki training camp east of Lublin in the mass murders perpetrated in the occupied territories.”

A central position in the indictment is occupied by an identity card according to which Demjanjuk, in 1943, was serving as a guard at the Sobibór camp. As opposed to this, an expert opinion formed on the basis of a number of elements had concluded as early as 1987 that the identity card was a forgery.² Over the next few years the German media largely accepted this view and *Der Spiegel* stated clearly and succinctly in its edition of 2 August 1993:³

“It [the document] had obviously been forged.”

Even if the identity card were indeed authentic, it would merely attest to Demjanjuk’s *presence* in the camp but would not in the least prove that the Ukrainian had, in fact, participated in any murder, let

¹ Georg Bönisch, Jan Friedmann, Cordula Meyer, “Ein ganz gewöhnlicher Handlanger,” in: *Der Spiegel*, No. 26/2009, 22 June 2009 (www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-65794351.html).

² Dieter Lehner, *Du sollst nicht falsch Zeugnis geben*, Vowinckel Verlag, Berg/Starnberger See 1987.

³ “Mörderische Augen,” in: *Der Spiegel*, No. 31/1993, 2 Aug. 1993 (www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13681024.html).

alone in 29,000 such acts. In the article mentioned initially *Der Spiegel* noted:¹

“For the German judiciary the case against the alleged SS-guard is a first. For the first time the authorities are attempting to bring to trial a hand from the lowest echelon of the hierarchy, not merely for some instance of excessive cruelty, but because of his participation in ensuring the smooth operation of the machinery of murder.”

Whereas the “Nazi perpetrators” had been indicted for certain concrete crimes in all previous trials, this was no longer the case for John Demjanjuk: the Ukrainian is to be sentenced for his sole presence as a guard in the Sobibór camp at a time when, as the prosecution maintains, at least 29,000 people were murdered there! Concerning this monstrous perversion of justice the German judiciary provides us with the following justification:¹

“The arrest warrant states that the guard would not have had to participate in the mass murder. Like so many other men from Trawniki, he could have deserted.”

By itself, the prosecution of an 89-year-old man for crimes which he allegedly committed at age 23 goes very much against the grain of our natural sense of justice and of European legal traditions, but the Demjanjuk case is further poisoned by the fact that the accused has already spent seven years in prison – five of them on death row – only to be declared innocent later on. We must remember that the U.S. authorities had extradited him to Israel in 1986. During his trial there, he was identified by a number of former Treblinka inmates as “Ivan the Terrible,” a Ukrainian whom these witnesses accused of having not only gassed a huge number of Jews with exhaust gases from the Diesel engine of a knocked-out Soviet tank, but also of having committed all kinds of mind-boggling atrocities.

In its verdict the Jerusalem court quoted the former Treblinka prisoner Pinchas Epstein, who had testified as follows:⁴

“Sometimes he [Ivan] would come with a dagger, sometimes with a bayonet, and he would crack skulls, he would cut off ears. [...] I want to say, honorable court, that it was horrible to look at the corpses when they took them out of the cabins. People with crushed faces, people with stab wounds, pregnant women with stab wounds in their bellies, women with the fetuses hanging half out, young girls

⁴ Criminal case No. 373/86, State of Israel vs. Ivan (John) Demjanjuk, Verdict, p. 182 f. Awkward language here and in the following quotes in the original.

with stab wound on their breasts, with eyes gouged out. [...] He would stand and gaze upon the results, what he had done, the stabbing of the girls, the gouging of the eyes, the severing of the girls' breasts – he stood there and enjoyed the scene.[...] This Ivan was a monster from another planet.”

The witness Yehiel Reichmann testified as follows:⁵

“I want to tell you what took place next to the well with my friend Finkelstein. While I was still washing teeth together with him, with Finkelstein, this devil Ivan came with a drilling machine for drilling holes. And he rotated the drilling machine for making holes on Finkelstein's buttocks and said to him: if you scream I'll shoot you. He injured Finkelstein; he was bleeding, he suffered great pain, intense pain, but he was not permitted to scream, because Ivan had given him an order: If you scream, I'll shoot you! Ivan was a super-devil, a super-destroyer from Treblinka.”

On the basis of these testimonies Demjanjuk was sentenced to death by hanging back in 1988. On appeal in 1993, however, he was acquitted and allowed to return to the USA because the witnesses “had been mistaken.”⁶

The identity card which is now taken to prove Demjanjuk's presence at the Sobibór camp was in the hands of the Israeli authorities as early as 1986, but the Ukrainian was *never* indicted by the Israelis for any crimes committed at that camp.

Once the Demjanjuk trial had crashed in Israel, the German authorities apparently feared a similar flop. On the German radio service *Deutschlandfunk* a reporter asked the former minister of justice, Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger:⁷

“There [in Israel], he [Demjanjuk] has been indicted and sentenced once before in the eighties for aiding and abetting the murder of more than 800,000 Jews at Treblinka. Later, however, the charges were dropped, the death sentence was rescinded. Is there a risk that there will be a repeat performance in Munich?”

The former government minister replied:

“I do not believe that what happened in Israel will now repeat itself in Munich. [...] Well now, I think, the possibilities that exist for

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁶ Cf. chapter 11.3.

⁷ *Deutschlandfunk*, 14 July 2009, www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/interview_dlf/998673/.

demonstrating [his guilt] have now surely been examined by the prosecution very, very carefully and over many, many years.”

Demjanjuk was formally charged two months after his extradition:⁸

“The prosecution of Munich I has indicted the suspected NS-criminal John Demjanjuk on charges of aiding and abetting the murder of 27,900 Jews.”

Thus the number of murders in which the Ukrainian is alleged to have participated had mysteriously diminished from 29,000 to 27,900, although in the period concerned, i.e. between May and July 2009, no document has surfaced which would in any way justify this revision – a truly disarming proof of the assertion that the German judiciary have examined the matter “very, very carefully and over many, many years.”

Faced with such a situation, *Der Spiegel* could not but note:¹

“NS-trials are laborious and delicate. Easily, the defendants appear to be pitiable and decrepit old men who are persecuted mercilessly.”

Still, the Hamburg news magazine took the oncoming trial of John Demjanjuk to be a necessity by invoking the historian Norbert Frei and asserting:¹

“The Germans owe it to the victims and the survivors, but also to themselves, to prosecute Demjanjuk.”

In other words, the old man *must be* sentenced – regardless of any legal aspects – because the Germans owe this to themselves!

In the last chapter of this analysis we shall discuss in detail the incredible perversions of justice committed by the German judiciary – in line with their American counterparts in earlier days – in the persecution of a defenseless old man. The main part of the present book is, however, devoted to the examination of the elements of proof regarding the alleged mass murders of Jews at Sobibór.

According to official historiography, this camp, together with Treblinka and Bełżec, was one of the three “extermination camps”⁹ in eastern Poland where more than one and a half million Jews are reported to have been killed by means of exhaust gases from combustion engines. In 2002, two of us (C. Mattogno and J. Graf) presented a thorough do-

⁸ “Ermittler erheben Mordanklage gegen Demjanuk,” *Tagesspiegel*, 14 July 2009 (www.tagesspiegel.de/weltspiegel/Kriegsverbrechen-Mord-Konzentrationslager-John-Demjanjuk;art1117,2846684).

⁹ The word *Vernichtungslager* (extermination camp) does not appear in any German document dating from WWII. It was coined by the Allies later on.

cumentation on Treblinka,¹⁰ whereas the Belżec camp was dealt with by Carlo Mattogno two years later,¹¹ but until now no revisionist monograph has appeared on the subject of Sobibór. The present work aims at filling this gap.

To assist us in our endeavor, Carlo Mattogno and I managed to win the help of an extremely able researcher, the Swede Thomas Kues who had in the past written several most pertinent articles on this topic.¹²

Chapters 4 and 5 (except for sections 4.2 and 5.3) and section 8.4 of the present book have been written in English by Thomas Kues. Carlo Mattogno is responsible for chapters 3, 5.3. and 7 to 9 (with the exception of section 8.4), whereas I have contributed chapters 2, 6 and 10 to 12 as well as section 4.2. The chapters and sections written by Carlo Mattogno and myself have been translated into English by Henry Gardner from the respective original languages (Italian and German).

Jürgen Graf
30 November 2009

¹⁰ Carlo Mattogno, Jürgen Graf, *Treblinka: Vernichtungslager oder Durchgangslager?*, Castle Hill Publishers, Hastings 2002 (vho.org/D/Treblinka); Engl.: *Treblinka: Extermination Camp or Transit Camp?*, Theses & Dissertation Press, Chicago 2004 (vho.org/GB/Books/t).

¹¹ Carlo Mattogno, *Belżec. Propaganda, Zeugenaussagen, archäologische Untersuchungen, historische Fakten*, Castle Hill Publishers, Hastings 2004 (vho.org/D/b); Engl.: *Belżec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research and History*, Theses & Dissertation Press, Chicago 2004 (vho.org/GB/Books/b).

¹² www.codoh.com/author/kues.html.

Measurement Conversions

Since all three authors are Europeans, they use metric units throughout the book. Since some U.S. readers might find it difficult to imagine lengths, areas, volumes and weights given in metric units, a conversion list of the most common units is given below:

Mass

$$1 \text{ kg} = 2.205 \text{ pounds}$$

$$1 \text{ ton} = 1,000 \text{ kg} = 2,205 \text{ pounds}$$

Length

$$1 \text{ mm} = 0.03937 \text{ inch}$$

$$1 \text{ cm} = 10 \text{ mm} = 0.3937 \text{ inch}$$

$$2.54 \text{ cm} = 1 \text{ inch}$$

$$30.48 \text{ cm} = 1 \text{ ft}$$

$$1 \text{ m} = 100 \text{ cm} = 1.094 \text{ yard}$$

$$1 \text{ km} = 1,000 \text{ m} = 0.6214 \text{ miles}$$

$$1.609 \text{ km} = 1 \text{ mile}$$

Area

$$1 \text{ m}^2 = 10.76 \text{ sqft/ft}^2$$

$$1 \text{ hectar} = 100 \text{ m} \times 100 \text{ m} = 10,000 \text{ m}^2 = 2.471 \text{ acres}$$

$$1 \text{ km}^2 = 1,000 \text{ m} \times 1,000 \text{ m} = 1,000,000 \text{ m}^2 = 247.1 \text{ acres} = 0.3861 \text{ square miles}$$

Volume

$$1 \text{ m}^3 = 1.308 \text{ cyd/yd}^3 = 35.31 \text{ cft/ft}^3$$

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

2. The Sobibór Camp and its Historiographic Representation

2.1. Sobibór as Described in the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*

Under the heading “Sobibór,” the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* has the following text:¹³

“Extermination camp near the village and railway station of Sobibór, in the eastern part of the Lublin district in Poland, not far from the Chelm-Włodawa railway line. Established as part of the operation of Aktion Reinhard,^[14] the camp was built in a sparsely populated, woody, and swampy area beginning in March 1942. Local inhabitants and a group of eighty Jews from nearby ghettos were employed to construct it; Obersturmführer Richard Thomalla,^[15] a staff member of the SS construction office in Lublin, was in charge. In April 1942, SS-Obersturmführer Franz Stangl was appointed camp commandant and assumed responsibility for completion of the camp. In building Sobibór, the Germans drew on experience gained in the construction and operation of the Belżec extermination camp.

The camp staff included 20 to 30 German SS men, most of whom had previously taken part in the euthanasia program, as had Stangl. In addition, 90 to 120 Ukrainians served in the camp. Most were Soviet prisoners of war who had been trained for the job at Trawniki, some were Volksdeutsche, Soviet nationals of German origin. The German staff filled most of the command and administrative positions, while the Ukrainian unit acted as a guards and security per-

¹³ Israel Gutman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, vol. 3-4, MacMillan, New York 1990, pp. 1373-1377.

¹⁴ See chapter 8.2. about this campaign “Aktion Reinhard(t)”; the spelling in original documents and in the literature varies between Reinhard and Reinhardt. Editor’s remark.

¹⁵ The higher quality German edition gives Thomalla’s rank as Hauptsturmführer; Israel Gutman, Eberhard Jäckel, Peter Longerich, Julius H. Schoeps (eds.), *Zyklus des Holocaust. Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden*, Argon Verlag, Berlin 1993.

sonnel, their function being, among other things, to quell any resistance offered by the Jews who were brought to the camp and to prevent their escaping. Jewish prisoners were employed as well, on various physical tasks.

The camp was in the form of a rectangle 1,312 by 1,969 feet (400 × 600 m) in area, surrounded by a barbed wire fence 9.8 feet (3 m) high, with tree branches intertwined in it to conceal the interior. There were three camp areas, each individually fenced in: the administration area, the reception area, and the extermination area. The administration area consisted of the Vorlager ('pre-camp'; the part of the camp closest to the railway station) and Camp I. The Vorlager included the railway platform, with space for twenty railway cars to be stationed, as well as the living quarters for the German and Ukrainian staff. Camp I, which was fenced off from the rest, contained housing for the Jewish prisoners and the workshops in which some of them were employed.

The reception area, also known as Camp II, was the place where Jews from the incoming transports were brought, to go through various procedures prior to their being killed in the gas chambers – removal of clothes, cutting of women's hair, and confiscation of possessions and valuables.

The extermination area, or Camp III, located in the northwestern part of the camp, was the most isolated. It contained the gas chambers, the burial trenches, and housing for the Jewish prisoners employed there. A path, 9.8 to 13 feet (3-4 m) wide and 492 feet (150 m) long, led from the reception area to the extermination area; on either side was a barbed-wire fence, and here too branches were intertwined to conceal the path from view. It was along this path that the victims were herded, naked, toward the gas chambers from the shed where they had undressed.

The gas chambers were inside a brick building. Each chamber was square, measured 172 square feet (16 sq m), and had a capacity of 160 to 80 persons. The chambers were entered from a platform at the front of the brick building; each gas chamber also had another opening, through which the bodies were removed. The gas, carbon monoxide, was produced by a 200-horsepower engine in a nearby shed, from which it was piped into the gas chambers. The burial trenches were nearby, each 164 to 197 feet (50-60 m) long, 33 to 49 feet (10-15 m) wide, and 16.4 to 23 feet (5-7 m) deep. From the

railway platform to the burial trenches ran a narrow-gauge railway, used to transport persons too weak to make their way to the gas chambers on their own, as well as the bodies of those who had died en route to Sobibór.[...]

Several hundred able-bodied Jews were chosen from among the first few transports to form work teams. Some were employed in the workshops as tailors, cobblers, carpenters and so on, to serve the needs of the German and Ukrainian camp staff; all the other work assignments related to the processing of the victims along the route that led from the railway platform to the burial trenches. A total of about 1,000 prisoners, 150 of them women, were eventually put into these teams. One group, numbering several dozen, worked on the railway platform. Its job was to remove from the cars those who were incapable of getting off on their own; to remove the bodies of those who had died en route; and to clean out of the cars the dirt that had accumulated and the articles left behind. [...]

In the extermination area, two hundred to three hundred Jewish prisoners were kept, whose task was to remove the bodies of the murdered victims from the gas chambers, take them to the burial ground, and then clean up the chambers. A special team of prisoners, nicknamed 'the dentists,' was charged with extracting gold teeth from the mouths of the victims before their bodies were put into the trenches. Toward the end of 1942, in an effort to erase the traces of the mass killings, the bodies were exhumed and cremated; this task too was carried out by a special team of prisoners. [...]

Transports: First Stage. *The procedure for the reception of incoming transports was based entirely on misleading the victims and concealing from them the fate that was in store for them. When a train arrived, the deportees on board were ordered to disembark and were told that they had arrived at a transit camp from which they would be sent to labor camps; before leaving for the labor camps, they were to take showers, and at the same time their clothes would be disinfected. Following this announcement, the men and women were separated (children were assigned to the women), on the pretext that the sexes had to be separated for their showers. The victims were ordered to take off their clothes and hand over any money or valuables in their possession; anyone who was caught trying to conceal any item was shot. There followed the march to the gas chambers, which had been made to resemble shower rooms.*

Some 450 to 500 persons entered the chambers at a time. Everything was done on the run, accompanied by shouts, beatings, and warning shots. The victims were in a state of shock and did not grasp what was happening to them. When the gas chambers were jammed full of people, they were closed and sealed and the gas was piped in. Within twenty to thirty minutes, everyone inside was dead.

The bodies were then removed from the gas chambers and buried, after the gold teeth had been extracted from their mouths. The whole procedure, from the arrival of the train to the burial of the victims, took two to three hours. In the meantime the railway cars were cleaned up, the train departed, and another twenty cars, with their human load destined for extermination, entered the camp.

The first stage of the extermination operation went on for three months, from the beginning of May to the end of July 1942. The Jews who were brought to Sobibór during this period came from the Lublin district in Poland, and from Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Austria. The latter - those from countries outside Poland - had first been taken to ghettos in the Lublin district, and from there were deported to Sobibór. Some 10,000 Jews were brought from Germany and Austria, 6,000 from Theresienstadt, and many thousands from Slovakia; all in all, between 90,000 and 100,000 Jews were murdered at Sobibór in this first stage. The transports came to a temporary halt at the end of July, to enable the Lublin-Chełm railway line to undergo repairs.

In Sobibór's first three months of operation, the Germans found that the gas chambers, which had a total capacity of fewer than six hundred persons, created a bottleneck in the murder program. The halt in camp operations during August and September of 1942 was therefore used to construct three more gas chambers. These were put up next to the existing chambers under the same roof, with a hallway separating the old chambers from the new. With a new capacity of twelve hundred persons, the rate of extermination could be doubled. At the end of August 1942, Stangl, the commandant of Sobibór, was transferred to the Treblinka extermination camp, and his place was taken by SS-Obersturmführer Franz Reichleitner.

Second Stage. *By the beginning of October 1942, work on the railway line was completed and the transports to Sobibór could be renewed. Until early November, the arriving transports brought more Jews from towns in the Lublin district; in the winter, following*

the closing of the Belżec camp, and in the spring and summer of 1943, Sobibór also received transports from Eastern Galicia. [...] From October 1942 to June 1943, a total of 70,000 to 80,000 Jews from Lublin and the Eastern Galicia districts were brought to Sobibór; the number of victims from the Generalgouvernement was between 145,000 and 155,000.

By the end of October 1942, 25,000 Jews from Slovakia had been killed at Sobibór. In the second half of February 1943, Heinrich Himmler paid a visit to the camp. While he was there, a special transport arrived with several hundred Jewish girls from a labor camp in the Lublin district. Himmler watched the entire extermination procedure. In March of that year, four transports from France brought 4,000 people, all of whom were killed. Nineteen transports arrived from the Netherlands between March and July 1943, carrying 35,000 Jews. The Dutch Jews came in regular passenger trains, were given a polite welcome, and asked to send letters to their relatives in the Netherlands to let them know they had arrived at a labor camp. After they had written these letters, they were given the same treatment that was meted out to all the other transports. Within a few hours they all perished.

The last transports to arrive at Sobibór came from the Vilna, Minsk, and Lida ghettos, in the Reichskommissariat Ostland; 14,000 Jews came on these transports in the second half of September 1943, following the liquidation of the ghettos in these cities. This brought the total number of Jews killed at Sobibór throughout the period of the camp's operation to approximately 250,000.

At the end of the summer of 1942, the burial trenches were opened and the process of burning the victims' bodies was begun. The corpses were put into huge piles and set on fire. The bodies of victims who arrived in subsequent transports were cremated immediately after gassing and were not buried.^[16]

Resistance and Escape. *On July 5, 1943, Himmler ordered the closing of Sobibór as an extermination camp and its transformation into a concentration camp. On a piece of land added to the camp area and designated as Camp IV, warehouses were built to store captured Soviet ammunition, which the prospective camp prisoners were scheduled to handle.*

¹⁶ Earlier, it was said that the corpses were unearthed and burned "towards the end of 1942." Author's comment.

Throughout the camp's existence, attempts were made to escape from it; some of them were successful. In retaliation for these attempts, the Germans executed many dozens of prisoners. During the summer of 1943, in order to prevent escapes, and also as a safety measure against attacks by partisans, the Germans planted mines along the entire circumference of the camp. In July and August of that year, an underground group was organized among the Jewish prisoners in Sobibór under the leadership of Leon Feldhendler, who had been chairman of the Judenrat (Jewish Council) in Żółkiew, a town in Eastern Galicia. The group's aim was to organize an uprising and a mass escape from the camp. In the second half of September, Soviet Jewish Prisoners of War were brought to the camp from Minsk; one of them was Lt. Aleksandr Pechersky. The underground recruited him into its ranks and put him in command, with Feldhendler as his deputy. The plan was for the prisoners to kill the SS men, acquire weapons, and fight their way out of the camp. The uprising broke out on October 14, 1943, and in its course eleven SS men and several Ukrainians were killed. Some three hundred prisoners managed to escape, but most of them were killed by their pursuers. Those who had not joined the escape for various reasons and had remained in the camp were all killed as well. At the end of the war, about fifty Jews survived of those who had escaped during the uprising.

*In the wake of the uprising the Germans decided to liquidate Sobibór, abandoning the idea of turning it into a concentration camp. By the end of 1943 no trace was left; the camp area was plowed under, and crops were planted in its soil. A farm was put up in its place, and one of the Ukrainian camp guards settled there. In the summer of 1944 the area was liberated by the Soviet army and troops of the Polish People's Army (see *Gwardia Ludowa*). [...]"*

2.2. Sobibór as Described in Contemporary Documents

The description of the function and the history of the Sobibór camp, which is found in the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, relies exclusively on testimony and on trial sentences which, in turn, are based entirely on the accounts of eye witnesses (and on confessions by defendants). Contemporary documents concerning Sobibór are rare and do not support

the official descriptions in any way. The most important of these documents will be analyzed in later chapters. In the way of an introduction to this topic we will summarize them here.

2.2.1. Himmler's Directive of 5 July 1943 and Pohl's Reply

On 5 July 1943, *Reichsführer*-SS Heinrich Himmler issued the following directive:¹⁷

"The Sobibór transit camp, located in the Lublin district, is to be converted into a concentration camp. A dismantling unit for captured enemy munitions is to be set up in the concentration camp."

The Holocaust literature regularly deforms the contents of this directive. Thus, in the text taken from the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* quoted above, we read:

"On 5 July 1943, Himmler ordered Sobibór to be closed as an extermination camp and transformed into a concentration camp."

It is, however, an undeniable fact that Sobibór, in Himmler's directive, was not referred to as an "extermination camp" but as a "transit camp."

Ten days later, on 15 July 1943, the head of the *SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt* (Economic Administrative Main Office of the SS), *SS-Obergruppenführer* Oswald Pohl, in his answer to Himmler's note, suggested to abandon the idea of converting the "Sobibór transit camp in the Lublin district" into a concentration camp, as the dismantling of seized enemy munitions could also be carried out without such a measure.¹⁷ Hence, Sobibór was regarded as a "transit camp" by Pohl as well. The transformation of Sobibór into a concentration camp, originally ordered by Himmler, never took place.

2.2.2. Documents about the Sobibór Uprising

Some surviving documents mention the uprising and the mass breakout of Jewish detainees on 14 October 1943. The commander of the security police in the Lublin district sent the following telex to the duty officer at Krakau on 15 October 1943:¹⁷

"On 14.10.1943, around 17:00 hours, uprising of the Jews in the Sobibór SS-camp, 40 km north of Cholm. They overpowered the guard detail and fled in an unknown direction after an exchange of

¹⁷ NO-482. This document is shown as a reproduction in several books about Sobibór, e.g. Thomas (Toivi) Blatt, *Sobibór. The Forgotten Revolt*, HEP, Issaquah 1998 (unnumbered page in the attachment).

gunfire with the rest of the camp personnel. Nine SS-men murdered, 1 SS-man missing, 2 foreign guards shot.

Some 300 Jews have escaped, the remainder were either shot or are now in the camp. Military police and Wehrmacht were notified immediately and took over camp security at around 1:00 hours. The area to the south and the southwest of Sobibór is being searched by police and Wehrmacht.”

Five months after these events, on 17 March 1944, SS-*Untersturmführer* Benda wrote an account of the Sobibór uprising – which he wrongly dated 15 October 1943 – and of the ensuing search for the fugitives, stating that the rebels had “shot an SS officer as well as 10 SS NCOs.”¹⁷

2.2.3. The Höfle Radio Message

A very important document, published only in 2001, gives us precise information concerning the number of detainees deported to Sobibór up to the end of 1942.¹⁸ It is a radio message of 11 January 1943 which was sent by SS-*Sturmbannführer* Höfle, a subordinate of Odilo Globocnik, Head of Police and SS in the district of Lublin. It was addressed to Globocnik’s deputy, SS-*Obersturmbannführer* Heim. The message was intercepted and decoded by the British Secret Service, but the British could not interpret its contents. On the subject of Sobibór the text states that 101,370 persons had been moved to that camp up to the end of 1942. The message contains no indications regarding the fate of the deportees.¹⁹

2.2.4. Provisional Summary

The few wartime documents which have come down to us prove that, at least through July of 1943, Sobibór counted officially as a “transit camp” and that 101,370 persons had been deported there by the end of 1942. There was an uprising at the camp on 14 October 1943 resulting in a mass escape of Jews. There is no documentary evidence for the mass murder of Jews or for the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Sobibór.

¹⁸ Peter Witte, Stephen Tyas, “A New Document on the Deportation and Murder of the Jews during ‘Einsatz Reinhardt’ 1942,” in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, No. 3, Winter 2001.

¹⁹ An extensive analysis of the Höfle radio message will be given in chapter 9.4.

2.3. Sobibór in Official Historiography and “Holocaust” Literature

The uninitiated will no doubt assume that a great number of scientific studies have been made on the subject of Sobibór. This is not at all the case, though. The literature concerning this camp is sparse, and most of the existing books are novelistic if not fictional. The book list in the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* has only four entries under the heading of “Sobibór.”²⁰ In the light of the enormity of the crimes ascribed to the camp by the official version of history, this is surprising, to say the least.

We will now give an overview of the way Sobibór has been described by orthodox historiography and by the “Holocaust” literature in the period since 1946.²¹

2.3.1. N. Blumental’s *Documents and Materials* (1946)

The first representation of the Sobibór camp with any claim for scientific procedure dates from 1946. At that time a documentation was edited in Poland by N. Blumental, the title of which, translated into English, is “Documents and materials from the time of the German occupation of Poland.” The first volume of this series contains 15 pages dealing with Sobibór: one and a half pages of introduction by the editor followed by the accounts of two former Sobibór detainees, Leon Felhendler and Zelda Metz.²²

“The death camp in the district of Lublin was set up during the first half of 1942. The first transport probably arrived in April or May. It was a typical extermination camp – complete with gas chambers, open-air incineration of the corpses, etc. Furthermore, a specialty of this camp was animal husbandry and the raising of poultry by the camp commander; surviving detainees have stated that during the ‘Aktionen’ the birds would be excited so that their honking would drown out the people’s screams.”^[23] *There were work-*

²⁰ Yitzhak Arad, *Belżec, Sobibór, Treblinka* (1987); Miriam Novitch (ed.), *Sobibór: Martyrdom and Revolt* (1980); Richard Rashke, *Escape from Sobibor* (1982); Adalbert Rückerl, *NS-Vernichtungslager im Spiegel deutscher Strafprozesse* (1977).

²¹ Because of our ignorance of Hebrew and Yiddish, we have not been able to consider works that have been published only in one of these languages.

²² Nachman Blumental (ed.), *Dokumenty i Materiały z czasów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce. Obozy*. vol. 1, Łódź 1946, pp. 199-214, here quoted pp. 199f. of the introduction.

²³ The inventor of this silly story is Alexander Aronovitch Pechersky. Cf. section 4.2.

shops in the camp making use of human raw materials, e.g. women's hair for the manufacture of mattresses. The belongings of those murdered as well as the 'products' of the death camp were shipped to Germany. [...] On 14 October 1943 the detainees revolted, as they had done at Treblinka. [...] Due to the complete absence of any official documents it is difficult to say how many people perished in this camp. [...] The figures given by the witnesses range from one to 2.5 million. It is difficult to judge this matter, but if we take into account that the camp operated from April or May of 1942 through October of 1943, we may set the number of persons killed at Sobibór over the whole period of the existence of this camp at about one million."

Both the succinct character of this description as well as the lack of any significant details are truly astonishing! The introduction says nothing about the number and the structure of the "gas chambers," nothing about the nature of the gas used, whereas L. Feldhendler and Z. Metz, the two witnesses quoted later, assert that the mass killings were done by means of chlorine! According to Z. Metz, the gas chamber had a collapsible floor, allowing the victims to drop right into railway cars located below.²⁴ Zelda Metz states that the number of victims was around two million (p. 210)!

As we can see, this first "scientific" description of the events at Sobibór differs from today's version in two fundamental respects: the killing method used and the number of victims.

2.3.2. Report by the "Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland" (1947)

A ten-page account concerning the "Sobibór extermination camp" appeared in the Bulletin of the "Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland" in 1947. It is based on²⁵

"the statements by former Jewish detainees of the camp and by a number of Poles – mainly railway personnel, as well as on experts' opinions and investigations carried out on site."

Concerning the rooms in which the mass murders were allegedly carried out the report by the commission stated (p. 52):

²⁴ Cf. chapter 3, p. 71.

²⁵ Z. Łukaszewicz, Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce, "Obóz zagłady w Sobiborze," (The extermination camp at Sobibór) in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*, No. III, Posen 1947, p. 49.

“Unfortunately it has not been possible to gather any details on the subject of the chambers in which human beings were annihilated. The reason is that none of the former detainees of the camp, which had been questioned during the investigations, were directly present in the vicinity of the chambers; on the other hand, we must stress that workers employed in other parts of the camp did not have access to the part of the camp which comprised the chambers. The evidence collected leads to the conclusion that the chambers were located in a building above ground and consisted of wood on the inside. The outer walls of this building were made of cement. It probably contained 5 chambers, which could accommodate some 500 persons. They were killed by means of exhaust gases produced by an engine located next to the chambers and linked to them by means of pipes.”

This version is still somewhat at variance with today’s description, according to which the “gassing building” initially contained three and later six rooms.

The number of victims for this camp was given as around 250,000, about a quarter of the figure of one million stated in the series *Documents and Materials* a year earlier. This latter figure apparently seemed too unbelievable even to the commission.

In chapter 5.1.1. we will consider the forensic investigations which revealed the presence of human remains in the camp and which described the alleged technology of incineration of corpses at Sobibór as presented in the report by the commission.

Once this book was published, Sobibór disappeared from view for a long time. Only two decades later did chroniclers and witnesses come to the fore once more.

2.3.3. Yuri Suhl (1967)

A collection of accounts describing the Jewish resistance against National Socialism, edited by Yuri Suhl, appeared in the USA in 1967.²⁶ It contains, among other items, Alexander Pechersky’s account “Revolt in Sobibór.” This account had been published in the USSR as early as 1946, but since it had been written in Yiddish, it had remained largely

²⁶ Yuri Suhl, *They fought back. The Story of the Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe*, Crown Publishers, New York 1967; MacGibbon & Kee, London 1968.

unnoticed. We will discuss the Pechersky report in chapter 4.2. in more detail.

2.3.4. Adam Rutkowski (1968)

It took 23 years after the end of the war for anything to be published about Sobibór by a historian. Although it was not a book, at least it was a 40-page article. Its author was Adam Rutkowski, a staff member of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. The title can be translated as “The resistance movement in the Hitlerian execution camp of Sobibór.”²⁷ Rutkowski’s article exhibits most clearly certain fundamental contradictions and absurdities which reappear throughout the later literature about the camp. We will now discuss two of them.

2.3.4.1. The knowledge of the “working Jews” about the fate of the other deportees

Rutkowski writes:

“Initially not even those detainees who had been in Sobibór for some time knew what Sobibór really was due to the internal structure and organization of the camp (the complete isolation of the individual camp sections, especially of section 3 where the gas chambers stood).” (p. 5)

A few pages further on, we read:

“The ‘old’ detainees who wanted to spare the new arrivals any overly violent discoveries did not tell them the whole truth about Sobibór, especially about section 3, hermetically closed-off, but introduced them only slowly, in a stepwise fashion, to what Sobibór was.” (p. 10)

In contrast to this we have Rutkowski’s description of the arrival of new transports:

“We must stress that the deportees, after having travelled for a long time (e.g. from Holland), were immediately made part of the efficient machinery of annihilation; this machinery would herd the victims from the first into the second barbed-wire cage, accompanied by deafening shouts on part of the SS men as well as by shooting, and would finally chase them into the gas chambers.” (p. 4)

Other authors report that the SS received the new arrivals in a soothing manner, with an SS man giving a deceptive speech describing So-

²⁷ Adam Rutkowski, “Ruch Oporu w Hitlerwoskim Obozie Straceń Sobibór,” in: *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, No. 65-66, Warsaw 1968.

bibór as a transit camp.²⁸ Thus, the various reports differ radically even at this early stage. If Rutkowski's report were true, the small number of Jews singled out for work would obviously have realized from the very beginning what gruesome fate awaited the deportees.

Rutkowski (p. 3) accepts the figure of 250,000 victims set in 1947 by the "Main Commission for the Investigation of the German Crimes in Poland" as well as the fact that the camp was in operation for only 17 months. Hence he has over 15,000 deportees arriving at the camp each month – at least 500 per day. According to the official reports, the trains departing from Sobibór were always empty. How could any of the working Jews have any doubt concerning the fate that awaited their brethren in section 3 of the camp?

Thus, Rutkowski's assertion that even long-time detainees were unaware of the real character of the camp is absurd, if we accept the standard account of the events in section 3 of the camp. The story about "the 'old' detainees who wanted to spare the new arrivals any overly violent discoveries" and thus "did not tell them the whole truth about Sobibór," introducing them "only slowly, in a stepwise fashion, to what Sobibór was," reads like a bad joke.

2.3.4.2. Details of the events in camp III

On the subject of section 3 Rutkowski writes on p. 6:

"All detainees of this section were murdered without exception."

Three pages further on we learn:

"Even in section 3, on the threshold of the gas chamber, so to speak, there was resistance. [...] In the winter of 1942/43 a group of naked women rebelled and refused to enter the gas chambers, even though the SS men and the guards beat them with sticks and poles. Half of them were shot in front of the building with the gas chambers. One time the victims succeeded in lifting the chamber door from its hinges – probably because of a defective gas pipe. The naked people ran all over section 3, which, in fact, was nothing but a large cage made of barbed wire. The SS men shot them with their submachine guns; Erich Bauer was one of them." (p. 9)

Esther Raab is named as the source for this. She was a witness for the prosecution at two trials in 1950 (Berlin and Frankfurt-upon-Main).²⁹ How could she have known? She could not have learned any-

²⁸ Cf. section 2.3.19.

²⁹ Cf. section 6.2 f.

thing from the detainees in section 3 because these people, as we know, “were murdered without exception,” and she could not have seen it with her own eyes because section 3, after all, was “hermetically closed off.”

One of the most revealing passages of this article is the following:

“A special place in the history of the camp and in the memories of the prisoners is occupied by the project of a mass escape in the summer of 1943, which became known as the Dutch plan or the plan of a Dutch revolt. Over the years this event, as well as its instigator, have assumed fantastic, even legendary traits. Some detainees and some historians who follow them [the statements of those detainees] state mistakenly that the organizer was a captain of the Dutch navy (the Dutch navy or the Dutch merchant fleet).” (p. 21)

Then Rutkowski tells us in a footnote:

“Dr. L. de Yong [recte: Jong], a well-known Dutch historian of the Hitler-German occupation, who heads the Amsterdam Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie [Imperial Institute for War Documentation], states in a letter to the Jewish Historical Institute: ‘at that time there was no Jewish naval officer.’” (p. 22)

So the story of the “Dutch captain” at Sobibór was a legend, cooked up in the rumor department of the camp. Rutkowski’s article abounds with such legends, probably without the author realizing this. The same goes for the whole orthodox historiography about Sobibór.

2.3.5. Stanisław Szmajzner (1968)

Stanisław Szmajzner, a Polish Jew and former detainee at Sobibór, emigrated to Brazil in 1947 and was a witness for the prosecution in the extradition procedures against the former SS men Franz Stangl and Gustav Wagner.³⁰ He therefore played an important role in the drama of Sobibór, and we have every reason to take a close look at a book he published in 1968 under the title *Inferno em Sobibór*³¹ (“Hell in Sobibór”), even though it exists only in Portuguese and was never fully translated into another language.³² It is easy to understand why it never appeared elsewhere: Szmajzner’s description of the camp is so different

³⁰ Cf. section 6.7.

³¹ Stanisław Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibór. A tragédia de um adolescente judeu*, Edições Bloch, Rio de Janeiro 1968.

³² On the Internet page www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/sobibor/smajzner.html is a partial translation into English which seems to have been prepared on the basis of a Polish text. No source is given. Possibly Szmajzner’s book, published in Portuguese, was based on a Polish manuscript.

from the official picture and contains so many embarrassing passages that even those editors who normally deal with such matters knew better than to make the book known beyond the reach of the Portuguese language.

According to his own indications Szmajzner was deported from Opeln in Upper Silesia to Sobibór in May of 1942 and worked there as a goldsmith, making jewelry for the “Szarfuehrer” (Szmajzner’s spelling) and other SS personnel. For a long time he did not know what was going on in camp III, but one day he received the following message from his friend Abrão (Abraham) who worked in that section:

“Dear brother. I asked you to recite the Kaddish not only for your parents but for everyone. You should know that, of all the Jews passing through camp 1 and moving on into camp 2, hardly anyone is alive today. Out of all the transports that have arrived so far, only a small group still exists in order to do the daily tasks; by pure chance, I belong to this group.

Once these thousands of Jews have passed through the gate which you spoke of, they cross a long corridor and enter camp 2. At that point their few remaining belongings are taken away, they must undress completely, and they are led to a large barrack under the pretext of having to take a bath. Hundreds of people enter this place at the same time.

Once the barrack is full, the door is closed and then hermetically sealed. Then a large Diesel engine is started up; its exhaust pipe passes through a hole in a wall, so that the exhaust gases go inside until all of them have suffocated.” (p. 152f)

A Diesel engine as the murder weapon has been accepted by official historiography for the Bełżec and Treblinka camps, but not for Sobibór. In this case most of the witnesses prefer not to specify an engine type, whereas the late U.S. political scientist Raul Hilberg expressly assigned a gasoline engine to this camp.³³ U.S. revisionist Friedrich P. Berg has shown in a detailed study that Diesel exhaust gases are most unsuitable for the mass murder of people in view of their high oxygen and low carbon monoxide content. Gasoline engines would be far more efficient.³⁴

³³ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3rd ed., Yale University Press, New Haven/London 2003, p. 936.

³⁴ Friedrich P. Berg, “Diesel Gas Chambers – Ideal for Torture, Absurd for Murder,” in: Germar Rudolf (ed.), *Dissecting the Holocaust*, 2nd, ed., Theses & Dissertation Press, Chicago 2003, pp. 435-469.

According to Abrão, Szmajzner's confidant, the Diesel engine was later abandoned and replaced by Zyklon B (p. 190f). As far as we know and apart from Szmajzner, the use of this pesticide for mass killings at Sobibór has only been claimed by a certain Joseph Tennenbaum.³⁵

Among the nonsense which Szmajzner asks his readers to believe we have the following stories:

- Franz was an eighteen-year-old Jew who used to live in the Oppeln ghetto and had been a "good boy," but "once the Nazis made him commander of the Jews in camp III, his personality changed radically." He eventually went so far as to believe that he was "a real German, even a staunch defender of Nazism. He believed that the Jewish race had to be eradicated and his visible paranoia was such that he executed his tasks with a degree of sadism not even attained by the Germans." (p.192)
- On certain days up to 8,000 Jews were killed at Sobibór; the total number of victims reached nearly two million (p. 270).
- In the fall of 1942 a "Walt-Kommando" (Szmajzner's spelling) was created; its task was to fell trees and chop wood because with "the oven burning the whole time, it required gigantic amounts of fuel" (p. 207). The members of this "Walt-Kommando" had to perform back-breaking work, but their daily food ration consisted only of a piece of bread, "for the Germans felt that they were strong enough to carry out this momentous work without proper food" (p. 231f).
- The German Jews who had been deported to Sobibór, while having "suffered terribly under Nazism, still believed in the Führer and his gang" (p. 230). Therefore, "they attempted most diligently to work together with the monsters" (p. 231).

Such absurdities notwithstanding, Szmajzner's book contains a few credible passages, such as the following:

"I had become, by the way, a hardened consumer of vodka. [...] I had no trouble getting my bottle, and be it through the dangerous barbed-wire fence. I must admit to the reader that, at Sobibór, I drank enough for the rest of my life." (p. 222)

If there is one passage in Szmajzner's book of which we believe every word, it is this one!

³⁵ Joseph Tennenbaum, *In Search of a Lost People. The Old and the New Poland*, The Beechhurst Press, 1948, p. 285, quoted after Paul Grubach (cf. section 2.4).

2.3.6. Adalbert Rückerl (1977)

In 1977 Adalbert Rückerl, long-time head of the German Central Agency for the prosecution of Nazi crimes at Ludwigsburg, Germany, published a book entitled *NS-Vernichtungslager im Spiegel deutscher Strafprozesse*³⁶ (NS crimes in the light of German criminal proceedings), in which he documents the trials in Germany against former members of the camp personnel at Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka and Chełmno. In chapter 6.4. devoted to the Hagen trial of 1965/66 we will refer to this book on many occasions.³⁷

2.3.7. E.A. Cohen (1979)

In 1979 the Dutch Jewish physician Elie A. Cohen, M.D., who had been interned at Auschwitz and Mauthausen during the war, published a book in Holland entitled *De negentien treinen naar Sobibór*³⁸ (The nineteen trains to Sobibór). Aside from extensive psychological considerations, the work gives us a summary of the orthodox version of the fate of the Jews during the Second World War as well as a résumé of the official depiction of Sobibór, which Cohen had gathered from the literature about the camp – extremely sparse at the time – and from the files of the German trials.

2.3.8. Miriam Novitch (1980)

With a certain Miriam Novitch acting as editor, a collection of accounts entitled *Sobibór. Martyrdom and Revolt*³⁹ appeared in 1980. It consists of an introduction and of uncommented statements by 25 former Sobibór detainees. The year in which these statements were recorded is given only in a few cases. Most of the accounts are surprisingly brief, and some amount to little more than one or two pages. With its 24 pages, the last account, written by Moshe Bahir, is an exception (pp. 139 – 163). The credibility of this key witness can be judged by the following passage:

³⁶ Adalbert Rückerl, *NS-Vernichtungslager im Spiegel deutscher Strafprozesse*, dtv, Frankfurt a. M. 1977.

³⁷ Cf. section 5.4.

³⁸ Dr. E. A. Cohen, *De Negentien Treinen naar Sobibór*, B. V. Uitgeversmaatschappij Elsevier Boekerij, Amsterdam 1979.

³⁹ Miriam Novitch (ed.), *Sobibór. Martyrdom and Revolt. Documents and Testimonies*, Holocaust Library, New York 1980.

“In the month of February, 1943, Himmler visited Sobibór a second time. [...] Two days after the visit I heard a conversation between Beckmann and Bredov. One said to the other that the visit was designed to mark the completion of the first million Jews destroyed at Sobibór.” (p. 155f)

As we have already mentioned, up to the end of 1942 exactly 101,370 Jews had been deported to Sobibór – but *deported* is not synonymous for *annihilated*.

If we follow Bahir, the deadly gases were fed into the gas chamber by means of the pipe work of a shower; the chamber had a collapsible floor, which was opened after each gassing so that the corpses could fall into the cars waiting below.⁴⁰

The account given by the witness Hella Felenbaum-Weiss is also in blatant disagreement with the official version of Sobibór:

“One day, a convoy brought to the camp prisoners in striped pyjamas. They were extremely thin, and their heads were shaved; women and men looked alike and they could hardly walk. Rumors spread that these people, about 300 of them, came from Majdanek where the gas chambers were out of order. When they alighted from the train, they literally collapsed. SS Frenzel met them and poured chloride on their heads, as though they were already dead. The arrival of another convoy distressed me in the same way. It was thought to come from Lvov, but nobody knew for sure. Prisoners were sobbing and told us a dreadful tale: they had been gassed on the way with chlorine, but some survived. The bodies of the dead were green and their skin had peeled off.” (p. 50)

Thus, the victims were not gassed in gas chambers but gassed along the way before they ever arrived, and it was not done by means of exhaust gases but with chlorine! As we have seen, this murder tool was also mentioned in the testimonies by Leon Feldhendler and Zelda Metz immediately after the war. The origin of this version of the gassing myth becomes clear when we read the sentence “SS man Frenzel went towards them and poured chlorine over their heads as if they were already dead”: The corpses of dead detainees were indeed treated with chloride of lime (not: “chlorine”) before they were buried in the mass graves to prevent the spread of diseases. This, by the way, has been

⁴⁰ Cf. chapter 3.

confirmed by the “Main Commission for the Investigation of the German Crimes in Poland” in their report on Sobibór.⁴¹

The fact that the former Sobibór detainees contradict one another in crucial respects does not seem to perturb Miriam Novitch in the least. We will give an evocative example: Several witnesses have said that, before they had reached Sobibór, the Polish inhabitants had warned them of the dire fate awaiting them. Itzak Lichtman:

“We walked from Żolkiewka to Krasnystaw station. Everyone could see that we were Jews [...]. Many children followed us, and Poles said as we passed, ‘Hey, Żydzi, idziecie na spalenie’ (Jews, you are going to burn).” (p. 81)

Aizik Rottenberg:

“Włodawa was about eight kilometers from Sobibór. Polish peasants who went to market were saying, ‘Jews, young and old, are being burned in Sobibór.’” (p. 103)

Yehuda Lerner:

“On the way to Sobibór, the train stopped in Chełm. A Pole was moving from car to car noting the numbers [of those inside]. We asked him where we were going. He answered: ‘To Sobibór, where prisoners are burned.’” (p. 112)

Hence, while the Poles in the area are said to have known about the annihilation of the Jews at Sobibór, this was apparently not the case for the detainees in the camp itself – at least if we are to believe the witness Hershel Zukerman. He stated that the gas chambers were so well camouflaged that he believed for ten weeks that the people who had arrived together with him were in a labor camp. It was only by accident that he had learned of a mass extermination going on in camp III (p. 107).⁴²

We can appreciate the scientific level of this book by the horror stories told by Miriam Novitch’s witnesses, such as the following:

Ber Freiberg:

“Then the Nazis found new entertainment: they sewed up the lower part of the prisoners’ trousers and put in rats. The victims were to stand quiet; if one of them moved, he was beaten to death.” (p. 75)

Eda Lichtman:

⁴¹ Z. Łukaszkiwicz, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 55.

⁴² Cf. chapter 3.

“Shaul Stark looked after geese; he fed them and weighed them every day. Once, a goose became ill and died. Frenzel, Bredov, Wagner and Weiss whipped Stark to death. The man’s last words were: ‘Avenge me, comrades, avenge me.’” (p. 57)

Moshe Bahir:

“The first one of them [the camp SS] whom I encountered when I came to the camp was Oberscharführer Gustav Wagner. [...] He would snatch babies from their mothers’ arms and tear them to pieces in his hands.” (p. 149)

“Sometimes Grot would have himself a joke; he would seize a Jew, give him a bottle of wine and a sausage weighing at least a kilo and order him to devour it in a few minutes. When the ‘lucky’ man succeeded in carrying out this order and staggered from drunkenness, Grot would order him to open his mouth wide and would urinate into his mouth.” (p. 150f.)

“Oberscharführer Paul Bredov, aged forty, a Berliner, was a human beast in the full sense of the word. His direct assignment was to be in charge of the Lazarett [infirmary], but he had additional jobs in the camp. His beloved hobby was target-shooting. He had a daily ‘quota’ of shooting and killing fifty Jews, all with his automatic pistol which was never separated from him even for a minute throughout the day.” (p. 153)

In view of the fact that the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* has accepted this “documentation” as one of only four titles recommended on the subject of Sobibór, one wonders about the quality of other books not recommended by the *Encyclopedia* authors...

2.3.9. Richard Rashke (1982)

The American journalist Richard L. Rashke published a book entitled *Escape from Sobibor*⁴³ in 1982. He had visited a number of former Sobibór detainees – among them T. Blatt, S. Szmajzner and A. Pechersky – in their homes and interviewed them. The book is a rendition of these interviews – partly in direct speech, partly otherwise. As most of these detainees have made their own statements about their experiences at Sobibór, we see no reason why we should discuss this book in

⁴³ Richard L. Rashke, *Escape from Sobibor*, Houghton Mifflin, 1982.

any detail and will merely quote a passage from the book written by Rashke himself:⁴⁴

“I hated Poland. I couldn’t understand a people who killed and betrayed Jews, who plundered and robbed them. I found it difficult to make distinctions between good Poles and bad ones, between peacetime and wartime, between heroism and the desire to survive, even if that meant selling Jews to the Gestapo for sugar and security. I felt hatred even for that Polish woman living in what was once a Jewish ghetto. And the Jewish Poles were not my people.”

This suffices to prove that this author of yet another of the four books on Sobibór recommended by the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* has a strong emotional bias.

2.3.10. E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl *et al.* (1983)

Edited by Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, Adalbert Rückerl *et al.*, a collective volume entitled *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas* (National Socialist mass killings by means of poison gas) was published in Germany in 1983 and has since been considered the classic book of “Holocaust” literature.⁴⁵ In 1993 an English-language edition was published under the title *Nazi Mass Murder: A Documentary History of the Use of Poison Gas*.⁴⁶ Below we will quote mainly from this English edition. In the book’s introduction the editors castigate those who “desire to defend the Nazi system” by denying “the killing of millions of victims by gas” while being careful not to mention any such authors or titles. In order to fight such tendencies efficiently and to contain them, the authors will “set down, in a precise and indisputable manner, the historical truth about the massacres perpetrated by means of poison gas.”

In view of such an ambitious endeavor one should expect that the authors of the individual sections would take great care when formulating their theses, but this is not the case at all. In the section entitled “the construction of the Sobibór annihilation camp” we read, in fact:

“The first gas chambers in Sobibór were housed in a brick building with concrete foundations, in the northwestern part of the camp.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2nd ed., University of Illinois Press, Urbana/Chicago 1995, p. 357.

⁴⁵ Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, Adalbert Rückerl *et al.* (eds.), *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*, S. Fischer, Frankfurt upon Main 1983.

⁴⁶ Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, Adalbert Rückerl *et al.* (eds.), *Nazi Mass Murder: A Documentary History of the Use of Poison Gas*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1993.

Inside were three gas chambers; each measured four by four meters and could hold 150 to two hundred people at a time." (p. 112)

Hence it was possible to press together in each chamber nine or even twelve persons per square meter. While the former figure still appears vaguely possible, the latter is not. Ten pages further on we have SS-Oberscharführer Kurt Bolender stating at one of his interrogations (p. 122):

"I would estimate that it took forty to fifty people to fill a chamber."

If that was the case, what is the basis for the figure of 150 to 200 persons per chamber given by the author?

Another eleven pages on, we encounter the following passage:

"The new building [i.e. the larger one, built in September of 1942] had six gas chambers, three on each side. Its layout was similar to that followed in Belżec and Treblinka, where the entrances to the gas chambers branched off from a central passage. The new rooms here were not larger than the old ones – that is, four by four meters – but the extermination capacity was increased to twelve hundred or thirteen hundred people." (p. 133)

This means that in the gas chambers more than 13 persons could be squeezed onto one square meter! There is no witness statement to substantiate this ridiculous assertion.

How this collective volume deals with historical sources is illustrated by the following sentence:

"On 5 July 1943, shortly before the end of the Jewish transports from Holland, Himmler ordered the Sobibór extermination camp to be transformed into a concentration camp [KZ] for the storage and dismantling of captured enemy munitions." (German edition, p. 191)⁴⁷

Actually, Himmler had spoken about a transit camp in his directive and not about an extermination camp.⁴⁸ In the section "The Liquidation of the Camps" we read:

"The terrain of the former extermination centers was plowed up, trees were planted, and peaceful-looking farmsteads constructed. A

⁴⁷ In the English edition (p. 137) we read: "Himmler declared that Sobibór was to be converted into a concentration camp." However, since apparently no revisions were made from the German original in this chapter of the book, we find it likely that the omission of the word "Vernichtungslager" (extermination camp) in the English edition is due to the translator.

⁴⁸ Cf. chapter 2.2.1.

number of Ukrainians from the camp commandos settled there. No traces whatsoever were to remain as evidence of the atrocities committed in Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka, to which, by a conservative estimate, about 1,500,000 human beings had fallen victim." (p. 137)

It is obvious that it would never have been possible to obliterate the traces of the burial, the excavation, and the open-air incineration of one and a half million corpses by the primitive plowing methods described above. The editors and the authors of this collective volume never even thought of requesting a forensic investigation of the crime site. They were happy with the accounts supplied by the witnesses, which they "corrected" if necessary, as we have seen in connection with the capacity of the gas chambers: In spite of the fact that the only witness quoted in this respect, Kurt Bolender, stated that the capacity was "40 to 50 persons" per chamber, the Sobibór chapters of the book twice give significantly higher capacities, which are not substantiated by witness statements.

Only the very naïve will accept the assertion in the introduction to the book, namely that the authors have "set down, in a precise and indisputable manner, the historical truth about the massacres perpetrated by means of poison gas."

2.3.11. Yitzhak Arad (1987)

In 1987, the Israeli historian Yitzhak Arad published a book entitled *Belżec, Sobibór, Treblinka. The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*,⁴⁹ which is still regarded as a standard in this field. As has been shown in a previous study,⁵⁰ Arad brazenly falsified a source in connection with his treatment of the Treblinka camp: He quoted a report from the underground resistance movement in the Warsaw ghetto dating from November of 1942, which described the extermination of the Polish Jews in "steam chambers" but replaced the embarrassing word "steam chambers" quite unabashedly by the term "gas chambers" (p. 354f). In the case of Sobibór Arad does not use the device of outright falsification. He limits himself to handling witness statements selectively, carefully excluding all passages which disagree with the official version of Sobibór, such as those which describe the killing medium as having been chlorine or a black fluid, or those assigning a collapsible floor to the gas

⁴⁹ Yitzhak Arad, *Belżec. Sobibór, Treblinka. The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 1987.

⁵⁰ C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), p. 62f.

chambers.⁵¹ This latter contraption, which allowed the corpses of those murdered to drop right down into a cellar, was mentioned in 1944 by the witness Dov Freiberg, a.k.a. Ber Freiberg.⁵² Arad, while quoting Freiberg on three occasions (pp. 75, 128, 129), does not mention this uncomfortable fact, quite obviously because it would immediately discredit Freiberg as a witness in the eyes of any critical reader.

If we follow Arad, “at least 90,000 to 100,000 Jews were murdered” at Sobibór up to the end of July, 1942. (We remind the reader that according to the Höfle radio message, which Arad did not yet know, a total of 101,370 persons had been deported to Sobibór up to 31 December 1942). Still, the SS felt that the capacity of the old gassing building with its three chambers, each 4 meters square, “could not cope with the tasks imposed on this camp,” so that “during the two-month lull in extermination activities in autumn of 1942 [sic], the old gas chambers were partially dismantled and the three additional gas chambers were built.” (p. 123)

We are not told what we are to understand by the “three gas chambers [...] 4 × 4 meters” being “partially dismantled.” Arad goes on:

“The new six-room gas chamber building had a corridor that ran through its center and three rooms on either side. The entrance to each gas chamber was from the corridor. The three gas chambers were the same size as the existing ones, 4 × 4 meters. The killing capacity of the gas chambers was increased to nearly 1,300 people simultaneously.” (p. 123)

Apparently it was not “the old gas chambers” that were “partially dismantled” but the building in which they were housed. The statement that the six gas chambers, each with a floor area of 16 square meters, could now hold “nearly 1,300 people simultaneously” signifies that 13 persons would have had to stand on one square meter – an impossible thing to achieve, which we have already noted in our discussion of the collective volume *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*. Just as the collective volume, Arad has no source for this assertion.

We should add that ten years before Arad’s book appeared, Adalbert Ruckerl, in the documentation *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*, had assigned to the “six cells” of the new “gas chamber building” a total capacity of “about 480” or 80 persons per “cell.”⁵³ This

⁵¹ Cf. chapter 3.

⁵² Cf. chapter 3, p. 69.

⁵³ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 173.

would have amounted to 5 persons per square meter, a figure which is physically possible.

Although it is obvious that Arad cannot present any documentary or forensic evidence for the alleged mass killings at Sobibór, he has witness statements such as the following:

“In the winter of 1942/43 and in the spring and summer of 1943, transports arrived in Sobibór with Jews from the Lvov district. In some of the transports the Jews were naked. They were forced to undress before entering the freight cars, to make it more difficult for them to escape from the train. [...] In her testimony, Ada Lichtman told of a transport that arrived from Lvov in the winter; nude corpses were removed from the closed freight cars. The prisoner platform workers said that the corpses were frozen and stuck to one another, and when they were laid on the trolley, they disintegrated, and parts of them fell off. These people had had a long voyage [sic] and their corpses crumbled.”

Normally frozen corpses do not crumble, which means that the “prisoner platform workers” related something that they could not have seen and hence never did see.

We will not go into Arad’s statistics on the Jews that were deported to Sobibór from various countries, because this question will be dealt with in the discussion of the book by Jules Schelvis. Suffice it to say that Arad gives a figure of 145,000 to 165,000 (p. 390f.) for the Jews deported to Sobibór from the General Government (Polish areas occupied but not annexed by the Germans during the war). Actually, the maximum was about 54,000,⁵⁴ which means that Arad’s figure is too high by a factor of three.

To put it mildly, Arad’s book does not measure up in any way to a “standard” on the subject.

2.3.12. Witold Zbigniew Sulimierski (1993)

By 1993, i.e. half a century after the closure of Sobibór, there was still no Polish monograph on this camp. To make up for this, a man by the name of Witold Zbigniew Sulimierski published a brochure during that year, the title of which can be rendered in English as “Sobibór. A Hitlerian Death Camp.”⁵⁵ This booklet contains neither references nor a

⁵⁴ Cf. section 2.3.19.

⁵⁵ Witold Zbigniew Sulimierski, *Sobibór. Hitlerowski Obóz śmierci*, Fundacja “Kamena” w Chełmie, Chełm 1993.

bibliography and is nothing but a summary of the usual unproven assertions concerning the camp.

On the subject of the murder weapon, i.e. the type of engine used at Sobibór, Sulimierski is one of the rare authors to opt for a Diesel engine.⁵⁶ He writes:

“The victims were killed by means of exhaust gases, which were fed into the cabins from a separate annex. This annex housed the 8-cylinder Diesel engine of an armored vehicle which K. Frenzl had brought from Lwów. Once the engine was started, the killing process took about 10 minutes.” (p. 19)

A time span of ten minutes between start-up of the Diesel engine and the death of the victims is absolutely impossible, as shown by a barbaric experiment on animals carried out in England in 1957. On this point, Germar Rudolf states:⁵⁷

“These experiments simulated heavy motor load by limiting the oxygen supply artificially. This was achieved by restricting the air supply at the intake manifold as much as possible without completely killing the motor. This was necessary because the exhaust fumes simply did not cause poisoning in any of the test animals while the engine was idling or operating under light loads. After the gas chamber had been filled with exhaust gas 40 mice, 4 rabbits, and 10 guinea pigs were exposed to it. The last of the animals had died of a combination CO poisoning after three hours and 20 minutes.”

2.3.13. Jules Schelvis (1993)

In the same year, i.e. 1993, Jules Schelvis, a Dutch Jew who had himself been deported to Sobibór in 1943, published a book entitled *Vernietigingskamp Sobibór*⁵⁸ (“Annihilation camp Sobibór”), which is by far the most extensive study of this camp. Eight editions have appeared in Holland to date. As Schelvis has revised his opinion on certain crucial points over the years – such as the number of victims at Sobibór – we shall base our discussion on the latest, 2008 edition.

⁵⁶ As far as we know, Stanisław Szmajer and Barbara Distel (see note 69) are the only two authors besides Sulimierski who claim that a Diesel engine was used for gassings at Sobibór.

⁵⁷ Germar Rudolf, *Lectures on the Holocaust*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2005, pp. 279f.

⁵⁸ Jules Schelvis, *Vernietigingskamp Sobibór*, De Bataafsche Leeuw, Amsterdam 1993.

2.3.14. Thomas (Toivi) Blatt (1996)

In addition to Alexander Aronovitch Pechersky, Thomas (Toivi) Blatt, a Polish Jew who was deported to Sobibór in early 1943 when he was 15 years old, is certainly the most widely known Sobibór detainee. He was an advisor for the 1987 movie *Escape from Sobibór*.⁵⁹ More than half a century after the end of the war, Blatt wrote a book entitled *Sobibór: The Forgotten Revolt*,⁶⁰ which has been praised lavishly by the usual devout audience. A certain Marilyn J. Harran, professor of religion and history at Chapman University, wrote for instance:⁶¹

“Thomas Blatt writes in the preface to his book: ‘Witnessing genocide is overwhelming; writing about it is soul shattering.’ Nor can the reader emerge unscathed from this wrenching account of man’s inhumanity to humanity. The account of the killing of 250,000 Jews at the death camp Sobibór is made even more powerful by the fact that the author is one of a handful of survivors of the revolt. To read this book is to risk having one’s soul shattered and one’s humanity put in question. No one who reads it will ever be able to forget Sobibór or Toivi Blatt.”

As soon as the interested reader opens this overwhelming book that shatters his soul and puts his humanity in question, he learns to his great surprise that the Nazis allowed T. Blatt to keep a diary (or that they were at least so sloppy in their supervision that he managed to do so undetected):

“After the liberation I was able to collect about a third of the diary pages that I had given to Polish people for safekeeping.” (p. xi, footnote 7)

After his arrival at Sobibór the boy confided his first impressions to the diary:

“We stepped down from the trucks. In front of us stretched a long, barbed-wire fence interwoven with fir branches. Hypnotized, my eyes were fixed on the Gothic letters on the top of the gate leading inside: ‘SS-Sonderkommando Sobibór.’” (p. 38)

Again and again, Blatt cites entries from his diary in which he recorded, with painstaking accuracy, the dramatic events in the death camp. A particularly overwhelming entry reads:

⁵⁹ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* German: *Sobibór. Der vergessene Aufstand*, Unrat Verlag, Hamburg 2004.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Engl. edition, back cover.

“A tragic and heroic example of spiritual resistance is recorded in my diary:

A transport of Polish Jews had been killed. The distant, dull, drum-like sound of bodies thrown from the gas chamber to the metal frame of the transportation lorry was always heard in the sorting shed. Invisible tension was tormenting us. Wolf was the supervising Nazi of the Himmelstrasse. I attached myself to the cleaning crew. I had never been in the dreary, fenced and camouflaged alley. I was curious to explore the camp, and this gave me the opportunity to trace the road to the gas chambers. At the entrance I picked up a rake and, watching the others, I began to rake the white sand, transforming the hundreds of footprints, human refuse and blood into an innocent, spotlessly even surface. While raking up bigger objects, I noted a trail of tiny green and red specks between the teeth of the rake. I bent down to collect them by hand and to my surprise and disbelief, I discovered paper money – dollars, marks, zloty and rubles – money torn into pieces too small to recollect [sic].

I thought... How must the victims have felt when they acted in this way? In the last minutes before a tortured death they could still sabotage the Nazis. Their world was disappearing, and the lonely Jew takes his time to tear the banknotes into irreclaimable tiny pieces, making them unusable to the end.” (p. 55)

Fate willed it that the Poles to whom Blatt had entrusted his diary returned to him at least a third of it. We can be sure that this literary marvel, written by a fifteen-year-old boy, an inestimable account of the Holocaust, once specialists had attested to its genuine character, was translated into all the languages in the world, from Albanian to Zulu, and sold dozens of millions of copies, to be quoted in every work of the Holocaust literature. It is certainly a gem in the museum of Yad Vashem, well protected by thick panes of glass that shield it from vicious attacks by Holocaust deniers and other vandals. Or is it?

Not at all. It is quite perplexing that up to the present day Toivi Blatt has neglected to publish his diary or at least to include a photocopy of a page or two in his book!

As if keeping a diary in an extermination camp were not by itself a miraculous achievement, Toivi Blatt also managed to preserve at the last moment the diary of another detainee, written in another extermination camp:

“On June 26, 1943, all Sobibór prisoners were suddenly locked in their barracks with strict orders to stay away from the windows so as not to observe the outside. As we found out later, a transport of the last 300 Jews from Belżec had arrived in Sobibór. While being unloaded, the Jews, realizing what was going to happen and aware that there would be no salvation, resisted by running in all directions, choosing to be shot rather than gassed. This act of defiance was in vain: they were shot at random throughout the camp. The bodies were later collected by the Bahnhofkommando and delivered to Lager [camp] III for cremation.

While sorting their clothing and burning the documents, I found a diary written up to the last minute which revealed that the transport was made up of workers from the Belżec death camp. The anonymous author states that, after the closure of Belżec in December of 1942, the surviving Jews had burned the corpses and dismantled the camp in the period until June of 1943. The Germans told them that they were being transferred to a new work place. They suspected a trap.” (p. 56)

Blatt states that he handed this diary to Leon Feldhendler, his co-detainee. Feldhendler allegedly confirmed this in Lublin in 1944 (p. 56, footnote 3). As Feldhendler was shot to death in a street of Lublin at the end of 1944 by a Polish anti-Semite, he unfortunately could not make this irreplaceable piece of evidence for the Belżec Holocaust known to the rest of the world...⁶²

The reason why Toivi Blatt allowed five decades to pass after his liberation before he finally published a little book about his adventures is probably the fact that he had to thoroughly study the literature about Sobibór and the trial files – fortunately, not an overly taxing effort. We must admit, though, that he did this very diligently and serves his readers all the potboilers that can be found in the earlier works about the camp, beginning with Shaul Stark, killed by the SS because one of the geese he had been entrusted with suddenly died (p. 51), moving along to Barry, the fiendish hound who would, on command, chew up the detainees’ genitals (p. 52; see on p. 99 of this book), right up to the old Jew who, before being gassed, picked up a handful of dirt, threw it into the wind, and said to an SS man: “This will happen to your Reich!” (p.

⁶² Shaindy Perl, *Tell the World: The Story of the Sobibór Revolt*, Eastern Book Press, Monsey (NY) 2004, p. 244. Jules Schelvis (*op. cit.* (note 58), p. 234) dates Feldhendler’s death to 6 April 1945.

57). More down to earth, but quite surprising, Toivi Blatt has this to say about the capacity of the gas chambers:

“A quick estimate tells us that over a working day of 14 hours, between 12,000 and 15,000 people were killed.” (p. 20)

Let us assume that this applies to the period after September 1942, when the original three gas chambers, each 16 m², were doubled by the addition of a further three chambers of the same size. This means that the capacity of the former chambers was around 6,000 to 7,500 persons per day. Hence, the old chambers could have handled the 250,000 Sobibór victims within 42 days, and we wonder why it was necessary to build the new chambers at all. It is all the more astonishing that the Germans, two months after the start-up of Sobibór, set up another death camp, Treblinka, which needed more than a year to do away with 870,000 Jews. It would have been possible, after all, to kill the lot of the victims of both camps, (870,000 + 250,000 =) 1,120,000 persons, in the three old 16 m² chambers at Sobibór within (1,120,000 ÷ 6,000 =) about 187 days without going through the trouble of building yet another death camp!

Blatt goes on to tell us:

“The prisoners were ordered to learn German military songs, clean the barracks and the yard, or were called to perform ‘exercises,’ exhausting drills performed for the sadistic pleasure of the Nazis. Many committed suicide; others were killed at the whim of the SS. Workers could always be replaced from the abundant supply in the next transport. The grueling work schedule was not simply the whim of the Sobibór administration. It was official policy issued by SS-Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl to all camps: ‘Time of work (for prisoners) should be in no way limited, it should depend on the organizational and structural purpose of the camp, and the type of work performed.’” (p. 46f.)

These assertions should be compared with the contents of a circular issued by the same Oswald Pohl on 26 October 1943 and sent to the commanders of all 19 concentration camps.⁶³

“In former years, and within the scope of the educational policy then in force, it could be regarded as unimportant whether a detainee was doing useful work or not, But now, the work capacity of the detainees has become significant and all measures taken by the

⁶³ Archiwum Muzeum Stutthof, I-1b-8, p. 53.

commanders, the heads of the V-services^[64] and the physicians have to aim for the health and efficiency of the detainees. It is not out of sentimentality, but because we need their arms and legs, because they have to contribute their share to the fight for the victory of the German people, that we must be concerned about the well-being of the detainees. My first priority is: No more than 10% of all detainees should be disabled because of diseases. This objective must be achieved by the joint effort of all concerned. Thus, it is necessary to ensure:

- 1) good and proper diet*
- 2) good and proper clothing*
- 3) use of all natural health agents*
- 4) avoidance of all unnecessary efforts not immediately connected with the tasks in question.”*

So much for the credibility of Thomas or Toivi Blatt. The only value of the book is in the reproduced documents and the photographs.

Aside from *Sobibór: The Forgotten Revolt*, Toivi Blatt has written another book, entitled *From the Ashes of Sobibór*,⁶⁵ which we will briefly discuss in chapter 4 of this study.

2.3.15. Shaindy Perl (2004)

In 2004 a book entitled *Tell the World: The Story of the Sobibór Revolt*⁶² and written by a certain Shaindy Perl was published in the USA. It is entirely based upon the recollections of a former Sobibór detainee, Esther Raab, and is another warmed-up version of the revolt of 14 October 1943 and the usual silly horror stories:

“‘Ah, a baby,’ he [Oberscharführer Wagner] said with an evil grin, carelessly grasping the crying child by its clothing. [...] ‘You know what? Because I am in a good mood today, I will let you live. I will only take the baby, and you can continue working for us here.’ Defiantly, the woman snatched the child from his arms and spit [sic!] in his face. Enraged, the SS man whipped out his gun and promptly shot her. As the others watched in horror, he pointed his weapon at the child and shot him, too.” (p. 81)

⁶⁴ Food service.

⁶⁵ Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibór: A Story of Survival*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1997.

In spite of this, the book is valuable because it enables us to judge the credibility of Esther Raab, a witness for the prosecution who appeared in 1950 at the two Sobibór trials.⁶⁶

2.3.16. Michael Lev (2007)

The English translation of a novel entitled *Sobibór* has been published in Israel and the USA. The original was written in Yiddish sometime in the 1960s (the exact date is not indicated) by the Soviet writer Michael Lev.⁶⁷ The hero of the novel is a Polish Jew named Berek Schlesinger who is deported to Sobibór by the Germans, takes part in the uprising of 14 October 1943, and joins the Soviet partisans after his escape. Literary criticism not being our specialty, we have no reason to discuss this “masterpiece of historical fiction” the cover of the book promises us.

2.3.17. Dov Freiberg (2007)

The same year saw the publication in the USA of the English version of a book that had appeared twenty years earlier in Hebrew, written by the former Sobibór detainee Dov Freiberg (who used to call himself Ber Freiberg) and entitled *To Survive Sobibór*.⁶⁸ The fourth chapter of our book is devoted to the analysis of witness testimonies, and Freiberg’s statements will be discussed there in the necessary detail.

2.3.18. Barbara Distel (2008)

Before the year 2008 no German historian had mustered up enough courage to write an article, let alone a book, about Sobibór. The world had to wait for Barbara Distel, long-time head of the Dachau memorial site, who squeezed a 30-page article entitled “Sobibór”⁶⁹ into the eighth volume of a series she and Wolfgang Benz have been editing. Barbara Distel’s text marks the intellectual and moral low point of the literature about this camp.

Concerning the number of victims ascribed to Sobibór, Barbara Distel starts out by saying that this figure “is taken to be 150,000 to 250,000” (p. 375). At the end of her contribution she opts for 250,000

⁶⁶ Cf. chapters 6.2 f.

⁶⁷ Michael Lev, *Sobibór*, Gefen Publishing House, Jerusalem and New York 2007.

⁶⁸ Dov Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibór*, Gefen Books, Lynbrook (NY) 2007.

⁶⁹ Wolfgang Benz, Barbara Distel (eds.), *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, Verlag C. H. Beck, Munich 2008.

(p. 402). Even if going along with orthodox historians in a dogmatic way by assuming that all but a few detainees deported to Sobibór were murdered there, such a figure is fundamentally impossible. Thanks to the Höfle message published seven years before Distel's article we know that 101,370 Jews were deported to Sobibór by the end of 1942. Moreover, all researchers agree without exception that the number of deportees was considerably less in 1943 than the year before. Barbara Distel either does not know the Höfle message or ignores it deliberately in order to arrive at a high number of victims. The former would make her an ignoramus, the latter a fraud.

Concerning the murder weapon Barbara Distel has this to say:

"In camp 3 there was the stone building with the gas chambers. Next to it stood a wooden shed housing a 200 HP Diesel engine, the exhaust gases of which were fed into the hermetically sealed chambers by means of pipes." (p. 378)

The poor suitability of Diesel exhaust gases for mass murder being widely known and accepted, it is truly astonishing that Barbara Distel would choose this version without the slightest necessity. We remind our readers of the fact that most authors do not specify the type of engine (allegedly) used at Sobibór and that Raul Hilberg speaks explicitly of a gasoline engine.

Even the most primitive inventions of black propaganda are faithfully repeated by Barbara Distel, down to the silly story of the flock of geese that would be "excited so that their ear-splitting honks would drown out the screams of the victims" (p. 381). On p. 389 she refers to Ada Lichtman and writes:

"Each SS man had his own way of killing. [...] They all waited for the arrival of the transports. Bredow was always on the lookout for young girls whom he would always whip sadistically. Gomerski killed the prisoners with a stick spiked with nails; Groth and Bollerender had their dogs. When they said to a detainee: 'Ah, you don't want to work,' the dog ripped the victim to pieces."

We can judge the level of German "Holocaust research" by this book.

2.3.19. Jules Schelvis (2008)

Ever since it first appeared in the Netherlands in 1993, Jules Schelvis' book *Vernietigingskamp Sobibór* has seen no fewer than eight edi-

tions. In 1998 it was translated into German,⁷⁰ and an English edition appeared in 2007.⁷¹ The latest Dutch edition⁷² was published in 2008. The various editions differ considerably in critical points. In the discussion below we will proceed as follows: Wherever the English edition agrees with the latest Dutch edition, we will quote from the English version or indicate the corresponding page number. In case of discrepancies we consider the latest published edition to be valid, as one may assume that it reflects the latest views of the author. In each particular case we will indicate what version the quotation was taken from.

Jules Schelvis' interest in Sobibór has a very personal and tragic background. On 1st June 1943 he was deported to that camp together with his wife Rachel and other relatives. They were part of a group of 3,006 Dutch Jews. Within a few hours of his arrival at the camp he was moved to the Doruhucza labor camp together with some 80 other detainees. After a two-year Odyssey through Poland and Germany, he was eventually liberated by French troops in the south German town of Vaihingen on 8 April 1945. He claims to have been the only survivor of his transport (p. 4).

With its vast bibliography and its wealth of footnotes, *Sobibór – A History of a Nazi Death Camp* formally satisfies all criteria of scientific work. In contrast to nearly all of his predecessors, Schelvis, in his description of the “extermination camp,” turns out to be an intelligent pragmatist who throws out all manner of useless junk found in the traditional literature. By and large he dispenses with horror stories of the kind which immediately disqualify the tale of someone like Miriam Novitch in the eyes of a critical reader. His SS men do beat the Jews with whips and sticks when they do not work hard enough, but they refrain from sewing rats into their trousers, urinating into their mouths or ripping babies apart. While the prisoners regarded SS man Bredow “as a violent person who ill-treated them incessantly” (German version, p. 299), they do not say – as Miriam Novitch does – that he had a daily quota of fifty detainees which he would kill with his gun.

When dealing with the accounts of eye witnesses, Schelvis takes care to discard all obviously incredible passages. Hence, he does devote a lot of space to Alexander Pechersky, the key witness, and lists the 1967 English translation of his 1946 report in his bibliography. On the

⁷⁰ Jules Schelvis, *Vernichtungslager Sobibór*, Metropol Verlag, Berlin 1998.

⁷¹ Jules Schelvis, *Sobibór. A History of a Nazi Death Camp*, Berg Publishers, Oxford 2006.

⁷² J. Schelvis, *Vernietigingskamp Sobibór*, De Bataafsche Leeuw, Amsterdam 2008.

other hand he carefully eliminates statements which would appear dubious to an attentive reader who knows the standard version of the history of Sobibór – such as Pechersky’s bizarre description of the extermination process or his assertion that, as late as September 1943, a transport of new arrivals was exterminated every other day⁷³ – something which is anachronistic even from the point of view of orthodox historiography. In other words, Schelvis handles his witness accounts selectively in such a way that a reader who does not have access to the original sources does not learn about the absurdities contained in them.

This pragmatic approach also applies to Schelvis’ estimate of the number of victims. In contrast to Barbara Distel and authors of her ilk, he does not stubbornly cling to the old figure of 250,000 victims, which has become untenable ever since the discovery of the Höfle message. While he still spoke of some 236,000 to 257,000 Sobibór deportees (who were all killed there except for a handful of them) in the German version, the 2008 Dutch version says:

“For many years it was believed that between 200,000 and 250,000 Jews were deported to the Sobibór extermination camp. New investigations have shown that the figure must be revised downward. The [new] figure is based on a radio message from Hermann Höfle, an SS-Sturmbannführer, who was one of the leading actors of Aktion Reinhardt in Lublin.” (p. 266)

The year 1942 saw deportations to Sobibór from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, from Slovakia, Germany (including Austria) and from the General Government. The English version of Schelvis’ book has the following entries for the Jews deported to Sobibór from the areas mentioned:

Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia:	10,000 (p. 210)
Slovakia:	28,284 (p. 215)
Germany, incl. Austria	23,500 (p. 224).

On the subject of the General Government Schelvis does not provide figures of his own and simply quotes estimates of other authors (English version, p. 225f). Since the total of deportees arriving at the camp in 1942 is known from the Höfle message, a simple subtraction tells us that – if Schelvis’ figures are otherwise correct and complete – $(101,370 - (10,000 + 28,284 + 23,500)) = 39,586$ Polish Jews must have arrived at Sobibór over the year of 1942.

⁷³ Cf. chapter 4.2.

Page 198 of the English version has the following list for the deportations of 1943:

– Ostland (Lida, Minsk, Vilnius):	13,700
– General Government:	14,900
– Holland:	34,313
– France:	3,500
– Skopje: ⁷⁴	2,382

Total: 68,795

Thus, Schelvis gives us the following grand total (English version, p. 198):

<i>COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</i>	<i>1942</i>	<i>1943</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Holland	–	34,313	34,313
Skopje	–	2,382	2,382
France	–	3,500	3,500
Ostland	–	13,700	13,700
General Government	39,586	14,900	54,486
Slovakia	28,284	–	28,284
Protectorate	10,000	–	10,000
Germany, incl. Austria	23,500	–	23,500
<i>Grand total</i>	<i>101,370</i>	<i>68,795</i>	<i>170,165</i>

We wish to point out that Schelvis' figure for the French Jews is higher by about 1,500 persons than the one given by Serge Klarsfeld in his standard work *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France*, which speaks of a total of 2,002 French Jews deported to Sobibór.⁷⁵

With respect to the Occupied Eastern Territories (German occupied areas of the Soviet Union) Schelvis relies exclusively on witness accounts. He believes that there were six transports and “possibly” a seventh and an eighth transport (p. 97f, English version). We may thus conclude that there is no documentary evidence concerning these transports – which does not necessarily mean, of course, that they did not take place. No one may doubt the presence of Alexander Pechersky and other Soviet Jews in Sobibór, even though the respective transport can-

⁷⁴ At the time Skopje belonged to Bulgaria.

⁷⁵ Serge Klarsfeld, *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France*, Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, Paris 1978. Klarsfeld's book has no page numbers. In a “chronological table of the deportation trains,” he mentions two transports from France to Sobibór, the first one leaving on 23 March 1943 and carrying 994 persons, the second leaving on 25 March and carrying 1,008 deportees.

not be identified in documents, but one should note that A. Rutkowski speaks of only one train of deportees from Minsk which arrived at Sobibór on 19 September 1943 with 2,000 Jews on board, including Pechersky.⁷⁶

On this basis we may surmise that Schelvis' figure of 68,795 Jews who came to Sobibór in 1943 – and thus his total of around 170,000 deportees – is too high and should probably be reduced by several thousand. On the other hand, there is no doubt that his order of magnitude is correct.

In order to prove that the deportees were actually gassed except for a handful of them, Schelvis has to show, first of all, that Sobibór was indeed equipped with homicidal gas chambers. Let us now examine how he approaches this problem in his chapter on "The Gas Chambers."

On the first four pages of this chapter he sketches the origins of the (alleged) Belżec gas chambers on the basis of witness testimonies. He starts out with a statement made in 1945 by Stanisław Kozak, a Pole who claimed to have participated in the construction of the first gas chambers at Belżec. According to Kozak it was a building 12 by 8 meters in size and some 2 meters high, subdivided into three rooms by wooden partitions (p. 97f., English version). Schelvis then quotes several witnesses and goes on to say:

"The first gas chambers at Sobibór were built to the same specifications as the original ones at Belżec. [...] A big engine, which was to produce the toxic gas, was picked up from Lemberg and connected to the pipelines. Erich Fuchs, who collected the machine, remembered [...]"

Then we have the statement made by E. Fuchs, a former SS man, during his interrogation at Düsseldorf on April 2, 1963 (p. 100f., English version).

This statement is followed by others made by former members of the Sobibór camp personnel in the 1960s, among them a statement by Erich Bauer made on 6 October 1965 during the Sobibór trial at Hagen. Schelvis comments on Bauer's explanations in the following manner:

"From his account it can be deduced that the gas chambers at Sobibór were indeed identical to those at Belżec. Towards the end of April 1942 further trial gassings took place at Sobibór." (p. 101, English version)

⁷⁶ A. Rutkowski, *op. cit.* (note 27), p. 27.

The witness with respect to these “trial gassings” is, once again, Erich Bauer. The major part of the footnotes in the chapter about the “gas chambers” refers to legal proceedings in Germany. It would not be possible to demonstrate any more clearly that the “evidence” for homicidal gassings at Sobibór was fabricated by the German judiciary decades after the war.

Schelvis is actually unable to refer to statements made by witnesses during or immediately after the war, because none of these witnesses have spoken of a gassing building subdivided into several rooms in which people were killed by engine exhaust gas. If these initial witnesses had anything at all to say about the murder weapon, they spoke of entirely different methods, primarily chlorine or (in the case of Pechersky) a nondescript “black fluid.”⁷⁷ The present-day version of the detainees being killed by means of engine exhaust gases in a building with several gas chambers was proposed in 1947 by the “Main Commission for the Investigation of the German Crimes in Poland” not on the basis of witness testimony, however, but based on the Gerstein report *about Bełżec!*⁷⁸

At the very beginning of Schelvis’ book, we have the following, truly astounding passage:

“Shortly after the liberation of Poland in 1944, a number of survivors gave statements about what happened in the camp, and the criminals who operated there. Still so traumatized by the torture they had endured, they referred to some of their torturers by name in relation to specific crimes which, years later, they felt less sure about. Some knew only first names. These testimonies should be regarded as contemporary documents rather than legal indictments where each and every comma and full stop or period must be in the right place. Despite their inaccuracies, they are of great value because they were given fresh from memory rather than being influenced by later writings or statements by others.” (p. 3, English version)

Without realizing it, Schelvis, in saying this, rejects outright the value of witness statements concerning Sobibór. If we accept the thesis that the witnesses for the prosecution, who had come forward as early as 1944 or shortly thereafter, no longer knew which SS-man had committed which (alleged) specific crime, how then can we ascribe any

⁷⁷ Cf. chapter 3.

⁷⁸ Cf. chapter 3.

value at all to statements made during the Hagen trial, which took place in 1965-1966, i.e. over twenty years after the events? After all, the verdicts against the indicted SS-men, who had been accused of specific crimes, were based exclusively on eyewitness testimony. Everybody knows that human memory tends to become less and less reliable as the years go by.

There is yet another, very revealing aspect hidden in Schelvis' thesis that the declarations by the early witnesses are valuable because "they were given fresh from memory rather than being influenced by later writings or statements by others." If that is true, one may conclude that the witnesses who appeared at the trials of the 1950s and 1960s were indeed "influenced by later writings or statements by others." That this was actually the case is borne out by the fact that not one of the witnesses who testified in the immediate post war period spoke of a building in Sobibór which was subdivided into several chambers and was used to kill Jews by means of engine exhaust gases.

In line with other orthodox historians, Schelvis states that the corpses of the Sobibór victims were unearthed and burned in the open from the fall of 1942 onwards. He obviously does not realize the enormous technical problems the open-air incineration of 170,000 corpses would have posed.⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that Schelvis, even in the 2008 Dutch edition of his book, does not refer in any way to the archeological soundings and digs carried out in the former camp by professor Andrzej Kola seven years earlier.⁸⁰ It is simply inconceivable that Schelvis, a recognized expert on Sobibór, would have been unaware of such a fundamental study.

Jules Schelvis' book is undoubtedly the best which the defenders of the orthodox view about Sobibór have been able to muster, but then, at times, the best is not good enough. Just like his predecessors, Schelvis is unable to proffer even the shadow of a proof that the Jews deported to Sobibór were killed in gas chambers in that camp – this is simply beyond the possibilities of any researcher, be he an honorary doctor of Amsterdam University or what have you.

Obviously, the revisionists must confront the question of what happened to the up to 170,000 Jews who were taken to Sobibór. The key to this mystery is supplied by Schelvis himself, as we can see from the following extract taken from his chapter "Arrival and selection":

⁷⁹ Cf. chapter 5.3.

⁸⁰ Cf. chapter 5.1.3., 5.2.3.

“The process following the arrival of a transport at the camp soon became routine. [...] After exiting the sorting barracks, the men were separated from the women and directed to the undressing area in Lager [camp] 2; the women to another part of the camp. Unless it had already been done at the platform, this was the point at which an SS man would give a short speech. Usually – until his transfer to Treblinka – it was given by Oberscharführer Hermann Michel. Dubbed ‘the doctor’ by the Arbeitshäftlinge [inmate workers] because of his habit of wearing a white coat, he delivered his speech in rapid German [...]. Michel’s words ran along the following lines: ‘In wartime, we must all work. You will be taken to a place where you will prosper. Children and the elderly will not have to work, but will still be well fed. You must keep yourselves clean. The conditions under which you have travelled, with so many of you in each wagon, make it desirable that hygiene precautions are taken. This is why you will shortly have to undress and shower. Your clothes and luggage will be guarded. You must put your clothing into a neat pile, and your shoes must be paired and tied together. You must put them in front of you. Valuables such as gold, money and watches must be handed in at the counter over there. You must remember carefully the number the man behind the counter calls out, so that you will be able to retrieve your possessions more easily afterwards. If we do find any valuables on you after your shower, you will be punished. There is no need to bring a towel and soap; everything will be provided; there will be one towel for every two people.’ [...]

Michel was so full of conviction when he delivered his speech, even as he was pulling the wool over the victims’ eyes, that the Arbeitshäftlinge also dubbed him ‘the preacher.’ Sometimes he would make out [sic] that the camp was a transit camp, that the journey to Ukraine was only a matter of time, and that the Jews would even be granted autonomy there. Other times he would tell them they would all be going to Riga.” (English version, p. 69f.)

Soon after, Schelvis tells us, the deluded people would march into the gas chambers.

What was the use of this entire gobbledygook? Was it necessary to avoid attempts at breaking out? Such a thing would have been hopeless from the start, because the Ukrainian guards who “were, generally speaking, overzealous, displaying a fanatical loyalty to their duty as

guards” and “often surpassed their German instructors in cruelty.” They would “form a cordon to prevent the newcomers from escaping.” (English version, pp. 34f., 62)

Was the speech needed to prevent any kind of resistance? Hardly, for the deportees were much too tired after the long trip and too scared to fight. Without fail, they would have obeyed any orders that would have been barked at them by the guards.

Then why harangue them? Why did the SS man tell them that Sobibór was a transit camp and that they would soon move on into Ukraine or to Riga?

Anyone in possession of his mental faculties can find the answer by himself.

2.3.20. Conclusions

The official version of the history of the camp, still in effect to the present day, was essentially defined by the 1947 report edited by the “Main Commission for the Investigation of the German Crimes in Poland”: Sobibór was an extermination camp for Jews from various European countries. Except for a small number of “working Jews,” the new arrivals were immediately killed by means of engine exhaust gases in a “gassing building” subdivided into several chambers. The corpses were burned on pyres in the open. The number of victims amounted to some 250,000.

Since then, the Sobibór literature has, by and large, adopted this version, even though some authors, such as S. Szmajzner, claimed far higher numbers of victims. The only major revision on the part of any orthodox historian is due to Jules Schelvis. He reduced his figure to 170,000 when the Höfle message became known.

The attentive reader will have noticed that over a period of twenty years (between 1947 and 1967) not a single book, not even an article of any serious nature was written about Sobibór. Among novelists and historians an interest in this camp increased only at the end of the 1970s. The reason for this phenomenon is obviously the increasing Jewish influence in the world. Its most noticeable characteristic has been the intensification of “Holocaust” propaganda. When we look at this literature, we see right away that the publications repeat over and over again a mass of unproven assertions, a never-ending line of the same horror stories and anecdotes, and promote to exhaustion the heroic tale of the uprising on 14 October 1943. Indeed, the available material does not

provide the defenders of the “Holocaust” story with any more information than this.

The only work by any orthodox historian which commands a certain respect (in view of its impressive bibliography) is Jules Schelvis’ *Ver-nietingskamp Sobibór*, but as far as the central question of this topic is concerned – the search for evidence of the mass exterminations – it is no better than the pitiable products of charlatans like Stanisław Szmajzner or Toivi Blatt. Like its predecessors, it provides not even a shred of forensic or documentary evidence for such mass exterminations and relies exclusively on testimony or on the “confessions” of defendants, which, on closer inspection, turn out to be useless.

2.4. A Revisionist Article about Sobibór

Aside from Thomas Kues,¹² the U.S. writer Paul Grubach has been the only revisionist to have seriously approached the problem of Sobibór before the publication of the present book. In August of 2009 he published an excellent article entitled “The ‘Nazi Extermination Camp’ Sobibór in the Context of the Demjanjuk Case.”⁸¹

The starting point of Grubach’s argument is a statement by Elie M. Rosenbaum, the head of the “Nazi-hunting section” of the American Department of Justice:

“Thousands of Jews were murdered in the gas chambers of Sobibór, and John Demjanjuk helped seal their fate.”

Grubach explains that there is no evidence for the existence of any gas chambers at Sobibór and that it is thus impossible to indict Demjanjuk for having pushed even a single Jew into these phantom installations. Among others, he treats the following aspects of the question:

- The failure of demonstrating the existence of gas chambers by means of archeological investigations.
- The contradictions in the testimonies regarding the killing method.
- The contradictions in the testimonies regarding the number, the size, the structure and the capacity of the gas chambers.
- The contradictions in the testimonies regarding the disposal of the corpses.

⁸¹ Paul Grubach, “The ‘Nazi Extermination Camp’ Sobibór in the Context of the Demjanjuk Case,” in: *Inconvenient History*, 1(2)(2009); www.inconvenienthistory.com/archive/2009/volume_1/number_2.

- The wildly divergent figures given by the various authors and witnesses regarding the number of victims.

Grubach summarizes his findings very convincingly:

“As we have shown here, the traditional extermination story at Sobibór has no authentic war-time documentation to support it, nor does it have any forensic or physical evidence to prove it. It is based exclusively upon the testimony of former Sobibór inmates and the post war testimony of former German and Ukrainian soldiers who served at Sobibór.

There are good reasons for even the most hardcore believer in the Holocaust to be very skeptical of the Sobibór extermination story. As the Scottish philosopher David Hume pointed out centuries ago, the veracity of human testimony is undermined when the witnesses contradict each other; when they are but few, or of a doubtful character; when they have an interest in what they affirm; when they deliver their testimony with hesitation, or on the contrary, with too violent asseverations, etc.

As we have shown here, the ‘eyewitnesses’ to Sobibór do contradict each other; they are of a doubtful character, and they do have an interest in what they affirm. The German officials who ‘confessed’ to the existence of the Sobibór ‘gas chambers’ had a vested legal interest in promoting this falsehood. They could not do otherwise in the judicial system they were entrapped in. Former Sobibór inmates had a burning desire to see the Third Reich go down in defeat. For sure, former Sobibór inmate Zelda Metz admitted that: ‘We [prisoners] all wanted to escape and tell the world the crimes of Sobibór. We believed that if the people knew about it, Nazi Germany would be wiped out. We thought that if mankind knew of our martyrdom, we would be admired for our endurance, and revered for our sufferings.’ Many of these Jewish survivors from Sobibór put forth testimony that is truly doubtful, and they did have an interest in promoting horrendous atrocity stories about Sobibór. This would help to defeat and forever degrade their hated enemy, National Socialist Germany, and they would come away as heroes in the eyes of the world. These former Sobibór inmates were embroiled in the German-Jewish hatreds of the war, and their testimonies must be evaluated with this in mind.”

2.5. Heinrich Himmler's Visit to Sobibór

Documentary evidence allows us to say that the *Reichsführer* SS, Heinrich Himmler, visited the Sobibór camp on two occasions. The first visit – about which we know little more than that it was extremely short – took place on 19 July 1942.⁸² The date of the second visit is not known precisely, although it did take place in March of 1943. On 13 April 1943 the head of SS and police of the Lublin district, Odilo Globocnik, noted in a letter to SS-*Gruppenführer* Maximilian von Herff that, on the occasion of his stay (in Lublin) in March, Himmler had inspected “installations of ‘*Aktion Reinhard*.’”⁸³ On the same date, a person whose signature on the corresponding document is illegible sent a letter to SS-*Obersturmführer* Kuno Ther saying, i.a.:⁸³

“The Reichsführer SS, after visiting the Sobibór camp, basically approved the promotion of the deserving Führers [i.e. SS officers] and men.”

Hence, Himmler's visit to Sobibór must have taken place in March of 1943. The document itself does not supply any more detailed information about the visit.

Orthodox historians do not get tired of claiming, on the basis of “eye witnesses” that Himmler attended a mass gassing of Jewish women and girls on the occasion of his second visit to Sobibór. The volume *Documents and Materials*, which appeared in 1947, has this to say:⁸⁴

“Himmler visited Sobibór, as he did the other death camps. In his honor, 300 (other testimonies have 500) Jewish girls were gassed; they had been specially brought to the camp for this festive occasion. Himmler himself stood behind a little window and watched the girls as they were dying from the poison gas.”

The same volume contains the testimonies by Leon Feldhendler and Zelda Metz, who also speak of this non-event. Here is Feldhendler's account:

“A special event for the camp was Himmler's visit in March of 1943. Two hundred women had been brought in from Lublin for this day. They were locked up in a special barrack for two days, waiting to take part in a spectacle for the supreme henchman. [...] The bath

⁸² According to the schedule for the visit, there was only a total of one hour and a half for Himmler to be taken from Chełm to Sobibór and to inspect the camp; www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/sobibor/docs/rfss%20visit%20programm.jpg.

⁸³ www.holocaustdenialontrial.com/en/trial/defense/browning/550#browning_553p64n157

⁸⁴ N. Blumental (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 199.

which was serving as a gas chamber had a little window on top through which Himmler could view with satisfaction the effect of a new gas." (N. Blumental, *ibid.*, p. 206)

Zelda Metz reports:

"Himmler came to Sobibór in late summer of 1943. In order to show him how efficiently the extermination camp was operating, 7,500 beautiful young girls were brought in from [the Jewish camp on] Lipowa Street and executed in front of him." (*ibid.*, p. 211)

While Leon Feldhendler has Himmler's visit take place correctly in March of 1943 and is happy with 200 women gassed for the occasion, Zelda Metz dates the visit to "late summer of 1943" and makes the number of the victims a full 7,500!

If we follow Toivi Blatt, the victims did not come from Lublin but from Włodawa. He writes:⁸⁵

"SS-Oberscharführer Erich Bauer, in charge of the gassing process at Sobibór, concluded a demonstration gassing of over 300 specially selected young Jewish girls from the nearby city of Włodawa."

Yet another version is provided by Moshe Bahir, according to whom the "several hundred" victims came neither from Lublin nor from Włodawa but from Trawniki.⁸⁶

Nearly every book about Sobibór mentions Himmler's presence at the gassing of Jewish girls, although the dates and the number of victims vary. Claiming to quote from witness statements, B. Distel⁸⁷ and J. Schelvis⁸⁸ give the date of the visit as 12 February 1943, although the documents cited have it take place in March. This matter is symbolic, showing as it does how the orthodox historians operate. The story of the *Reichsführer's* presence at a gassing of Jewish ladies also crops up in connection with Treblinka. The Polish Jewess Rachel Auerbach tells us:⁸⁹

"It is said that on the occasion of his visit to Treblinka towards the end of February of 1943, a very special show was arranged for Himmler. A group of young women who had been specially selected for this event were herded into the 'bath house' – naked, so that the

⁸⁵ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 12.

⁸⁶ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 156.

⁸⁷ B. Distel, *op. cit.* (note 69), p. 391.

⁸⁸ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 111.

⁸⁹ Alexander Donat (ed.), *The Death Camp Treblinka*, Holocaust Library, New York 1979, p. 48.

SS-Reichsführer might enjoy the view of their bodies – leaving it as corpses.”

It does not speak for the honor of orthodox historians that they accept such products of sick minds as historical truth.

2.6. Sobibór’s Claimed Number of Vicitms

Table 2: Victim numbers claimed for Sobibór

2,000,000	Zelda Metz, ⁹⁰ Stanisław Szmajzner ⁹¹
1,000,000	N. Blumental ⁹²
800,000	Kurt Ticho, ⁹³ Ch. Engel and S. Engel-Wijnberg ⁹³
600,000	Yuri Suhl ⁹⁴
500,000	I. Ehrenburg, V. Grossman ⁹⁵
*350,000	Erich Bauer, 1962 ⁹⁶
300,000	Léon Poliakov ⁹⁷
250,000	<i>Encyclopedia of the Holocaust</i> , ⁹⁸ Wolfgang Scheffler ⁹⁹
200,000	Raul Hilberg ¹⁰⁰
170,000	Jules Schelvis ¹⁰¹
*110,000	Karl Frenzel, 1987 ⁹⁶
*50,000 to 70,000	Karl Frenzel, 1966 ⁹⁶
30,000 – 35,000	Jean-Claude Pressac ¹⁰²
*25,000 – 30,000	Hubert Gomerski, 1950 ⁹⁶

* Victim numbers given by SS personnel formerly stationed at Sobibór

⁹⁰ N. Blumental (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 210.

⁹¹ S. Szmajzner, *op. cit.* (note 31), p. 270.

⁹² N. Blumental (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 200.

⁹³ Statement by Kurt Ticho (Thomas), ROD (Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam), c[23.62]09, p. 6.

⁹⁴ Yuri Suhl, *Ed essi si ribellarono. Storia della resistenza ebraica contro il nazismo*, Milano 1969, p. 66.

⁹⁵ Ilya Ehrenburg, Vasily Grossman (eds.), *The Black Book*, Holocaust Library, New York 1981, p. 443.

⁹⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 238.

⁹⁷ Léon Poliakov, *Bréviaire le la Haine*, Calman-Lévy, Paris 1979, p. 387.

⁹⁸ See chapter 2.1.

⁹⁹ Wolfgang Scheffler, *Judenverfolgung im Dritten Reich*, Colloquium Verlag, Berlin 1964, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt 1986, p. 956.

¹⁰¹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 72), p. 267.

¹⁰² Valérie Igounet, *Histoire du négationnisme en France*, Editions du Seuil, Paris 2000, p. 640.

Table 2 is an incomplete list of the numbers of victims assigned to Sobibór by various witnesses and historians. As we have seen, Schelvis' figure of 170,000 corresponds to the maximum possible number of detainees *to have reached* Sobibór – but does not tell us anything about the ensuing fate of these deportees.

We will present our own estimate of the victims of Sobibór elsewhere in this book.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Cf. chapter 5.7.

3. Origins and Evolution of Claims about Sobibór

Józef Marszałek notes that the espionage service of the *Delegatura*, which was that branch of the Polish Government in exile in London during World War II which operated within Poland, and the intelligence service of the Polish National Army (the AK, or Armia Krajowa) “had a good knowledge of the Treblinka and Bełżec death camps, much less so with respect to Sobibór,”¹⁰⁴ which is to be understood mainly in a quantitative way. Bogdan Chrzanowski affirms that “the underground press wrote rather vaguely about another camp of immediate extermination, i.e. Sobibór, even though first indications had already surfaced in August of 1942.”¹⁰⁵

Wartime information about this camp was indeed sparse and vague from the first such item onward, which was written by Ruta Sakowska.¹⁰⁶

“In early July of 1942, Oneg Szabat’s^[107] group managed to identify the location of the second extermination camp located in the General Government: Sobibór. The first news item about Sobibór – which went into operation in early May – was brought into the Warsaw ghetto by two couriers of the Dror,^[108] ‘Frumka’ Płotnicka and ‘Chawka’ Folman. In early June of 1942, on orders of the Dror, they went to the Lublin region, i.a. to Werbkowice near Hrubieszów, where there was a commune of Jewish youths. The two women arrived at Rejowiec on 6 June 1942. However, the Rejowiec Jews were

¹⁰⁴ Józef Marszałek, “Rozpoznanie obózów śmierci w Bełżcu, Sobiborze i Treblince przez wywiad Delegatury Rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na Kraju i Armii Krajowej,” in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji zbrodni przeciwko narodowi polskiemu Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. XXXV, Warsaw 1993, p. 47.

¹⁰⁵ Bogdan Chrzanowski, “Eksterminacja ludności żydowskiej w świetle polskich wydawnictw konspiracyjnych,” in: *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce*, No. 1-2/133-134, p. 103.

¹⁰⁶ Ruta Sakowska, *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod. NS-Ausrottungspolitik gegen die polnischen Juden gesehen mit den Augen der Opfer*, Edition Entrich, Berlin 1993, pp. 40f.

¹⁰⁷ Hebrew for “Joy of the Sabbath,” code name of a group of Jews dedicated to chronicling life in the Warsaw Ghetto, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oyneg_Shabbos_\(group\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oyneg_Shabbos_(group)).

¹⁰⁸ Hebrew for freedom, name of a group of socialist Zionists in the Warsaw ghetto.

no longer there, as they had been deported to the extermination camp in mid-May.

The following day the two young women reached Hrubieszów. On the way into town they met a column of several thousand Jews from Hrubieszów and its surroundings who were being herded to the station by the Germans.

A few days later 'Frumka' Plotnicka reported about this to Eliahu Gutkowski, the second secretary of the underground archives of the ghetto, who recorded the accounts of the two couriers: 'I almost fainted, the people marched in rows of four, more than 2,000 persons, men, women, and youngsters, no children. I noticed two or three children holding the hand of an adult. There was a deadly stillness in the ranks, people marched quietly, looking down with eyes that no longer saw anything...' This column was followed by a second group: old people and sick women, some eight to twelve people each on farm wagons; one could hear their subdued complaints and their prayers: 'Save us, oh Lord.' As 'Frumka' Plotnicka learned later, the children had been taken away from their parents and were taken 'to an unknown destination' in sealed [railway] cars.

The next day, the two liaison women were present at the station of the nearby town of Miąciń. And here, for the first time, they heard the name: 'Sobibór.' 'Frumka' Plotnicka told Eliahu Gutkowski: 'From morning till nightfall people arrived here with their wagons and their possessions. In the evening the Jews were herded into special cars, they could not take their possessions along [...]. The train left for 'an unknown destination.' There are rumors that the Germans had built another death camp at Sobibór, modeled on Bełżec.' 'Frumka' Plotnicka died during the defense of the ghetto at Będzin (Bendsburg, Upper Silesia). 'Chawka' Folman survived and later published her memoirs in Israel."

On 1st July 1942 the journal *Polish Fortnightly Review* published an article which mentioned Sobibór in connection with the "destruction of the Jewish population" in Poland:¹⁰⁹

"The German press reported that the ghetto had been transferred from Lublin to the village of Majdan Tatarski [Majdanek], but in fact almost the entire population was exterminated. For instance, it is generally known that a certain number of Jews from the Lublin ghet-

¹⁰⁹ "Documents from Poland. German attempts to murder a nation. (5) Destruction of the Jewish Population," in: *Polish Fortnightly Review*, No. 47, July 1st, 1942, pp. 4-5.

to were shut up in goods trucks, which were taken out beyond the town and left on a siding for two weeks, until all inside had perished of starvation. The majority of the Jews of Lublin were carried off over a period of several days to the locality of Sobibór, near Włodawa, where they were all murdered with gas, machine-guns and even by being bayoneted. It is an authenticated fact that Lithuanian detachments of shaulists,^[110] who have recently been brought into Poland, were used for these mass executions. The fetor of the decomposing bodies in Sobibór is said to be so great that the people of the district, and even cattle, avoid the place. One Pole working in Sobibór wrote a letter pleading to be granted a transfer elsewhere, as he could not remain in such conditions.”

A report dated 7 September contained this brief reference:¹¹¹

“In spring the news came through that a new camp of tortures had been set up in Sobibór (Włodawski district). The winding up of the ghetto was expected already by the middle of April, and then, later, by the end of May. In June the rumor spread that it had been put off for some time. But the visit of Himmler to the General Government in the middle of July this year hastened the execution of the plan, and his former orders were even made stricter.”

The newspaper *Rzeczpospolita Polska* wrote in its edition of 19 November 1942:¹¹²

“The Sobibór camp near Włodawa is temporarily not in operation but is being enlarged.”

The first vague mention of the extermination method used at Sobibór – unidentified “gases” – appeared in an official report of the Ministry of the Interior of the Polish Government in Exile, dated 23 December 1942:¹¹²

“At that time – April/May – the first vague news about the camps of Sobibór, in the Włodawski district and Bełżec, in eastern Lesser Poland, reached Warsaw, indicating that there was mass poisoning with gases^[113] and assassinations with electric current of transports of hundreds of Jews who were moved there from the territory of western Lesser Poland. [...] They are taken to three killing places,

¹¹⁰ Term for Lithuanian volunteers in the service of German armed forces during WWII.

¹¹¹ “Report on conditions in Poland. Report received by the Polish government in exile in London on 27 November 1942. Annex No. 7. Liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto,” dated 7.IX.1942, p. 4. Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Stanford University, Box 29.

¹¹² B. Chrzanowski, *op. cit.* (note 105), p. 103.

¹¹³ *gazami*

Treblinka, Belżec and Sobibór, where the transports are unloaded, the condemned are stripped naked and murdered, probably with gases.”¹¹³

In 1943 the Polish underground press published more news about the Sobibór camp. The paper *Informacja Bieżąca* stated on 1st April:¹¹⁴

“The death camp of Sobibór has again been in operation since 10 March. At the moment, transports from Holland and France are arriving there. These Jews arrive in passenger trains and are convinced that they are to work in factories of the war industry further east. On Sunday, 14 March, Dutch Jews were even received at Sobibór by an orchestra; the next day, not one of them was alive.”

A report of May-June of 1943 stated that, after the deportation of Jews to the work camps at Trawniki and Lublin, “women, old people and children were moved to Sobibór,”¹¹⁴ which suggests that this camp was considered to be one not for general extermination but only for those unfit for work.

In the report of the *Delegatura* for the first three months of 1943 we read:¹¹⁴

“Some transports of Jews from France arrived during March of 1943. A train for Sobibór passed through the station of Radom on 3 March, on 6 March [there was a train] at Częstochowa for Oświęcim [Auschwitz], and on 11 and 18 March (train of 30 cars) for Sobibór.”

The *Informacja Narodowa* No. 3 dated 30 September 1943 reported that, out of the transports of Jews which had reached the camp between 19 and 25 September, “90% were killed and 10% sent to the camp at Trawniki.”¹¹⁴ In its No. 1 edition of 3 September the same paper had already written about “200 persons sent to the Sobibór death camp,” which had been selected from Jewish transports directed from Byaństok to Trawniki on 15-21 August.¹¹⁴ At Trawniki, after yet another selection, “old people, women, and children were sent to their death at Sobibór” on 27 September.¹¹⁴

An unknown “eye witness” composed a report on 1st November 1943 in which he said, among other things:¹¹⁵

“On the last day of the ‘Aktion,’ [campaign] 9 June [1942], some 5,000 persons were assembled on the market square [of Hrubieszów]. The district supervisor appeared and carried out a selec-

¹¹⁴ J. Marszałek, *op. cit.* (note 104), p. 46.

¹¹⁵ Abraham Silberschein, *Die Judenaustrichtung in Polen*, Geneva 1944, vol. 5, p. 25.

tion according as he saw fit. The people he selected were allowed to remain in the town and work, the others were loaded on trucks, taken to Sobibór and executed there. (These Jews were sent to Sobibór because Belżec was, by then, 'overcrowded.') Out of the 5,000 persons, 1,000 were moved to Sobibór."

In November of 1943, the underground press devotes a few lines to the revolt at Sobibór. *Informacja Bieżąca* No. 44 of 10 November states for example:¹⁰⁴

"The Jews have destroyed the Sobibór camp and escaped into the woods."

A furtive reference to Sobibór is made in the report from the *Delegatura* for November/December 1943:¹¹⁶

"The work camp at Lemberg with a few thousand Jews who still remained there was dissolved. This also applied to 2 other, smaller camps. This fact could not be prevented, although a Jewish group had destroyed the camp and the execution site at Sobibór – as had happened at Treblinka earlier on."

Marszałek stresses that these meager rumors did not provide any information on the organizational structure of the camp:¹⁰⁴

"Hence one did not know anything about the layout of the camp, nor the kind of [supervisory] personnel; there was no information about the Kommando that carried out the routine work for the operation of the camp, nor any details of the extermination method. Furthermore, there was no attempt at estimating the human losses."

The situation was similar to that concerning the camps at Treblinka and Belżec, about which the most absurd rumors were bandied about during WWII.¹¹⁷

Hence, practically nothing was known about Sobibór. This made the historical reconstruction of the camp particularly difficult, as we can see from this text written in 1945 by the *Polish War Crimes Office*, which attempted to give some kind of historical shape to the vague rumors:¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *Faschismus – Getto – Massenmord, Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges*, Röderberg-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1960, p. 366.

¹¹⁷ Cf. in this respect: C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 47-69; C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), pp. 9-34.

¹¹⁸ "Report by the Polish War Crimes Office, Dr. J. Litawski, Officer in charge, on the German crimes in Poland," 1945. AGK, MSW London [In the original, the name "London" is in Polish], 113, p. 626.

“The third torture place for Jews was the ‘death camp’ of Sobibór, near Włodawa on the river Bug, to the south of Brześć Litewski [Brest-Litowsk], in the district of Lublin.

This camp was used for the concentration of Jews during both the first and the second period of the liquidation of ghettos. In the first period – August 1942 – enormous masses of Jews from the General Government were brought to this camp to be destroyed in gas chambers. Besides Jews from foreign countries, especially from Low Countries and France, were brought there, who are given the assurance of being sent to factories in the Reich, but in fact share the fate of the Polish Jews in the gas chambers, whilst their luggage and other movables become a booty of the warders. In summer 1943 large numbers of Jews from the district of Lublin and especially from the neighbourhood of Włodawa and Hrubieszów are brought to Sobibór. In the first half of 1943, a group of 1,000 Jews were murdered in Sobibór who were employed in war factories and brought from the Warsaw ghetto. These people had been previously promised by the German authorities their lives would be spared in recognition of their war effort. During the same period thousands of Russian Jews were destroyed in Sobibór who had been deported in masses from Mohilew, Smoleńsk and Bobrujsk districts. In the second half of October 1943, a sedition broke [out] in the camp of Sobibór among several hundred of surviving Jews, who killed a number of hangmen, SS men and Ukrainians, burned down the barracks and escaped.”

This is a decidedly insipid “historical reconstruction,” yet it entered the official report of the Polish government by way of the Nuremberg trial in an even more general form:¹¹⁹

“This camp was used for the concentration of Jews during the first and second extermination periods affecting the ghetto. Here, the Jews were killed in gas chambers. The foreign Jews, especially those from Holland and France, were brought to Sobibór under the pretext that they would have to work in factories in the Reich, and then executed. The high point of the executions was the year 1943. Thousands upon thousands of Jews were deported and killed in gas chambers.”

¹¹⁹ “The Polish Republic in the case against: 1. German war criminals; 2. Their corporations and organizations indicated under indictment No. 1 before the International Military Court,” p. 42. This is the official report of the Polish government for the Nuremberg tribunal, document URSS-93.

At Nuremberg this passage was adopted in an even more succinct way by L.N. Smirnov, the Soviet prosecutor, who declared during the hearing of 19 February 1946 with reference to the official report of the Polish government:¹²⁰

“[...] I call the attention of the Tribunal to Page 136 on the reverse side of the document book; this is from a report of the Polish Government, which shows that the Camp Sobibur^[121] was founded during the first and second liquidation of the Jewish ghetto. But the extermination on a large scale in this camp really started at the beginning of 1943.”

In the years 1944-1946 witnesses still ascribed the most fanciful methods of killing to the alleged Sobibór killing installations. On 10 August 1944 Ber Moiseyevich Freiberg, a former Sobibór detainee, declared the following:¹²²

“When a group of eight hundred people entered the ‘bathhouse,’ the door closed tightly. [...] In a separate building, there was an electric machine which released deadly gas. Once released, the gas entered tanks, and from there, it came through hoses in the chamber to be asphyxiated [sic]. There were no windows in the building. A German, who was called the ‘bathhouse attendant,’ looked through a small glass opening on the roof to see if the killing process was completed. Upon his signal, the gas was shut off, the floor was mechanically drawn apart, and the corpses fell below. There were carts in the cellar, and a group of doomed men piled the corpses of the executed onto them. The carts were taken out of the cellar to the woods in the third camp. A huge ditch had been dug there, and the corpses were first thrown into it and then covered up with dirt. The people who delivered and disposed of the corpses were immediately shot.”

Alexander Pechersky a.k.a. Alexandr Peczorskij had this to say:¹²³

“He was an old inmate who worked at sorting out the clothing of those who were killed. He was well-informed. From him we learned where our comrades had disappeared and how the whole thing operated. He spoke simply, as though it were a conversation about or-

¹²⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal (subsequently quoted as *IMT*), vol. VII, p. 576.

¹²¹ Phonetic transliteration of Sobibór.

¹²² I. Ehrenburg, V. Grossman, *op. cit.* (note 95), p. 439.

¹²³ A. Pechersky, *Revolt in Sobibór*, Yiddish translation by N. Lurie, Moscow, State Publishing House Der Emes, 1946. Reprinted in: Yuri Suhl, (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 26), p. 20.

dinary matters, and we, the new arrivals who had lived through some unusual experiences ourselves, shuddered as we listened to his story.

‘As soon as you were separated from them,’ he said, ‘they were taken to a second yard where everyone, without exception, must gather. There they are told to lay down their bundles and undress before going to the ‘bath.’ The women’s hair is cut off. Everything is done quietly and efficiently. Then the bareheaded women, wearing only their undergowns, and the children go first. About a hundred steps behind them go the men, completely naked. All are heavily guarded. There is the ‘bath’ he pointed with his hand, ‘not far from where you see the smoke. Two buildings are standing there, one for the women and children, the other for men. I myself haven’t seen what it looks like inside, but people who know have described it.

At first glance, everything looks as a bath should look – faucets for hot and cold water, basins to wash in... As soon as the people enter, the doors are clamped shut. A thick dark substance comes spiralling out from vents in the ceiling. Horrible shrieks are heard, but they don’t last long. They are soon transformed into gaspings of suffocation and convulsive seizures. Mothers, they say, cover their little ones with their bodies.

The ‘bath’ attendant observes the entire procedure through a small pane in the ceiling. In fifteen minutes it is all over. The floors open up and the dead bodies tumble down into small wagons that are standing ready below, in the ‘bath’s’ cellars. The full wagons roll out quickly. Everything is organized in accordance with the last word in German technology. Outside the bodies are laid out in a certain order. They are soaked with gasoline and set aflame. That is where they are burning.’”

In 1945 the Dutch Red Cross published a summary of the testimony given by Ursula Stern, deported to Sobibór on 9 April 1943.¹²⁴

“There was a gas chamber which could hold 600 persons; the gas came into the chamber through showers; once the people were dead, the floor opened up and they fell through. Gassing of a group took about a quarter of an hour.”

¹²⁴ Het Nederlandsche Roode Kruis. Afwikkelingsbureau Concentratiekampen. *Sobibór*. ‘S-Gravenhage, April 11, 1945, p. 11.

Chaim Engel, too, as reported by Jules Schelvis, declared in 1946 “that trap doors were located in the gas chambers through which the corpses would fall.”¹²⁵ Another witness, Leon Feldhendler, stated:¹²⁶

“The bath was arranged as if it were really a place to wash (faucets for the shower, a pleasant environment). The baths were places for gassing.^[127] Five hundred persons were gassed simultaneously. Sometimes, a stream of chlorine would be released,^[128] they were always trying out other gases.”

The literary elements of chlorine and the collapsible floor were then fused into a new version by the witness Zelda Metz, who asserted:¹²⁹

“[The victims] went to the counter naked. There they deposited money, jewelry and valuables. The Germans gave them brass tokens or gave them numbers orally, so that, when they returned, they could claim the money and their affairs. Then they entered the barrack where the women’s hair would be cut, and then into the ‘bath,’ i.e. the gas chamber. They were asphyxiated with chlorine.^[130] After 15 minutes they were all asphyxiated. Through a little window, [the Germans] checked to see if they were all dead. Then the floor opened up automatically. The corpses fell into the car of a railway which traversed the gas chamber and transported the corpses to the oven. Before they were burned, their gold teeth were pulled out. The oven was an enormous hearth with an open-air grate.”

Murder by means of chlorine was also asserted by Salomea Hanel, who declared:¹³¹

“Out of the 3,000 persons, 7 women and 18 youths were selected for work, the others were sent to their death. There were barracks, one of them had ‘cashier’ written on it. The women were pushed to the ‘cashier,’ their heads were shaved, and then they were given tickets for the bath. Gestapo people told them that they all had to take a bath because they were full of lice. They were to put their shoes and clothes together and get a receipt in return. One time there was an incident because something had broken in the cham-

¹²⁵ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 82.

¹²⁶ N. Blumental (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 204. The deposition dates from 1945.

¹²⁷ *gazowniami*

¹²⁸ *czasem puszczano prąd chlorku*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211. This deposition as well dates from 1944 or 1945.

¹³⁰ *dusili chlorem*

¹³¹ Jewish Historical Commission, Cracow, *Dokumenty zbrodni i męczeństwa*. Cracow 1945, p. 64.

ber. The people who were moved out ran around naked and hid outside. The Germans killed [them] with chlorine."

If we follow Hella Felenbaum-Weiss, chlorine was used to kill the deportees during the journey:¹³²

"The arrival of another convoy distressed me in the same way. It was thought to come from Lvov, but nobody knew for sure. Prisoners were sobbing and told us a dreadful tale: they had been gassed on the way with chlorine, but some survived."

Stanisław Szmajzner, on the other hand, spoke of Zyklon B in 1996, as J. Schelvis tells us:¹³³

"Szmajzner believed that the victims were initially killed by means of exhaust gases, but that Zyklon B was used later on."

An unnamed witness, however, speaks of victims "who were usually executed by means of electricity and gas."¹³⁴

The story about the "little window in the ceiling" through which the man in charge of the gassing process would watch the agony of the victims and the tale of the collapsible floor of the gas chamber reappear in later accounts as well. In his memoirs, "written in about 1950" and published "in Tel Aviv in 1970," Moshe Bahir writes:¹³⁵

"Lager [camp] 3 was closed to all sides to the prisoners of Sobibór. It was impossible for us to see what was going on in that Lager because of the grove of pine trees which surrounded it. We saw only the roof of the 'bathhouse' which protruded through the trees. Thus we saw the murderous face of Oberscharführer Bauer, who used to stand on the roof of that building and peep through the little window into the death chambers.

We all knew what was done inside the building. We knew that Bauer looked through the window in order to regulate the amount of death-gas which streamed through the ducts, which were in the form of an ordinary shower. He was the one who saw the victims suffocating from the gas that was showered upon them, and he was the one who ordered that the flow of gas be increased or stopped. And he was the one who ordered the victims in their final agony and in their death. At his order the machinery which opened the floor of the 'bathhouse' was activated, and the corpses fell into small carts,

¹³² M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 50.

¹³³ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 82.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

¹³⁵ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 147.

which took them at first to mass graves and later, when time was short, to cremation ovens instead."

Ada Lichtman, too, asserts that Bauer "supervised the executions from a roof window of the gas chambers"¹³⁶ Even as late as 5 June 1961, at the 65th hearing of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, the witness Ya'akov Biskovitz declared:¹³⁷

"Yes, that is the fire pit in which the victims who were brought out of the gas chambers were burned. After some time, a buzzing sound would be heard, the floor opened up, and the victims fell into the deep hollow below and were conveyed in this little train into the pit where the eighty men of Camp 3 were working, and they burned the bodies."

Bauer's presence on the roof ("to regulate the amount of death-gas") does not make much sense within the framework of Holocaust historiography, because the claimed engine allegedly producing the gas worked best only at a certain speed. In this sense, SS-Unterscharführer Erich Bauer declared on 2 April 1963:¹³⁸

"On the suggestion of the chemist I set the engine to run at a certain number of revolutions, which would make acceleration unnecessary in the future."

Perhaps for this reason Szmajzner later changed the "little window" into "a moveable skylight" for the introduction of Zyklon B,¹³⁹ along the lines of the alleged model of the gas chambers in crematoria II and III at Birkenau!

The tale of the assassinations by means of an undefined "engine" was officially adopted only in 1947. During the Polish investigations on the Sobibór camp the following was "ascertained:"¹⁴⁰

"On the inside, this [gassing] building had brick partitions. It probably^[141] held 5 chambers, which could accommodate a total of 500 persons. Killing was done with the exhaust gas produced by an engine set up next to the chambers and connected to them by pipes."

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹³⁷ State of Israel, *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann. Record of Proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem*. Jerusalem 1993, vol. III, p. 1184.

¹³⁸ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 119.

¹³⁹ Cf. chapter 4, p. 83.

¹⁴⁰ Z. Łukaszewicz, "Obóz zagłady w Sobiborze," in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*, vol. III, Poznań 1947, p. 52.

¹⁴¹ *prwdopodobnie*

No witness statement described this killing method, though. It was, in fact, invented by the Polish investigators. The *Polish War Crimes Office* had already opted for one of the methods mentioned in the Polish underground press, the one using unspecified “gases,” and applied it to the “gas chamber” installation. The Polish investigators themselves added the “exhaust gas produced by an engine,” which they pulled out of the so-called “Gerstein report,” as we have already made clear elsewhere.¹⁴² Let us state here that, on 30 January 1946, the assistant general prosecutor of the French Republic, Charles Dubost, handed to the Nuremberg tribunal a file of documents, registered as PS-1553, which also contained a report written in French by Kurt Gerstein¹⁴³ and dated 26 April 1945.¹⁴⁴ This report, in which Gerstein describes an alleged visit of his to the Belżec camp, was not read in court, but another version of it, with the story of the gas chambers operating on the basis of a Diesel engine, appeared in the French newspaper *France Soir* on 4 July 1945 with the title “I have exterminated up to 11,000 people per day.”¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, on 16 January 1947 a German translation of document PS-1553 was presented as Exhibit 428 during the Nuremberg trial of the physicians.¹⁴⁶

Hence as early as the immediate post war years the story of the extermination of Jews at the Belżec, Sobibór and Treblinka camps was known widely enough to inspire the Polish investigators.

Another revealing aspect of what the investigators “established” is the fact that on the one hand they were ignorant of the story of the two alleged gassing buildings and on the other hand they claimed a number

¹⁴² C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 70-76.

¹⁴³ The German national Kurt Gerstein had joined the SS in early 1941, where he became a member of the Institute for Hygiene of the Waffen-SS, eventually serving as head of the technical disinfection services. At war's end he was arrested by the French, and in their custody he wrote several highly dubious and at times absurd “confessions” about mass murder scenes he claimed to have witnessed in the Treblinka and Belżec camps. Shortly thereafter he committed suicide... The importance of Gerstein's reports for mainstream Holocaust historiography on the Belżec, Sobibór and Treblinka camps is substantial; for a critical analysis see André Chelain, *Faut-il fusiller Henri Roques?* Polémiques, Paris, 1986. Editor's remark.

¹⁴⁴ *IMT*, vol. VI, pp. 332-334 and 363f.

¹⁴⁵ G. Kelber, “Un bourreau des camps nazis avoue: ‘J’ai exterminé jusqu’à 11,000 personnes par jour.’” *France Soir*, 4 July 1945, pp. 1f.

¹⁴⁶ *Militärgerichtshof, Fall 1: der Ärzteprozeß*, Nuernberg, hearing of 16 January 1947, mimeographed transcripts, pp. 1806-1815; Staatsarchiv Nürnberg. A long extract from the document can be found on pp. 1808-1814; published condensed Engl. edition: U.S. Government (ed.), *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, vol. I: “The Medical Case,” Nuernberg, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 1949, pp. 865-870.

of gas chambers (5) which disagrees with the numbers usually given today for either of these buildings (3 and 6):¹⁴⁷

“Within this building, three adjoining cells having a floor area of 4 × 4 meters were hermetically separated. [...] It turned out that these gas chambers were too small, that the ‘output’ of the Sobibór camp was too low. A construction crew from the Lublin base, under the technical direction of the accused L[ambert] tore down the old gassing building in part and replaced it by a new and larger [massive] brick building with twice the number of chambers. The cells – each covering an area 4 × 4 and having an internal height of 2.20 m – were arranged on both sides of the building, either in such a way that they contained a central corridor or that they stood only in one row. Each of the cells could hold some 80 persons, if they were tightly packed. Construction work proceeded quickly within a few weeks, thanks to the use of Jewish detainees as laborers; now six chambers allowed killing 480 persons in one gassing operation.” (Emph. added)

Hence, according to today’s orthodox view, there was no gassing building with *five* gas chambers. We should perhaps stress at this point that the second building equipped with six gas chambers measuring 4 × 4 m each could accommodate 1,200 to 1,300 victims according to Y. Arad.¹⁴⁸

The description of the two gassing buildings set out in the reasoning of the Hagen trial sentence had nothing to do with witness accounts concerning Sobibór. It is not difficult to retrace its origins. The first building with its three gas chambers was copied from the account regarding Bełżec given by Stanisław Kozak to the investigating judge Czesław Godziszewski on 14 October 1945. We will discuss it later. Kozak declared that at the end of October of 1941 he was forced by the SS, together with some 20 inhabitants of the village of Bełżec, to work in the camp. (Although M. Tregenza tells us they were well-paid volunteers.¹⁴⁹) Work began on 1st November. These Polish laborers built three barracks. The third one, the alleged extermination barrack, contained three rooms¹⁵⁰ which were later taken arbitrarily to be “gas chambers” –

¹⁴⁷ A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 163, 172f.

¹⁴⁸ E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl *et al.* (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 45), p. 186.

¹⁴⁹ C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), p. 43.

¹⁵⁰ The declaration by S. Kozak is shown in the book by C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), pp.45f.

the witness' description evokes an entirely different picture, as we shall see in chapter 8.

The second building at Sobibór with its three gas chambers on either side of a central corridor was clearly taken from the "Gerstein report," again referring to Bełżec:¹⁵¹

"In the bath itself, there were three chambers each to the right and left of a corridor, like garages, 5 × 5 m in size and 1.90 m high."

Even J. Schelvis, in the section of his book which is dedicated to the "gas chambers," could not but describe those at Bełżec,¹⁵² reproducing the drawings made by Eugeniusz Szrojt¹⁵³ and adding the captions "The first gas chambers at Bełżec, which also were the model for Sobibór"¹⁵⁴ and "The gas chambers after the reconstruction."¹⁵⁵ According to Schelvis "the first gas chambers at Sobibór were designed on the original pattern of Bełżec. The arrangement and the dimensions were identical."¹⁵⁶ Elsewhere he states that "the Sobibór gas chambers were identical to those of Bełżec."¹⁵⁷ We will later discuss the consequences deriving from this hypothesis.

The assertions made by the official historiography on the alleged gas chambers at Sobibór are thus completely unfounded not only with respect to documentary evidence, but also from the point of view of the statements made by the witnesses.

¹⁵¹ Account by Kurt Gerstein dated 6 May 1945, PS-2170, p. 4.

¹⁵² J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), pp. 113-119. Cf. chapter 1, section s).

¹⁵³ Eugeniusz Szrojt, "Obóz zagłady w Bełżcu," in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*, vol. III, Poznań 1947, "Orientacyjny plan pierwszego budynku z komorami straceń w Bełżcu," and "Orientacyjny plan drugiego budynku z komorami straceń w Bełżcu," drawing outside of text, between pp. 40 and 41.

¹⁵⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 115.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

4. Critical Analysis of Eye Witness Testimonies

4.1. Alleged Contacts with Inmates in camp III

At Sobibór, in contrast to Belżec and Treblinka, there were (supposedly) no survivors among the inmates working in the death camp proper, which is usually designated “Lager III” (camp III) and described as “hidden in the thickness of the trees.”¹⁵⁸ All first-hand accounts of the alleged killing installations derive from testimonies left by former SS or Ukrainian auxiliary camp personnel years or even decades after the end of the war. On the other hand we have a fairly large number of witness accounts from former Jewish inmates in other parts of the camp, some of whom divulge “knowledge,” or rather hearsay, on details of the alleged mass killings.

The already mentioned Ya’akov Biskovitz (Jacob Biskubicz), born in the Polish town of Hrubieszów in 1926, is the only former inmate who claims to have seen the gas chambers with his own eyes.¹⁵⁹ On 5 June 1961 he testified at the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem.¹⁶⁰

“Not everybody had the opportunity [to see the killing installations], but I, by chance, did. By chance I was taken to bring a cart with a barrel of chloride. When I was passing by the two larger stores in Camp 2, I detached the cart and pushed it towards Camp 3. I was supposed to leave it near the gate, but I could not hold the vehicle back. The gate opened and it pushed me inside.

Since I knew I would not get out alive from there, I began to run back at top speed and managed to reach my place of work without anyone noticing. I kept this a secret – I am stressing this – even from the inmates of the camp who worked with me. From a distance, I saw the pit and the hollow and the small train that carried the dead

¹⁵⁸ From the testimony of Moshe Bahir, reproduced in M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 144.

¹⁵⁹ According to Schelvis, an inmate named Chaim Trager (spelled Haim Treger by Novitch) “claimed to have seen all the goings-on in Lager 3 while building a chimney on a rooftop in that part of the camp.” Curiously, Schelvis provides neither a quote nor a reference for this remarkable piece of testimony. J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 238.

¹⁶⁰ State of Israel, *op. cit.* (note 137), vol. III, p. 1188.

bodies. I did not see the gas chamber from the inside; I only saw, from the outside, that there was a very prominent roof, and that the floor opened and the bodies fell below. [...] underneath the gas chamber, there was a hollow which already contained bodies."

The problem with this description is obvious: no historian believes the gas chambers at Sobibór to have had collapsible floors, and therefore this testimony subsequently has dropped down the memory hole. In the 1980s writer Richard Rashke travelled to Israel to interview former Sobibór inmates for his book *Escape from Sobibór*. One of them was Biskovitz, who Rashke talked to in the presence of Israeli Holocaust historian Miriam Novitch. Apparently not a single word was said about the event described above. Yet Biskovitz is not alone in claiming that "the floor opened up and the bodies fell below into the railway wagons." The same details appear in the testimonies of Alexander Pechersky,¹⁶¹ Zeld Metz,¹⁶² Ursula Stern,¹⁶³ Chaim Engel,¹⁶⁴ Dov (Ber) Freiberg,¹⁶¹ and Moshe Bahir.¹⁶¹ One might therefore assume that Biskovitz either did not keep his supposed observation a secret or that he was simply passing on rumors spread among the inmate population.

To the gas chambers with collapsible floors can be added the fantasies already mentioned in chapter 3: the "thick dark substance [...] spiraling out from the vents in the ceiling," suffocating the people inside the gas chamber, as mentioned by the leader of the October 14, 1943 uprising, Alexander Pechersky; and the "baths" described by Leon Feldhendler, Zeld Metz, and Salomea Hanel, where chlorine was used to kill the victims.

But where, we may ask, did the inmates' "knowledge" of the gas chambers originate, if, as Arad puts it, "nothing could be seen" from the outside, and the prisoners in camp III "had no contact with those in the other parts of the camp"?¹⁶⁵

Many of the eyewitnesses assert that the camp staff made substantial efforts to conceal the alleged true nature of the camp. According to Eda

¹⁶¹ Cf. chapter 3, p. 69, 69, 72.

¹⁶² Cf. chapter 3, p. 71; already quoted in C. Mattoigno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), p. 10.

¹⁶³ Cf. chapter 3, p. 70; declaration by Ursula Stern; Documentation of the "Joods Recherche-werk," April 11, 1945. SOBIBÓR. ROD, C [23.62]09, Verklaring 72, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Engel "was under the impression that the bodies fell through trapdoors inside the chambers"; J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 68.

¹⁶⁵ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 79.

(Ada) Lichtman, the SS kept up the transit camp “deception” even in front of the inmates:¹⁶⁶

“The camp commander [...] described the happiness awaiting those who left for the Ukraine. ‘Life conditions and food are much better there than here... Certificates will be given to good workers, families will be united.’ We were not allowed to express the slightest doubt.”

In a long interview made by Claude Lanzmann, Lichtman insisted that this alleged charade went on for the camp’s entire period of operation:¹⁶⁷

“They always thought that we did not know what was going on there. For example, there was an Oberscharfuehrer Stangl. [...] And Stangl came and stood next to the window, here, at the shoemakers’ [where Ada’s future husband worked], and always said: Oh, all of those you see here go through the... they change clothes, wash, put on clothes and go to the Ukraine. And you, once you finished your work, will get special certificates that you worked well, so that you will get good jobs there. And they are going today...”

Dov Freiberg, a.k.a. Ber Moiseyevich Freiberg, arrived with one of the first transports in early May 1942. In 1987 Freiberg published a bulky autobiography in Hebrew, which was later translated into English as *To Survive Sobibór*. In it we read:¹⁶⁸

“For some days we had hoped that they were still alive; we were still unable to fathom that we were actually in an extermination camp. Prisoners working in the forest said that they had heard the voices of people and children crying from within the forest, which we interpreted as evidence that they were still alive; only after some time did we understand that these were voices of people burying corpses...”

According to Arad, Freiberg and his fellow inmates worked for two weeks only a few hundred meters away from the gas chambers without

¹⁶⁶ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 56. The witness Chaim Engel likewise claims that the Germans believed the detainees to be unaware of the (alleged) mass murder; Joshua M. Greene, Shiva Kumar (eds.), *Witness. Voices from the Holocaust*, Simon & Shuster, New York 2000, p. 154.

¹⁶⁷ Transcript of interview with Ada Lichtman, *Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive at USHMM* (online: http://resources.ushmm.org/intermedia/film_video/spielberg_archive/transcript/RG60_5023/9D60DA93-2C5D-43A6-8365-A6F9AB822687.pdf), p. 39.

¹⁶⁸ D. Freiberg, *op. cit.* (note 68), p. 529.

realizing their existence.¹⁶⁹ One will, however, search through Freiberg's accounts in vain for an explanation of how exactly he and the other inmates came to this "understanding."

Freiberg stated in his Eichmann trial testimony that at the time he arrived in the camp "rumours were already circulating, but the people did not believe them," and that instead they were convinced that the deportees were sent "to the Ukraine for agricultural work." As can be expected, Freiberg portrayed this as a ruse:¹⁷⁰

"They said that in two or three weeks' time we would be reunited with our families. But we saw their personal effects, the following morning we were working with them. They [the SS] maintained that they distributed other clothes and that from Camp No. 3 trains were departing to the Ukraine."

What Freiberg withheld from the court was the fact that he himself had seen SS men distributing clothes¹⁷¹ to detainees that supposedly were to be sent to the gas chambers. In an interview by Japanese journalist Aiko Sawada from 1999, Freiberg stated:¹⁷²

"Another time some people received new clothes and were sent to the shower room. 'You will work for us in German factories, but first you are going to take a shower,' the German soldiers told them. Up to then they had been strict, but now they suddenly became friendly as they handed them clothes and told them that they could use the showers. I thought it very suspicious."

Ada (Eda) Lichtman, who arrived at Sobibór in the middle of June 1942,¹⁷³ has made conflicting statements regarding when and how the inmates found out about the mass murder. In one version, an inmate working on top of a roof in camp II observed dead people in camp III that were being buried. The man became mute from shock but his

¹⁶⁹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 79.

¹⁷⁰ State of Israel, *op. cit.* (note 137), vol. III, p. 1168.

¹⁷¹ In a video-taped interview the witness Chaim Engel claims that prisoners from camp III "came sometimes over to our Lager [camp II, where Engel worked in the sorting barracks] to bring the clothes or bring things like that." Why would clothes have been brought to camp III? There are really only two possible answers: either the clothes were for the camp III inmates themselves, something which would seem overly considerate on the part of the SS (not to say impractical and, given the alleged secrecy surrounding camp III, careless), or they were picked up to be disinfested and then distributed to newly deloused deportees; J. M. Greene, S. Kumar (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 166), p. 154.

¹⁷² Aiko Sawada, *Yoru no Kioku - Nihonjin ga kiita Horokōsuto seikansha no shōgen* (Memories of the night – Holocaust survivor testimonies told to a Japanese), Sōgensha, Osaka 2005, p. 303.

¹⁷³ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 236.

brother somehow conveyed his story to the other Jews.¹⁷⁴ This took place either “a couple of days”¹⁷⁴ after Ada’s arrival, or after “many days.”¹⁷⁵ According to the other version:¹⁷⁶

“[The Germans believed that] *we did not know what was going on here. And we had to pretend and act the role that we do not know. [...] at the beginning I really didn’t know. But then I knew very well, because one day while we were lined up in appell [roll-call], we saw a fire, as big as the wall of a huge house, fire. And one felt the [...] smell of burn... of burnt corpses. And we know[sic] it.*”

As will be seen from our discussion of the beginning of cremations at Sobibór in the next chapter, this implies that it took the inmates three to four months before they realized that they were in a death camp!

Historian Arad contradicts both of Lichtman’s versions, stating that “the truth of what was going on in camp III became known to the Jewish prisoners in Sobibór at the beginning of June 1942,” that is, more than a month after the camp began operating.¹⁷⁷ According to Arad this revelation came about thanks to the cunning inmate cook Hersh Zuckerman (also spelled Cuckierman):¹⁷⁸

“I came up with an idea. Every day I used to send twenty or twenty-five buckets with food for the workers in Camp III.^[179] The Germans were not interested in what I cooked, so once I prepared a thick crumb pie and inside I put the following letter: ‘Friends, write what is going on in your camp.’ When I received the buckets back, I found in one of them a piece of paper with the answer: ‘Here the last human march takes place, from this place nobody returns. Here the people turn cold...’ I informed some other people about the substance of this letter.”

¹⁷⁴ A. Lichtman, *op. cit.* (note 167), p. 24.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁷⁷ In the account published by Novitch, Zuckerman writes that it took him ten weeks to find out about the gas chambers (cf. chapter I). According to Schelvis (*op. cit.* (note 71), p. 232), Zuckerman (here spelled Cuckierman) was deported with another 2,500 Jews from Nalenczow in May 1942. Thus the inmates in camp I and II would have “learned” of the alleged gas chambers at the earliest in mid-July, not at the beginning of June.

¹⁷⁸ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 79.

¹⁷⁹ Regarding the number of detainees in camp III several widely divergent estimates are given. In his Eichmann trial testimony Ya’acov Biskovitz gave their number as 80. Thomas Blatt estimates their number to a mere 30 men (*op. cit.* (note 65), p. 232). According to Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 79, on the other hand they numbered 200-300. Witness Chaim Engel states that “about fifty, sixty Jews” worked in camp III; J. M. Greene, S. Kumar (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 166), p. 154.

In the Zukerman account found in the Novitch anthology the skilled cook turns the thick crumb pie into a “dumpling,” and instead of the theatrical reply we get the curt “You shouldn’t have asked. People are being gassed, and we must bury them.”¹⁸⁰ Leon Feldhendler, elsewhere described as the leader of the camp underground,¹⁸¹ and a certain Shlomo Goldstein are here revealed as the people to whom Zukerman confided the “substance” of the message. *Nota bene*: he did not show them the actual letter.

Zukerman was not alone in supposedly receiving messages smuggled out from camp III. At the Eichmann trial Dov Freiberg affirmed that the inmates “had contact with Camp 3.” In his 1987 book, however, he omitted to mention this. The above-mentioned Moshe Bahir tells us of letters even more remarkable than the one mentioned by Zukerman:¹⁸²

“Sometimes we would find notes stuck to the sides of the empty buckets that were brought back from the gate. In these notes the men who worked at burning the bodies described what went on in Lager No. 3. One note told of a bloodstain which could not, by any means, be cleaned or scraped from the floor of the gas chamber. Finally, experts came and determined that the stain had been absorbed into the chamber’s floorboards after a group of pregnant women had been poisoned and one of them had given birth while the gas was streaming into the chamber. The poison gas had mingled with the mother’s blood and had created the indelible stain. Another note said that, one day, the workers were ordered to replace a few floorboards because several fragments of ears, cheeks and hands had become embedded in them.”

Thanks to these letters the inmates in the other parts of the camp “all knew what was done” in camp III despite the fact that, as noted by Bahir himself, “it was impossible [...] to see what was going on in that Lager”!¹⁸³ Bahir’s description of the gas chambers¹⁸⁴ bears a strong resemblance to that of Biskovitz, with Erich Bauer portrayed as looking down into the gas chamber (in singular) through a “window,” regulating

¹⁸⁰ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 107.

¹⁸¹ “The leading figure in the circle of those with ideas for resistance was Leon Feldhendler [...] a former head of the *Judenrat* in the Żońkiewka ghetto”; Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 299.

¹⁸² M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 148.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. chapter 3, p. 72.

the amount of “death-gas” showered on the victims, and starting, once all inside were dead, the machinery opening the gas chamber floor, thereby making corpses fall into “small carts” transporting them to the mass graves.

Why would the inmates in camp III have misinformed Bahir and the other Jews in camp I and II about the appearance and functioning of the gas chambers?

Another recipient of smuggled-out letters was the young Stanisław Szmajzner who migrated to Brazil after the war, where he published an account of Sobibór in Portuguese and also appeared as a witness in the extradition trials against Franz Stangl and Gustav Wagner. Szmajzner claims that a friend of his working in camp III named Abrão (Abraham) bribed the Ukrainian guard Klat to deliver messages for him. One of them describes the killing process in detail, with the victims being murdered with exhaust gas from “a large Diesel engine.”¹⁸⁵ While the victims are gassed, dragged out from the chambers and thrown into “immense ditches,” the SS “monsters” are “delirious with happiness, as if they were at the opera.”¹⁸⁶

Abrão provided his friend with the following information in a later letter:¹⁸⁷

“The manner through which the Jews were exterminated – asphyxiated by the combustion gases of a Diesel engine – had been abolished. They had also modified the bathroom-slaughterhouse and they had closed the hole in the wall through which went the exhaust-pipe of the motor which had been taken away. Besides, they had installed a moveable skylight^[188] in the ceiling of the death shed. As they did not think one ‘bathroom’ was enough, the Nazis had erected another, which already obeyed the above-mentioned specifications. [...] Abraham went on to explain that, to direct the massacre, a chief of operations had already been appointed, the cruel Bauer. His main activities were those of checking, through the skylight, the exact moment when the shed was filled to saturation. At that moment he issued an order, and the door was hermetically closed. Next he opened the skylight, threw a can of gas on the compact mass of condemned people, and closed it again. The gas was the deadly Zyklon

¹⁸⁵ Cf. chapter 2.3.5.

¹⁸⁶ S. Szmajzner, *op. cit.* (note 31), pp. 152f.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 190f.

¹⁸⁸ Evidently meaning a skylight that can be opened.

B, conceived in laboratories in Germany with the only aim of answering to a demand from the genocidal murderers to discover a product which would kill more quickly."

This means that the camp now had two gassing installations, both of them containing a single gas chamber into which Zyklon B was dropped through a "moveable skylight." The problematic nature of this account is obvious. Not only the number of buildings and individual gas chambers, but also the alleged murder weapon clashes violently with the established historiography, which has it that Kurt Gerstein's supposed mission to replace the engine exhaust gas used as killing agent with hydrogen cyanide "did not bring about any changes in the gassing system in the Operation Reinhard death camps."¹⁸⁹

The presence in the witness accounts of the communications discussed above poses an important question regarding the veracity of the testimonies: If the mass gassing allegation is indeed true, why are the contents of the supposed letters from camp III either inconsistent with the official narrative as established at the Sobibór trials or plainly absurd? It may be worth noting in this context that Jules Schelvis, in the most complete historiographic work to date on the Sobibór camp, does not devote a single word to these letters.

4.2. Alexander Pechersky, the Main Witness

Alexander Aronovitch Pechersky (1909 – 1990), the leader of the successful uprising in Sobibór, is one of the stars of the history of the "Holocaust." He is the protagonist of a number of movies about the uprising, among which we have Jack Gold's *Escape from Sobibór* (1987) and Claude Lanzmann's *Sobibór, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures* (2001).

Alexander Pechersky was drafted into the Red Army in June 1941 as a sergeant and was promoted to lieutenant in September of the same year. A month later he was taken prisoner by the Germans. After a failed attempt to escape he was deported to Borisov in May 1942 and then to a work camp at Minsk. On 18 September 1943 he was loaded onto a train together with all other Jews held at that camp. On 23 September he arrived at Sobibór, where he remained until the uprising on

¹⁸⁹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 104.

14 October. The Jews who succeeded to escape split into various groups. On 22 October Pechersky's group encountered a unit of Soviet underground fighters and decided to join them.

An investigation into Pechersky's fate after that date yields the most astonishing contradictions. The Russian edition of *Wikipedia* tells us:¹⁹⁰

“After the liberation of Byelorussia,^[191] Pechersky was suspected of treason and assigned to a disciplinary battalion. The commander of that battalion, Major Andreyev, was so moved by Pechersky's account that, in spite of the prohibition to leave the territory of the unit, he allowed Pechersky to travel to Moscow and to depose before the commission investigating the misdeeds of the German-Fascist intruders and their helpers. Being members of the commission, the writers Pawel Antokolskij and Wenjamin Kawerin heard Pechersky's account. On that basis they published an article entitled Wosstanje w Sobibore (Uprising at Sobibór).^[192] After the war, this text was incorporated into the famous collection The Black Book. [...] In 1948, during the course of the political persecution of so-called ‘unpatriotic cosmopolites,’ he lost his job. For the following five years he could not find employment and depended on the support of his wife.”

However, in a conversation with another Sobibór detainee, Thomas (Toivi) Blatt, which took place in 1979 according to T. Blatt¹⁹³ and in 1980 according to the English edition of *Wikipedia*,¹⁹⁴ Pechersky says nothing about the disciplinary battalion. Instead he maintains that he suffered a serious wound in his leg during action in August of 1944 and was awarded a medal for bravery on that occasion.¹⁹⁵ He was, however, not able to enjoy this for any length of time, because, as he tells us:¹⁹⁶

“I was thrown into prison for many years. I was considered a traitor because I had surrendered to the Germans, even as a wounded soldier. After people from abroad kept inquiring about me, I was finally released.”

¹⁹⁰ http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Печерский,_Александр_Аронович

¹⁹¹ The northwestern part of the Soviet Union south of the Baltic states is referred to at times as White Russia (literal translation into English), Byelorussia (Russian name), Byelorussian SSR (political unit of the USSR), or Belarus (today's name of the independent country).

¹⁹² A footnote informs us that this article appeared in No. 4/1945 of the magazine *Znamya*.

¹⁹³ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 121.

¹⁹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Pechersky

¹⁹⁵ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 123.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

The assertion that Pechersky was treated as a traitor because of his capture by the Germans also figures in the French edition of *Wikipedia*, which, moreover, wrongly states that Pechersky appeared as a witness at Nuremberg.¹⁹⁷

The story of Pechersky's "many years" of incarceration does not stand up to critical scrutiny. If his capture by the Germans had been considered to constitute treason, he would obviously have been judged and incarcerated immediately after he rejoined the Red Army. It is absolutely incredible that he would have been given a medal for being wounded, would have been allowed to testify before a commission, would have been permitted, in 1946, to publish an account of Sobibór, only to be then imprisoned "for many years" for having surrendered to the Germans in 1941.

In contrast to Pechersky himself, the English entry on *Wikipedia* gives precise dates for the time of his alleged imprisonment:¹⁹⁴

"During Stalin's political witch hunts of 1948 Pechersky was fired from his job and imprisoned along with his brother. Only after Stalin's death in 1953 and mounting international pressure for his release was he freed."

This wording suggests that Pechersky was jailed because of alleged anti-Soviet activities as part of the campaign against "cosmopolitanism," which began at that time, but it contradicts Pechersky's own presentation. Moreover, the German edition of *Wikipedia* states unmistakably:¹⁹⁸

"He [Pechersky] entertained a correspondence with many survivors of the camp who lived in the West. In 1948 these letters led to his dismissal [from his post as a music teacher] because of 'relations with imperialist states.' He was not arrested, but could not exercise his profession for five years, having to restrict himself to occasional jobs."

In her article on Sobibór published in 2008, which discusses Pechersky in some detail, Barbara Distel, too, makes no mention of his imprisonment by the Soviet authorities for any reason. She merely states that life was "difficult" for the former participants in the uprising once they had returned to the USSR.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Petcherski

¹⁹⁸ http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Petscherski

¹⁹⁹ B. Distel, *op. cit.* (note 69), p. 402.

We thus arrive at the inescapable conclusion that Pechersky invented the story of his “many years” of incarceration in the Soviet Union in order to decorate himself with the halo of a double martyr who not only survived a “Nazi death camp” but also Stalin’s dungeons. This in itself is enough to make him a con-man, and we have reason enough to be very suspicious of his Sobibór tales as well.

The Russian *Wikipedia* entry on Pechersky tells us that the magazine *Znamya* published the article entitled “Wosstanie w Sobibore” (Uprising at Sobibór) by the writers P. Antokolskij and W. Kawerin in its 4/1945 issue. The article is based on Pechersky’s deposition before the “commission investigating the misdeeds of the German-Fascist intruders and their helpers.” Pechersky’s account was presented in the third person. The famous propaganda writers Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman included the article in the manuscript of their *Black Book*, which, however, could never be published in the USSR because the censor’s office had seized and destroyed the printing plates just prior to the date of the planned publication of the book. It was only in 1980 that a Russian language edition of the *Black Book* was published in Israel.²⁰⁰ A year later an English translation appeared in New York.²⁰¹

In 1946 a version of Pechersky’s account, four times as long and written in the first person, was published by the Moscow publishing house Der Emes in Yiddish under the title *Der Uifstand in Sobibór*. Pechersky, although of Jewish origin, did not speak Yiddish, and so his Russian report was translated into the Yiddish language by a certain N. Lurie. *Der Uifstand in Sobibór* was translated into English in 1967.¹²³

A comparison of the latter two versions of Pechersky’s account shows that their contents are essentially identical. Two differences are worth being mentioned:

- According to the former version, later integrated into the *Black Book*, a train with 2,000 future victims arrived at Sobibór “nearly every day,”²⁰² whereas the trains of death, according to the 1946 version, operated only every other day.²⁰³
- In the first version, Sobibór is said to have existed for one year at the time of Pechersky’s arrival, with a total of 500,000 victims.²⁰⁴ Ac-

²⁰⁰ Source: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilja_Grigorjewitsch_Ehrenburg

²⁰¹ I. Ehrenburg, V. Grossman, *op. cit.* (note 95), the paper by P. Antokolskij and W. Kawerin, “Revolt in Sobibór,” is on pp. 427-445.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 443.

²⁰³ A. Pechersky, *op. cit.* (note 123), p. 19.

²⁰⁴ I. Ehrenburg, V. Grossman, *op. cit.* (note 95), p. 443.

ording to the second version, the camp had been in existence for a year and half by September 1943; no total number is given for the victims, but if there was a trainload of victims every other day and if they were killed on arrival with only a handful of exceptions, then the number of those killed must have amounted to some 550,000 persons.

For the following analysis we will use as a basis the (long) 1967 English version “Revolt in Sobibór.”

Pechersky’s report is full of outrageous lies. He starts out by saying that he and his fellow deportees, during their train ride of four and a half days from Minsk to Sobibór in a hopelessly overcrowded car (p. 18), “were not given any food, not even a drink of water.” Under such circumstances the better part of the deportees would have died of thirst on the way, but Pechersky does not mention a single death – even “two-year-old Nellie” had survived, although she would be killed on the spot as soon as she arrived at Sobibór (p. 21). As the Germans immediately selected a portion of the new arrivals – Pechersky among them – for work in the carpentry shop, it would obviously have been totally counter-productive for them to save a few buckets of water in exchange for the loss of valuable hands. On the other hand, if the death of the detainees had been their objective, they could simply have left them in the overcrowded cars without any water for a little longer. In that case all they would have had to do was to bury the corpses; no “extermination installations” would have been needed.

Right after his arrival Pechersky learns from “a short stocky Jew” that a mass annihilation of human beings is going on at Sobibór:

“I noticed, to the northwest of us, gray columns of smoke rising and disappearing in the distance. The air was full of the sharp smell of something smoldering.

‘What’s burning there’ I asked.

‘Don’t look in that direction,’ the Jew replied, ‘your comrades’ bodies are burning there, the ones who arrived together with you.’

I almost fainted. He continued: ‘You are not the first and not the last. Every other day, a transport of 2,000 arrives here, and the camp has been in existence for nearly a year and a half.’” (p. 19)

Hence, even as late as September 1943, 2,000 Jews were murdered at Sobibór every other day (=1,000 per day). On the following pages Pechersky goes on to mention the arrival of new transports of victims.

Looking at the matter from the point of view of the official version of Sobibór, we have here a blatant anachronism:

According to Jules Schelvis, there were six, possibly eight transports to Sobibór from the Soviet territories then occupied by the Germans, with Pechersky's being number two; the first one had left Minsk on 15 September.²⁰⁵ Apart from these Soviet Jews, Jews from Holland, France, the General Government, as well as from the city of Skopje were taken to Sobibór in 1943.²⁰⁶ The last transport from Holland departed on 20 July 1943,²⁰⁶ the last one from France on 25 March 1943,²⁰⁷ and the only one from Skopje on 30/31 March 1943.²⁰⁸ Deportations from the General Government ended in June of 1943.²⁰⁹ In other words, between 21 July and 14 September not a single transport reached Sobibór. This fits in very well with the fact that Himmler had decreed on 5 July that the "Sobibór transit camp [...] is to be converted into a concentration camp."²¹⁰

What, then, was the origin of the victims mentioned by Pechersky's anonymous witness, those victims of whom "every other day, a transport of 2,000" had been arriving until 23 September?

If we follow Pechersky, we learn that, according to his informer, the mass murder was not carried out with engine exhaust gases at all, but by means of a "thick dark substance" which came down spiraling from the holes in the roof of the death chamber.²¹¹ There are more absurdities which the Jewish Soviet officer asks his readers to believe:

Whenever people in camp III are led to the death chamber, which is disguised as a "bath," three hundred geese that were kept in the yard "were chased around so that their honking would drown out the shrieks of the people" (p. 25).

Pechersky learns from his friend Ber Feinberg, a Warsaw hairdresser, that formerly a train of ten cars filled "with clothing, shoes and sacks of women's hair" left Sobibór every day for Germany (p. 27).

Pechersky befriends an eighteen-year-old German Jewess named Luka who emigrated to Holland in the 1930s together with her parents. Even though she speaks only German and Dutch and he only Russian,

²⁰⁵ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 218-220.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 226 (note 5).

²⁰⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 72), p. 263.

²¹⁰ Cf. chapter 2, p. 21.

²¹¹ Cf. chapter 3, p. 69.

they have extensive conversations in private. Luka tells him that she works in the yard. Through the cracks in a wooden fence “one can see the naked men, women, and children as they are led to camp III” (p. 32). Luka also admits to Pechersky that, when she was eight years old, she was tortured by the German police who wanted to know the hiding place of her father, a communist, who was being sought. However, she did not succumb to the torture and did not squeal (p. 36).

After their escape from Sobibór, Pechersky and his companions stop somewhere to the west of the Bug River near a farm. There they learn that the Germans in that region have set up a camp “where people were turned into soap” (p. 55). The tale of human soap has long since been abandoned by official historiography, but in the post war years it was a set piece of anti-German horror stories.

The most enlightening passages of Pechersky’s report, however, are those dealing with the 14 October uprising itself. In order to understand the situation, we must remember the following: Pechersky tells us that, while he was at Sobibór, the camp held 600 (male and female) Jewish detainees (p. 29). They all are claimed to know that the Germans have already killed hundreds of thousands of their brethren. Every day they are being manhandled and ill-treated (24 September “passed more or less ‘smoothly.’ Only fifteen of us received twenty-five lashes with the whip, each for not displaying enough zeal in our work,” p. 22). Each one of these Jews is fully aware of the fact that upon the dissolution of the camp he will be eliminated as an undesirable witness. Under these circumstances the detainees have nothing to lose, and the Germans must reckon any day with an attempt at an uprising, all the more so as the Jews are far from being defenseless: during the preparation of the revolt Pechersky advises Baruch, his co-conspirator, that he ought to “gather about seventy sharp knives and razors,” (p. 34) and at the carpentry shop the workers have hatchets at their disposal.

A mere handful of SS men were facing these desperate Jews who were boiling with rage and with the desire to take their revenge and who were, at least in part, armed with knives and hatchets. While the SS have some helpers (Pechersky wrongly calls these guards “kapos”²¹²),

²¹² The “kapos” were recruited from among the detainees. As the Sobibór detainees were all Jewish, so were the kapos, obviously. Y. Arad writes: “In charge of each team was a capo, who was one of the prisoners. [...] In Sobibór, the camp elder, who was called ‘chief kapo,’ was Moshe Sturm, nicknamed ‘The Governor.’” (Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 107). The Ukrainian and other guards from Eastern Europe who served at Sobibór and in other camps are generally labeled “Trawniki men” in the literature. According to the *En-*

they cannot rely on them in any way. “We have privileges, but when the time comes to liquidate the camp, we’ll find ourselves standing next to you. They will kill us too. That is clear,” the Polish “kapo” Brzecki allegedly tells Pechersky (p. 38).²¹³ In other words, the guards can join the Jews at any time against the SS guards. Under those circumstances one would assume that the SS would be at high alert all the time – but that is the very thing that does not occur, according to Pechersky. Pechersky explains to his men:

“My plan is as follows: first we must do away with the officer group that administers the camp. Naturally one by one, and without the slightest sound.” (p. 41)

That is exactly what happens:

“Unterscharführer Ernst Berg rode up to the tailor’s shop, as was arranged beforehand, dismounted from his horse and left it standing with the reins hanging down. From what I learned later, this is what happened inside: When the Unterscharführer entered, everybody rose as usual. Shubayev (Kalimali) walked over to the edge of the table. In the corner, near one of the table’s legs, lay a hatchet wrapped in a shirt. The Unterscharführer removed his belt together with his holster and pistol and laid them on the table. Then he took off his jacket. Juzef, the tailor, immediately came over with the uniform and began to take the fitting. Senie moved up to the table to be able, if necessary, to grab the pistol. Juzef turned the German around with his back to Shubayev, explaining that he did so in order to get a better light on the uniform. At that moment, Shubayev clouted the Hitlerite on the head with the flat side of the hatchet. He let out a frightful scream. Outside, the horse quivered and pricked up its ears. The second blow silenced the Hitlerite for good. [...] Ten minutes later, the chief of the guards, Oberscharführer Erbert Helm, entered the tailor shop. He never came out again. He was waylaid by Senie as soon as he crossed the threshold. At exactly four o’clock, as had been arranged beforehand, Oberscharführer Goettinger, the chief of camp III, entered the shoemakers’ shop. Arkady Vaispapier was repairing a stool. Grisha was standing near the door. The chief executioner was in a happy mood. ‘The sun is shining, it is warm,

zyklopädie des Holocaust (op. cit. (note 15), p. 1330), there were “between 90 and 120 Trawniki men” at Sobibór.

²¹³ The literature about Sobibór does not mention the presence of Polish guards at that camp. In his report Pechersky apparently replaced *Ukrainian* guards by *Polish* ones in order to conceal the fact that certain Soviet citizens had voluntarily cooperated with the Germans.

good,' he babbled on. 'Are my boots ready?' 'Here, please,' Jakob said, handing him the boots, 'try them on.' 'Hey, you, Jakob,' the Oberscharführer went on, 'five days from now, I will be going to Germany. You must make a pair of slippers for my Frau. Remember that.' 'I hope your Frau will be satisfied,' Jakob replied. At this moment, Arkady brought the hatchet down on his head. [...] At four thirty, Brzecki and his group returned from the Nord-Camp. Just then, Unterscharführer Haulstich appeared in the yard. Shloime ran up to him.

'Unterscharführer,' he said, 'I don't know how to continue with the dug-outs. The people are standing around doing nothing.' The Unterscharführer started walking towards the barracks. [...] In the meantime, the Unterscharführer was taken care of inside. Shloime himself had finished him off." (pp. 45 – 49)

Is this report believable? Our answer is: Yes, absolutely so; it is the only believable part of Pechersky's account.

From German documents we know that the uprising was successful. Eleven SS guards and two non-German helpers were killed and 300 Jews managed to escape. This was possible only if the SS neglected to take even the most elementary precautions, because it did not even consider the possibility of an uprising. If, however, Sobibór was an extermination camp where a horrifying number of Jews had been murdered, where the Jewish workforce were facing death at any time and were whipped all along, one would have had to reckon permanently with a revolt. Thus, the absolutely hare-brained behavior of the SS who practically asked to be killed, as Pechersky describes it, proves that Sobibór was, instead, a camp where conditions may have been tough, but where the lives of the detainees were not in constant danger and where they were not continually ill-treated. Thus, the only credible portion of Pechersky's account belies the legend of "Sobibór, the extermination camp." It takes but a minimum of common sense to recognize this.

We come to the same conclusion when we look at Miriam Novitch's book, in which Pechersky gives us a condensed version of his 1946 report: He tells us that the guards, at tattoo every night, had to hand in the clip of five cartridges which came with the rifle each of them had been issued²¹⁴ – but in a real extermination camp the camp administration

²¹⁴ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 95.

would have made sure that all guards remained armed to the teeth 24 hours a day.

We wish to add that, according to a deposition made by the former police captain Erich Wullbrandt in Braunschweig in 1961, some of the Jews who had escaped returned *voluntarily* to the camp on the night of the uprising.²¹⁵ If this is true – and we see no reason why it should not be – we would have here a further proof of our assessment.

4.3. “The Most Conclusive Evidence”

In a note to his 1997 book *From the Ashes of Sobibór*, Thomas Toivi Blatt, the key witness of the German Demjanjuk trial, makes the following admission:²¹⁶

“The most conclusive evidence that something murderous was taking place in Lager III was the fact that no-one ever came out alive, but such evidence was purely circumstantial. The Nazis made it difficult to collect any direct evidence of what was widely known throughout the camp.”

As will be shown below, this “evidence” is not only “purely circumstantial,” but also fundamentally flawed.

Let us for the sake of argument assume that the alleged mass killings really took place. What, then, would the inmates working outside of camp III have been able to observe of the extermination process? Schelvis gives us the following answer:²¹⁷

“They would have heard the agonizing cries and screams of the victims; they also caught glimpses, through holes in the fence, of naked people going through the ‘tube.’ Then there was the stench of decomposing bodies, and later still the tall flames of the fires, all of which pointed to the fact that people were being murdered there.”

To this can be added the supply of vast amounts of firewood for the cremations, the cutting of the hair of the female victims, the noise coming from the gassing engine, and the fact, mentioned by Blatt, that “no-one ever came out alive” from camp III. But do these observations really point unequivocally to the “fact” of mass gassings? Are all of them even reliable?

²¹⁵ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 176, 193 (note 9).

²¹⁶ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 65), p. 232, note 7.

²¹⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 68.

Let us begin with the “agonizing cries and screams.” Needless to say, such sounds do not prove murder, only the expression of fear, and may have come from people who merely *believed* that they were about to be gassed. This sort of reaction was observed by an American in the liberated Belsen camp in 1945.²¹⁸

“An American relief worker who had not worked at Belsen could not understand why ‘it was difficult to get many of these people to take a steam bath voluntarily.’ Many of the women especially, Marvin Klemme noted, ‘would let out such screams as they were led into the place, or as the steam was turned on, that one would have thought that they were entering a slaughterhouse.’ Eventually, ‘a Jewish doctor explained that some of this fear resulted from a subconscious feeling that they were about to enter some kind of torture chamber.”

Eye witnesses and mainstream Holocaust historians both assert that the screams soon ceased because the victims were suffocated, but would not likewise the screamers have fallen silent (at least to the degree that they could not be heard from a certain distance), if they suddenly discovered that they were not in a “death chamber” but rather in an ordinary bath? Here we may also recall Freiberg’s statement that “voices of people and children crying” were heard by some inmates “from within the forest” and were interpreted as evidence that the deportees were still alive, until Freiberg and his fellow inmates somehow realized that they were the voices of the men in the burial detail. But could the voices of adult males really be mistaken for children’s cries?

The cutting of women’s hair, rather than indicating mass killings, in fact works against the official hypothesis. Or are we to believe that the SS deliberately created a bottleneck in the extermination process just so that they could collect around 100 kg of hair per transport,²¹⁹ corresponding in value to only a minute fraction of the money, gold and other valuables confiscated from the deportees? Indeed, the haircutting only makes sense as part of a delousing operation. Likewise, the undressing of people does not imply murder.

What about the noise from the supposed gassing engine? As seen above, the earliest eyewitness accounts asserted that the alleged victims

²¹⁸ Ben Shephard, *After Daybreak. The Liberation of Bergen-Belsen 1945*, Schocken Books, New York 2005, p. 148.

²¹⁹ Cf. *Treblinka Flyer Sources*, Note 7; online: www.holocaustdenialvideos.com/treblinkasources.html

were killed using chlorine (Feldhendler, Metz, Hanel) or an unidentified gas or substance (Pechersky, Freiberg's 1944 account). This can only mean that those witnesses *did not* connect the alleged gassings with the sound of an engine.²²⁰

The railroad employee Jan Piwonski, when interviewed by Claude Lanzmann in the 1970s, stated that he had clearly heard the sound of a diesel motor from inside the camp.²²¹ Diesel engines, especially those of an older type, produce a characteristic knocking sound which makes them distinguishable from petrol engines.²²² As already mentioned, the exhaust gas from diesel engines is not feasible as a weapon for mass murder.

In his book Freiberg recalls the acoustic impressions of his first night in Sobibór thus:²²³

“We sat on the sand, under the roof, waiting for the unknown. No more children crying, no more women sighing. Complete silence, as if no one was there. We heard only the hum of a motor that operated nonstop, accompanied by the croak of frogs, a sound that was somehow both monotonous and terrifying.”

Interestingly, later in the book Freiberg describes how, while being led to the haircutting barrack near camp III where he and other inmates were to work, “only the monotonous hum of the generator and the sound of the crickets could be heard.”²²⁴ Curiously, the former SS Hubert Gomerski testified that the camp only had one generator,²²⁵ which was located in camp I, i.e. the other end of the camp, but he also mentioned that “in the gas chamber there was a light, which was powered by the [gassing] engine,”²²⁶ a statement which means that there indeed was a generator located in camp III. Treblinka eyewitness Jankiel Wiernik speaks of a “power plant” located alongside the gas chambers in that camp, housing “a motor taken from a dismantled Soviet tank” which, besides acting as the killing agent, supplied the camp with elec-

²²⁰ Many years after the war Ada Lichtman insisted that she had not heard the sound of an engine; A. Lichtman, *op. cit.* (note 167), p. 24.

²²¹ Transcript of the Shoah Interview with Jan Piwonski. Translation by Erica Booth, Volunteer-Visitor Services, May 2008, available at http://resources.ushmm.org/intermedia/film_video/spielberg_archive/transcript/RG60_5031/2ED4B8F9-C263-4A75-AD79-9C05BB0D486C.pdf

²²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diesel_engine

²²³ D. Freiberg, *op. cit.* (note 68), p. 190.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

²²⁵ According to Blatt, Sobibór was equipped with “an excellent lighting system in and around the camp which had an independent generator”; T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 14.

²²⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 113.

tricity.²²⁷ It is thus fully possible that inmates heard the sound from an engine used to generate electricity (or possibly a water pump engine) and then ascribed to it a false, homicidal origin.²²⁸

Observations of flames likewise do not prove mass killings. As will be further discussed in the next chapter, a certain percentage of the deportees died either in the camp or on their way to it. It is likely that sooner or later their corpses were burned for hygienic reasons.

While mainstream Holocaust historians have it that the cremation of victims at Sobibór began in early autumn 1942,²²⁹ there are witnesses contradicting this, such as Moshe Bahir, who describes his arrival at the camp as follows:²³⁰

“Behind the fence were huge piles of bundles and various personal belongings, flames of fire and pillars of smoke which arose from within the camp and, with their flickering light, tried to brighten the evening twilight, and, above all, the smell of charred flesh which filled the air.”

The witness claims to have arrived to Sobibór on April 20, 1942,²³¹ just a few days after the camp opened, and would therefore have been unable to observe either flames from cremation pyres or huge piles of personal belongings. Freiberg, who arrived some weeks later, writes on the other hand that Sobibór “looked like a big farm where everything appeared normal.”²³²

As will be further discussed in the next chapter, the cremation of hundreds of thousands of corpses on pyres would have required vast amounts of firewood. However, most eyewitnesses appear completely unaware of such a fuel supply. There is even confusion as to what kind of fuel was used. The witness Kurt Thomas (alias Kurt Ticho) testified

²²⁷ C. Mattoigno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 70-73.

²²⁸ One should recall here that, although situated adjacent to Sobibór station, the distance from the camp site to the actual village of Sobibór was about 4 kilometers. The nearest village, Żłobek, was located 3 kilometers to the west. Moreover, the area containing the camp site, the station, and a saw mill was situated in the middle of a forest. It is therefore possible that the camp was not linked to a power station, or, if it was, the capacity of the line may well have been too low for the needs of the camp. It is further unlikely that the camp was connected to a local water supply system.

²²⁹ Cf. chapter 4.

²³⁰ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 143.

²³¹ Bahir’s testimony from the Eichmann trial on the other hand states that he arrived even earlier, on March 20, 1942 (State of Israel, *op. cit.* (note 137), session 65). Bahir is clearly not confused about the year, as he gives an account of Himmler’s visit at “the end of July” (actually August 15), 1942.

²³² M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 73.

that the corpses were burnt “with the help of firebombs, wood, and coal.”²³³ In another account, published in Novitch’s anthology, Thomas mentions only coal as fuel.²³⁴

Many of the witnesses describe a stench supposedly emanating from decomposing corpses. It is a well known fact among police and people working in the field of forensics that the odor of putrefying corpses, which appears during the bloat stage of decomposition and is caused by the release of gases such as hydrogen sulfide and mercaptans (which, in turn, are the final products of bacterial metabolism) is “terrible” and overwhelming.²³⁵ In the case of open or shallow mass graves, the smell can spread over large areas, depending on weather and wind conditions. American journalist Elizabeth Neuffer has described a visit to a mass grave in Bosnia thus:²³⁶

“You could smell the mass grave at Cerska long before you could see it. The sickly, sweet smell of the bodies came wafting through the trees lining the dirt track up to the grave.”

In this case the mass grave contained only a few dozen corpses.²³⁷ It seems highly doubtful that the inmates at Sobibór would have been able to determine by their olfactory senses alone if the decomposing bodies causing the stench numbered a few dozen, hundreds, thousands, or tens of thousands. In this context it is worth noting that the odor of decomposition is extremely persistent and may linger for months or even years after the disappearance of soft tissues or the removal of the decomposing corpse(s).²³⁸

Finally we come to the “evidence” that “no-one ever came out alive.” The problem of this argument becomes evident by even a cursory glance at the various maps of Sobibór. The most “correct” map,²³⁹ drawn by Bill Rutherford in 2002 and partially based on air photos, shows that the northern, eastern, and western borders of the vaguely trapezoidal camp III area hardly could have been observed from other

²³³ “mit Hilfe von Brandbom[b]en, Holz u. Kohle”; Statement by Kurt Ticho (Thomas), ROD, c[23.62]09, p. 4.

²³⁴ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 78.

²³⁵ Cf. Alan Gunn, *Essential Forensic Biology*, 2nd ed., Wiley-Blackwell, New York 2009, p. 23.

²³⁶ Elizabeth Neuffer, *The key to my neighbor’s house. Seeking justice in Bosnia and Rwanda*, Picador, New York 2002, p. 215.

²³⁷ “U.N. Starts Digging Up Mass Grave in Bosnia,” *The New York Times*, 10 July 1996, p. 6.

²³⁸ Linda L. Klepinger, *Fundamentals of forensic anthropology*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken (NJ) 2006, p. 119.

²³⁹ Online: www.deathcamps.org/sobibor/pic/bmap21.jpg

parts of the camp. This means that deloused deportees could have left camp III unnoticed by inmates in camp I and II. Interestingly, the Rutherford map shows a sort of passage leading from the northeast corner of camp III through the forest in the general direction of the main railroad.²⁴⁰

4.4. Miscellaneous Anomalies and Absurdities

The testimonies left by former Sobibór inmates are rife with contradictions, incongruities, anomalies, and absurdities which are indicative of their general quality. Below I will list only a few of them.

Dov Freiberg claims to have seen in the forest surrounding camp III “a hill of white sand about twenty meters high” which “looked suspicious.”²⁴¹ Needless to say, anyone would be surprised by a mysterious mountain of sand the height of a seven story building! He also writes that “hundreds of other workers were killed daily during the months I spent in the camp and were replaced by others.”²⁴² Given that the inmates numbered around 600,²⁴³ his survival was more than a little miraculous.

Freiberg also maintains that a group of 73 Dutch detainees caught trying to escape was punished with decapitation (!) and:²⁴⁴

“After the war, an SS man by the name of Novak was caught, and a search of his home revealed photographs of the beheadings in Lager 3.”

Yet no Sobibór SS man named Novak was ever arrested,²⁴⁵ and if such photographs really existed, they would surely have been reproduced a hundred times by now!

²⁴⁰ It should be pointed out here that the trains bound for the east may have departed from the main railroad, rather than the sidespur leading into the camp. According to Jan Piwonski, who worked at the Sobibór station, the Chełm-Włodawa line saw little traffic, and thus such embarkations were feasible; Jan Piwonski, *op.cit* (note 221). The 1942 timetable of the railways in the General Government shows that there were four trains per day on this line, in each direction; cf. *Kurzbuch Polen 1942 (Generalgouvernement)*, Verlag Josef Otto Slezak, Vienna 1984, p. 118.

²⁴¹ D. Freiberg, *op. cit.* (note 68), pp. 219f.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 260f.

²⁴³ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 333.

²⁴⁴ D. Freiberg, *op. cit.* (note 68), p. 276, note 1. According to Louis de Jong, some witnesses like Freiberg maintain that the Dutch Jews were beheaded, while other claim that they were shot; Louis de Jong, “Sobibór,” *Encounter*, December 1978, p. 26.

²⁴⁵ According to Schelvis, two men of the camp staff bore the surname Novak: Anton Julius,

As we have already seen in our first chapter, the witness Moshe Bahir is especially fond of ascribing cruelties of the more extreme and unbelievable kind to members of the camp staff. His mendacity is further demonstrated by the claim that the guard dog Barry, well-known also from Treblinka, was “the size of a pony.”²⁴⁶ Ada Lichtman states that young girls were “raped before being gassed” and that a newborn baby was drowned in the latrines by Gustav Wagner.²⁴⁷ However, she also maintains that Wagner always was very nice to her, that he once saved her from being beaten by a Ukrainian guard, and that, at another occasion, he let Ada go without punishment after discovering her eating stolen food.²⁴⁸ Esther Raab in turn recounts that Wagner once gave her candy.²⁴⁹ Clearly the man was something of a split personality!

Other witnesses claim that inmates were forced to climb trees which were then cut down, so that they fell to their death, and that SS Gomerski and Wagner amused themselves by using babies as sling-balls.²⁵⁰ In court the former camp commandant Stangl gave a rather different version of the alleged tree climbing murders:²⁵¹

“It came to my attention that Bolender was bullying the Jewish inmates by forcing them to climb up the trees. He would make them whistle or sing, and then they had to jump down. [...] I called Bolender to order and told him that as long as I was at the camp, this must not continue any longer. I forbade him to engage in any more such bullying. At the subsequent meeting with the other officers I let it be known that I would not tolerate such bullying.”

who was killed in the revolt, and Walter Novak, who is said to have disappeared in 1947 after having spent some time as a prisoner of war. Schelvis notes that the Pirna police in 1946 searched the home of Walter Novak’s wife, and that valuables supposedly taken from the camp were found, but mentions nothing of photographs or other documents; J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 260.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 150. Photos taken of Barry at Treblinka by Kurt Franz show him to have been of perfectly ordinary size (www.deathcamps.org/treblinka/pic/bigz04.jpg). According to Kurt Bolender, the dog was “rather aggressive,” but never severely harmed any of the inmates; J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 92.

²⁴⁷ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 55.

²⁴⁸ A. Lichtman, *op. cit.* (note 167), p. 42, 44.

²⁴⁹ R.L. Rashke, *op. cit.* (note 44), p. 319.

²⁵⁰ “Sobibór – Mordfabrik hinter Stacheldraht,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 25 August 1950, p. 5.

²⁵¹ Statement made by Franz Stangl in Duisburg on 29 April 1969, Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen Ludwigsburg (subsequently quoted as ZStL) 230/59-12-4469; quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 113.

It is thus possible that the allegations of murder by tree-felling originated with a case of relatively harmless bullying carried out by an individual SS officer, who was then reprimanded for his behavior.

Another anomalous group of assertions concerns the reception of the arriving Jewish deportees. According to Bahir, one of Gustav Wagner's duties was "counting the Jews who arrived in the transports"²⁵² and "conducting the registry of victims."²⁵³ He also mentions that SS-*Oberscharführer* Hermann Michel "took a census" of the male arrivals.²⁵⁴ Freiberg recalls an incident where, during a period of "respite from transports," Wagner went around registering the names, age and place of birth of the inmates in the camp.²⁵⁵ But why was this done, if Sobibór indeed was a pure extermination camp? This is a question flying in the face of the official narrative. Schelvis compares the bureaucracy of the "extermination camps" with that of the *Einsatzgruppen*,²⁵⁶ asserting that the former did not have to keep records of the alleged mass killings.²⁵⁷ Later in his book, however, he details the procedure of transport lists used for the deportation of French, Dutch, German, and Austrian Jews to Auschwitz and Sobibór.²⁵⁸

"Two copies [of the transport lists] were given to the transport leaders for the journey east, creating the impression, perhaps, that they knew the deportees by name, and that the list would facilitate registration on arrival at the camp.

At Auschwitz this may indeed have been the case – unless of course the victims were sent straight to the gas chambers. But the lists compiled for Sobibór were only ever intended to disguise the Germans' true intentions. The transport leaders would have passed the lists on to the camp commandant, but the most he probably ever did with them was to file them in a drawer somewhere. No further action was ever taken."

Thus at least a part of the Jews sent to Sobibór was registered with their names – but the Holocaust historian assures us that this was only

²⁵² M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 149.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²⁵⁵ D. Freiberg, *op. cit.* (note 68), pp. 223f.

²⁵⁶ "Task forces," German military units deployed behind the Russian front to fight partisans. According to mainstream historiography they are also said to have shot between 1.3 and 2.2 million Jewish civilians. This topic will not be covered in the present book. Editor's remark.

²⁵⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 15.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 51f. See also Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 139.

part of a “deception”! We may also note in this context that, while in Brazilian custody in 1967, Franz Stangl, the former commandant of Sobibór and Treblinka, allegedly stated to the São Paulo police that “his job during the war had been to take down the names of the victims as they were marched to the gas chambers.”²⁵⁹ A most thorough “deception” indeed!²⁶⁰

Another example of this laborious charade: according to Ada Lichtman the Germans received the Dutch transports with long tables on which were nicely set coffee, bread, and marmalade.²⁶¹ After they finished eating, the Dutch Jews were shown around the camp. Next they had to write postcards addressed to their remaining relatives in the Netherlands, after which some of them were selected for work, while the rest was finally “chased off to be exterminated”!²⁶²

Yet another anomaly found in Schelvis’ description of the camp concerns Walter Poppert, a German Jew deported from Westerbork with his wife on May 8, 1943.²⁶³ At Sobibór Poppert was foreman of the *Waldkommando*, a fact which was mentioned by him in a postcard dating from August 1943.²⁶⁴ In other words: the SS allowed an inmate in a top secret “extermination camp” to communicate with the outside world – a contradiction which goes unnoticed by Schelvis.²⁶⁵

Regarding the number of victims eyewitnesses often give figures significantly higher than both the figure of 250,000 hitherto generally accepted and Schelvis’ lower estimate of 170,000. Bahir claims to have overheard a conversation between SS men Paul Bredow and Rudolf Beckmann following Himmler’s reported second visit to the camp in

²⁵⁹ “Austrian seized by Brazil as Nazi,” *The New York Times*, 3 March 1967, pp. 1f. However, according to a notice in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* (“Treblinkas chef greps i Brasilien,” 3 March 1967, p. 13), Stangl “denied all allegations made against him.”

²⁶⁰ For another important indication that the deportees who arrived in Sobibór (and the other Aktion Reinhardt camps) were indeed registered, cf. chapter 9.5.

²⁶¹ Dov Freiberg likewise maintains that “there were transports where the people were greeted politely, with bread, jam and coffee”; D. Freiberg, *op. cit.* (note 68), p. 251.

²⁶² A. Lichtman, *op. cit.* (note 167), pp. 46f.

²⁶³ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 139

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112, 141.

²⁶⁵ Schelvis states that the arriving Dutch Jews sometimes were either encouraged or forced to “send postcards home to those left behind, telling them of their safe arrival,” *ibid.*, p. 71. This was supposedly part of the “deception” of the victims. Poppert’s postcard, however, was sent three months after his arrival to the camp, which makes it difficult to reconcile with the alleged policy of secrecy and camouflage.

February 1943, in which it was said that “the visit was designed to mark the completion of the first million Jews destroyed at Sobibór”²⁶⁶ – yet in reality little more than 100,000 Jews had been *deported* to the camp at that time. Zelda Metz in her early post war testimony gave the number of Sobibór victims as 2 million,²⁶⁷ a figure which also appears in Szmajzner’s book from 1968.²⁶⁸ At the 1950 trial against the former Sobibór SS men Hubert Gomerski and Johann Klier witnesses mentioned the figure of more than 900,000 victims.²⁶⁹ The above-mentioned Kurt Ticho/Thomas⁹³ as well as Chaim Engel and Selma Engel-Wijnberg²⁷⁰ spoke of 800,000 victims. Exaggerations of this magnitude are hard to explain as simple misjudgments.

One also encounters false statements regarding the number and arrival dates of transports. The witness Ursula Stern claims that, between 9 April 1943 and 14 October the same year, a transport of Dutch Jews from Westerbork arrived at the camp “regularly every Friday” despite the uncontested fact that the last transport of Dutch Jews to Sobibór left Westerbork on July 20, 1943.²⁷¹

4.5. Testimonies by Former Camp Personnel

Jules Schelvis describes the testimonies left by former German and Austrian Sobibór camp staff by writing:²⁷²

“Still using their Nazi jargon, those who had once been in power, showing no signs of emotion and giving only the barest of facts, submitted their statements about what had happened at Sobibór.”

When it came to camp III and what had allegedly transpired there, Schelvis adds: “the SS men were reluctant to reveal any snippets of information.”²⁷³ Most of their declarations are indeed severely lacking in detail, which should not come as a surprise, as their interrogators apparently did not show much interest in how exactly the alleged mass killings had been carried out, or even made possible. When we get extra

²⁶⁶ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 156.

²⁶⁷ Testimony by Zelda Metz, in: N. Blumental (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 210.

²⁶⁸ S. Szmajzner, *op. cit.* (note 31), p. 270.

²⁶⁹ “Die Massenmorde im Lager Sobibór,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 August 1950, p. 4.

²⁷⁰ Statement by Chaim Engel and Selma Engel-Wijnberg, ROD, c[23.62]09, p. 3.

²⁷¹ U. Stern, *op. cit.* (note 163), p. 11.

²⁷² J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 2.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

“information,” it is often peripheral, redundant, or absurd, such as the “snippet” provided by the former SS-*Oberscharführer* Alfred Ittner, who claimed that his colleagues Gomerski and Bolender had built a cabin at the edge of the cremation pit from where they could oversee the cremations while “generally amusing themselves and roasting potatoes over the fire”!²⁷⁴ Indeed, the information about the death camp proper at Sobibór is so scarce that, in order to describe it in detail, Schelvis has to spend five pages quoting the Belżec witnesses Gerstein and Reder.²⁷⁵

One of the most frequently quoted former staff members is Erich Bauer, who in 1950 was sentenced to death (later commuted to life imprisonment) for having been in charge of the alleged murder weapon, the engine providing carbon monoxide for the gas chambers. After having spent twelve years in the Berlin Tegel prison, Bauer suddenly decided to “come clean about the whole truth”²⁷⁶ and spent the next years appearing as a witness for the prosecution and playing the role of the honest perpetrator (an activity which was to little avail, as he died in the same prison in 1980). The quality of his truth-telling may be ascertained from the fact that, while at his own trial in 1950, he maintained that the Sobibór victims numbered between 50,000 and 100,000,²⁷⁷ in 1962 he suddenly changed this estimate to 350,000²⁷⁸ – i.e. more than twice the currently held victim figure! Bauer’s description of the roof of the first gas chamber building is also more than a little curious:²⁷⁹

“I remember quite clearly that a camouflage net had been draped over the gas chamber. I collected this net myself from the ammunition warehouse in Warsaw. It was thrown over the top of the roof and fixed onto it. When this was, I can no longer say. To start with, we had fir and pine trees covering the roof. [sic ...] That was at the time when German flying units were flying to Russia. The German pilots were not to be able to see inside. The camouflage net was torn off the roof when the gas chamber was rebuilt. The camouf-

²⁷⁴ Statement by Alfred Ittner, ZStL 251/59-7-1426 to 1427, quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 112.

²⁷⁵ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 105-109.

²⁷⁶ Erich Bauer on 20 November 1962, ZStL 251/59-VIII-1590, quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 2.

²⁷⁷ Verdict of the trial against Erich Hermann Bauer, Landgericht Berlin, 8 May 1950, PKs 3/50.

²⁷⁸ Ernst Klee, Willi Dreßen, Volker Reiß, *The Good Old Days*, Free Press, New York 1991, p. 232.

²⁷⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 102.

lage net was acquired when the old wooden barracks were still in use,^[280] because such a lot of steam was generated.”

Remarkably, none of the Jewish eyewitnesses who reports seeing the roof of the “gas chamber” building protruding above the trees surrounding camp III have mentioned a camouflage net. Moreover, the alleged reason for the net is clearly spurious. How would pilots have been able to see through a roof? Wouldn’t it have been much more logical to camouflage the mass graves instead? The claim that “a lot of steam was generated” during the gassings is likewise bizarre. By “steam,” did Bauer mean engine exhaust? However, a native speaker of German would never use *Dampf* or any word derived from it²⁸¹ to denote exhaust fumes from an engine. There is no reason why the alleged gassing process would have produced steam. On the other hand, hot showers could result in a lot of steam, especially in cold weather. In addition, delousing chambers utilizing steam or hot air may also have caused such emissions of vapor.

In April 1963 and June 1965 two trials were held in Kiev against former Ukrainian auxiliaries who had served in Sobibór. Thirteen of them were sentenced to death and executed. In the late 1970s testimonies from a handful of accused Ukrainian guards were made available to the U.S. Department of Justice by the USSR in connection with the first extradition trial against John Demjanjuk. When it comes to camp III those testimonies are generally as vague and lacking in detail as the German ones.

The witness Vassily Pankov describes all three camps where he was posted – Sobibór, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald – as “death camps” where the SS and their auxiliaries “perpetrated physical extermination of civilians.”²⁸² The inclusion in this list of Buchenwald – a camp where no extermination is claimed to have taken place – should be enough to draw the veracity of Pankov’s account into question.

The former auxiliaries moreover tend to grossly exaggerate the size of the camp, which is curious in the light of the fact that one of their primary tasks was to patrol the camp perimeter. M. Razgonayev stated

²⁸⁰ The testimonial incongruity regarding the building material of the alleged gas chambers will be discussed in detail in chapter 8.4.

²⁸¹ In the original German the last part of the final sentence of the quote reads: “...*weil es dort immer so gedampft hat*”; J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 121.

²⁸² Interrogation of Vassily Pankov in the city of Stalino on 18 October 1950. Online: http://ftp.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/camps/aktion_reinhard/ftp.py?camps/aktion_reinhard//sobibor/pankov.001

that “the area of the camp was 2-3 square kilometers,”²⁸³ while I. Danilchenko claimed that “the camp covered approximately four square kilometers.”²⁸⁴ According to the above-mentioned Rutherford map, the camp’s area measured less than 20 hectares (i.e. 0.2 square kilometers ≈ 50 acres). Why would those guards make the camp out to be 10 to 20 times larger than it actually was?

Not all former members of the Sobibór camp staff were eager to confirm the official version of what had transpired at the camp. On 31 May 1978 Gustav Wagner handed himself over to the Brazilian special police in São Paulo. At the time of his arrest Wagner confirmed that he had been posted in Sobibór, but explicitly denied the gas chamber allegations:²⁸⁵

“I never saw any gas chamber at Sobibór.”

4.6. The Value of Eye Witness Testimonies

Historian Christopher Browning notes the following on the subject of the *Aktion Reinhardt* eyewitnesses in his 1999 expert report from the Irving trial:²⁸⁶

“[...] human memory is imperfect. The testimonies of both survivors and other witnesses to the events in Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka are no more immune to forgetfulness, error, exaggeration, distortion, and repression than eyewitness accounts of other events in the past. They differ, for instance, on how long each gassing operation took, on the dimensions and capacity of the gas chambers, on the number of undressing barracks, and on the roles of particular individuals. [...] however, without exception all concur on the vital issue at dispute, namely that Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka were

²⁸³ Interrogation of Mikhail Affanasevitch Razgonayev in the city of Dniepropetrowsk on 20 & 21 September 1948. Online: http://ftp.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/camps/aktion_reinhard/ftp.py?camps/aktion_reinhard//sobibor/razgonayev.001

²⁸⁴ Interrogation of Ignat Terentyevich Danilchenko in the city of Tyumen on 21 November 1979. Online: http://ftp.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/camps/aktion_reinhard/ftp.py?camps/aktion_reinhard//sobibor/dchenko.001

²⁸⁵ “*Eu nunca vi nenhuma camara de gas em Sobibór*”; quoted in: “Eu prefiro ir para a Alemanha, diz Wagner,” *Folha de São Paulo*, June 2, 1978. Also “Wagner nega ser criminoso” (Wagner denies being a criminal), *Diário da Noite*, 31 May 1978, p. 1.

²⁸⁶ Christopher R. Browning, “Evidence for the Implementation of the Final Solution,” section 5.D. Online: www.holocaustdenialontrial.com/en/trial/defense/browning/545.0

death camps whose primary purpose was to kill in gas chambers through the carbon monoxide from engine exhaust, and that the hundreds of thousands of corpses of Jews killed there were first buried and then later cremated.”

That eyewitnesses may err in their recollections is, of course, a truism. Browning should also know that people can “recall” false memories and that alleged perpetrators confess to crimes they never committed, even when not physically coerced to do so.²⁸⁷ The supposed consensus invoked by him that the eyewitnesses “without exception all concur [...] that Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka were death camps” where Jews were mass murdered with “carbon monoxide from engine exhaust” is in fact nothing but a mesh of contradictions, held together by mere belief.

In the case of Sobibór the witness accounts left by Jewish former inmates are of little value for the question whether the camp was a center for mass extermination of Jews, as “the most conclusive evidence” those inmates had that gassings were taking place in camp III, to which they lacked all access, was indeed “purely circumstantial” and, when examined more closely, does not unequivocally confirm the mass murder allegations. To this should be added the messages supposedly smuggled out from camp III, whose reported contents are either absurd or contradict the established historiography on Sobibór.

On the other hand, the statements from former camp personnel are largely devoid of detail, especially where camp III and its killing installations are concerned. As for the number, sizes, capacity, and construction material of the alleged gas chambers, or the circumstances surrounding the start of gassings at the camp, their declarations are rife with contradictions.²⁸⁸

While Browning and other historians of his ilk are satisfied with creating a historiographic picture out of selected pieces of eyewitness testimony and a handful of arbitrarily interpreted documents, all skeptical inquirers searching for what really happened at Sobibór must recognize the necessity of comparing the witness accounts with available material evidence. Are the remains found at the former camp site really compatible with the alleged mass murder of hundreds of thousands of people in gas chambers? This will be the topic of our next chapter.

²⁸⁷ Cf. Gisli H. Gudjonsson, *The Psychology of Interrogations and Confessions*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester 2003, pp. 179-186.

²⁸⁸ Cf. chapter 8.4.

5. Critical Analysis of Material Evidence

5.1. The State of Evidence

5.1.1. Forensic Post War Survey by Polish Authorities

According to Jules Schelvis, the local Polish prosecutor failed to initiate a judicial inquiry into the crimes allegedly perpetrated at Sobibór and an inspection of the former camp area, so that the opportunity to establish the dimensions of the mass graves and other relevant matters was lost.²⁸⁹ At least the latter half of this claim is incorrect, as in 1947 a report entitled *Obóz zagłady w Sobiborze* (“The extermination camp at Sobibór”) was published by the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland. In this we read:²⁹⁰

“Today, on the site of the camp, nothing remains of the old facilities destined specifically for the liquidation of the victims. What does remain, on the other hand, are a few small houses (in a state of considerable dilapidation) which served as living quarters for the service personnel of the camp. In the central part of the area, presumably at the sites used for the burial of the ashes, there is a growth of young firs covering some 1,200 square meters. Diggings showed the presence of ashes and of bone fragments mixed with ashes below a layer of sand half a meter thick. Close to the eastern limit of the camp a pit of chloride of lime, 20 by 15 m, was identified. Over the whole area of the camp human bones can be found here and there.

The purpose of the camp can also be deduced conclusively from other results of the investigations. An opinion prepared by the institute of forensic medicine at the Jagellonian University states that the bones sent there for analysis were human bones. An opinion of the institute of forensic medicine at Cracow indicates that the sand removed from the diggings is mixed with bone ashes and fat. A certain

²⁸⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 191.

²⁹⁰ Z. Łukaszkiewicz, *op. cit.* (note 25), pp. 49f.

amount of rubble^[291] was found at the site which witnesses have stated to have been the site of the building with the gas chambers.”

We will note here that apparently no effort was made to determine the number and/or dimensions of the present burial pits or the actual amount of ashes present and that the only pit for which dimensions are given is described not as a grave containing human remains but as “a pit of chloride of lime.” The only evidence for the alleged gas chamber mass murder of at least 250,000 victims²⁹² which the commission’s forensic experts could muster thus consisted of an unrevealed amount of human ashes mixed with sand and some uncharacterized debris from the supposed location of the “gas chambers”!

In section 5.2.5. below we will return to the reported findings of the Central Commission.

5.1.2. Photographic Evidence

In an important 2009 article, which will be discussed later in this chapter, Isaac Gilead *et al.* write that “there are few images of Sobibór” and that those “very rare” pictures known to exist “do not contribute significantly” to our knowledge of the camp.²⁹³ Arad states that the taking of photographs was prohibited in the Reinhardt camps.²⁹⁴ However, we know that this rule was not always obeyed. At Belżec the camp staff even invited local Polish villagers to take pictures of them inside the supposedly top secret “extermination camp.”²⁹⁵ The witness Kalmen Wewryk claims that the SS at Sobibór shot a film of a – supposedly fake – wedding ceremony in the camp.²⁹⁶ It is thus possible that there exists yet undiscovered or unpublished photographic evidence relating to the Sobibór camp. Furthermore we have an air photo of the former camp site taken by the Luftwaffe in 1944²⁹⁷ which will be referenced later in the present chapter.

²⁹¹ *gruz*

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁹³ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, “Excavating Nazi Extermination Centres,” *Present Pasts*, vol. 1, 2009, p. 26.

²⁹⁴ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 18.

²⁹⁵ C. Mattoigno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), p. 43.

²⁹⁶ K. Wewryk, *To Sobibór and Back: An Eyewitness Account*, online:

<http://migs.concordia.ca/memoirs/wewryk/chapt2.html>

²⁹⁷ National Archives, Washington D.C., Ref. No. GX 191 F 910 SK, exp. 122.

5.1.3. Kola's Archeological Research at Sobibór 2000-2001

The first ever study²⁹⁸ of the former Sobibór camp site by archeological means was undertaken in 2000-2001 by a team led by Professor Andrzej Kola of the University of Toruń, who had previously carried out excavations at Bełżec.²⁹⁹ While the Sobibór excavation was reported on by a number of newspapers in late 2001, no translation into any western language has yet been made available of the brief research report which Kola published that same year in the journal *Przeszłość i Pamięć* ("Past and Memory") published by the Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom.³⁰⁰ In the present chapter Kola's published results will be critically analyzed and compared to the established historiographic picture of the camp.

Regarding the purpose of the study Kola states:³⁰¹

"The planimetric structure of the camp's buildings and the mass graves' locations are currently indiscernible as a result of deliberate destruction, demolition, and removing of the evidence of its infrastructure by the Germans in 1943, following the well-known mass breakout of prisoners on the 14th October of the same year. The aim of the archeological excavations is to recreate this plan as the basis of a fitting and dignified memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, including an adequate project of commemoration being formulated. It is also important to obtain authentic artifacts belonging to the Jews who were brought to Sobibór from all over Europe for the branch of the Łęczna-Włodawa Lakeland Museum located in Sobibór – objects bearing witness to the martyrdom of the victims or linked to the organization of the genocide."

²⁹⁸ Historian Martin Gilbert, who visited Sobibór in the summer of 1996, writes in his travel journal that at the site of the former camp III, "there is a patch of sand where men have recently been digging, trying to find the rails that were used for the crematorium pyres where the bodies had been burned. This work is being done by the regional museum at Włodawa." The details of this archeological activity are wrapped in obscurity, however, since it is not acknowledged in the Sobibór literature, not even in Kola's 2001 article, see note 300; Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1997, p. 250.

²⁹⁹ Andrzej Kola, *Bełżec. The Nazi Camp for Jews in the Light of Archaeological Sources. Excavations 1997-1999*, The Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom/United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Warsaw-Washington 2000.

³⁰⁰ Andrzej Kola, "Badania archeologiczne terenu byłego obozu zagłady Żydów w Sobiborze," in: *Przeszłość i Pamięć. Biuletyn Rady Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa*, No. 4(21) 2001, pp. 115-122.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Thus the officially stated purpose is basically the same as for the 1997–1999 excavations at Belzec: to enable the construction of a new memorial by locating mass graves. However, the search for artifacts “linked to the organization of the genocide” – in other words remains of the alleged gas chambers – is also recognized as “important.”

Kola next reiterates the basic layout of the camp, denoting camp III as “the place of extermination” and stating that “the task of the archeologists” consists of “a highly extensive study of the site.” He goes on to describe camp III as follows:³⁰¹

“Due to a lack of eye witness accounts and the removal of evidence we do not know the layout of Camp III. It consisted of a gas chamber (or chambers), barracks for the German, Ukrainian, and Jewish personnel, and barracks for the storage of the possessions of the arriving Jews, further a barber’s barrack and also the burial sites of, as is estimated, more than 200,000 victims. Furthermore, from the available accounts it would appear that, from the rail ramp in Camp I through Camp II, a narrow-gauge railway led to Camp III, with its carts pushed by camp inmates. This railway was used to transport the sick and handicapped Jews brought to Sobibór over to Camp III. The route of the railway is not known.”

The claim that there is a “lack of eye witness accounts” concerning the structure of camp III is incorrect, as the map used at the 1966 Hagen trial, which shows that part of the camp in detail, was drawn up by none other than Erich Bauer, the SS-*Oberscharführer* who allegedly was in charge of the gas chambers. As will be seen below, there also exists witness statements on the dimensions of the gas chambers and mass graves. It is worth noting that Kola consistently avoids comparing his research results with eye witness testimony, historiography, or judicial findings.³⁰²

The claim that camp III contained “barracks for the storage of the possessions of the arriving Jews” lacks any foundation in historiography or eye witness testimony. Such barracks, the witnesses unanimously stated, were located in camp II opposite the reception area,³⁰³ and no

³⁰² From his 2000 preliminary report on the survey, however, it is clear that Kola is well familiar with testimonies such as those of Chaim Engel, Moshe Bahir, Alexander Pelechsky and Kurt Bolender; A. Kola, “Sprawozdanie z archeologicznych badań na terenie byłego obozu zagłady Żydów w Sobiborze w 2000 r.” (Report on the archaeological investigations at the site of the former extermination camp for Jews at Sobibor in 2000), *Przeszłość i Pamięć*, Nr. 3, July-September 2000, p. 89.

³⁰³ See for example the map in Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp. 34f; items 42-44, “Barracks

such structures are asserted to have been located in camp III. The reason why Kola inserted this unfounded claim in his description of camp III will become apparent later in this chapter when we turn to the subject of the excavated building remains.

After a preparatory survey had been conducted in autumn 2000, the actual study commenced in spring the following year. Its first goal consisted in marking out archeological remains detected by probing drills on a large-scale map (1:1000) of the former camp site area. For the sake of the survey the camp site and its immediate surroundings – a rectangular area measuring 700 × 900 m – were divided into 63 areas of one hectare each (≈ 2.5 acres), numbered I to LXIII. The progress of the work is summarized thus by Kola.³⁰⁴

“The program of archeological excavations of the Sobibór camp in 2001 consisted of two phases – one taking place in spring, the other in autumn. During the six week long spring phase in the period between 17th April and 9th June, archeological identification of the camp structure was carried out, starting with the supposed area of Camp III. In 2000, as part of the reconnaissance research near the mound commemorating the tragedy of the murdered Jews erected in the 1960s, mass graves were discovered by a few of the archeological probes made in this area.

Following this lead, it was decided in 2001 to continue excavations in the region of these finds. This was carried out through archeological drillings using hand held geological drills with a 2.5 inch diameter, i.e. approx. 65 mm. Due to the considerable area to be explored, initially the drilling locations were determined by the intersections of a 5 meter grid, with an additional, narrower grid at sites where the drill cores had shown positive results (i.e. in places where cultural objects had been located – e.g. relics of buildings or graves). With this assumption in mind, at least 400 drillings would be required on each hectare.

In the second phase, carried out from 19th August to 13th October, investigations of the camp’s terrain using coring continued. Simultaneously excavations of selected structures (localized as a result of the phase one drillings) were started.

During the springtime phase, 4 hectares of the area of the former Camp III (i.e. hectares XVII, XVIII, XXIV and XXV) were fully inves-

for storing property.”
³⁰⁴ A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 300), p. 116.

tigated by coring. In each hectare 400 basic drillings were made; additional drillings enabling a more detailed localization of the remnants of anthropogenic structures were made in places of soil disruptions. At this stage the structures were divided into grave pits (usually easy to distinguish) and interferences in the natural stratigraphic structure, which were traces of unknown elements of other transformations of the terrain resulting from human activity. Their interpretation will only be possible if excavations take place.

In hectare XVII 90 additional drillings were carried out, 76 in hectare XVIII, 18 in XXIV, and 21 in XXV; thus altogether there were 1,805 drillings made on 4 hectares.”

5.2. Mass Graves

5.2.1. Mass Graves in Testimony, Verdicts, and Historiography

The most important accounts of the mass graves at Sobibór derive from the former SS men Kurt Bolender and Hubert Gomerski. Jules Schelvis has summarized their statements as follows:³⁰⁵

“Until the end of 1942, the bodies were taken to a Lager 3 pit, measuring about 60 by 20 metres and about 6 to 7 metres deep, the walls sloping down to protect it from collapsing. Along one side a wooden structure jutted over the edge, so that the loaded carts could be tipped over and the bodies dumped into the pit. The bodies had to be laid out by the Arbeitshäftlinge [inmate workers] in a prescribed fashion to use all the available space, and were then covered with chloride of lime. By June 1942 it had become clear to the camp leadership that the grave was filling up fast, so a second grave was dug about 80 metres away from the first.”

Schelvis then goes on to quote Bolender’s testimony of December 8, 1963:³⁰⁶

“The first grave had been covered with a layer of sand. As this grave was completely full, the other bodies had to be taken else-

³⁰⁵ Summary of a statement made by Kurt Bolender in Munich on 5 June 1961 (ZStL 252/59-11-1322), and a statement made by Hubert Gomerski in Hagen on 2 December 1966 (StA.Do-XII 65-705); J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 110.

³⁰⁶ Statement by K. Bolender in Hagen on 8 December 1963 (StA.Do-band 35-116), quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 110f.

where, even though the new grave was not yet ready. I still clearly remember arriving for work at the second grave one morning to find that the bodies which had already been piled up along one side had decomposed to such an extent that in the sweltering heat blood and body fluids had run all along the bottom of the unfinished grave. It was clear that we could not continue working under such circumstances.”

Due to such problems the burial of uncremated corpses was stopped. Schelvis writes:³⁰⁷

“It was then decided to start burning the bodies instead and to get a machine in to dig up the tens of thousands of buried bodies to burn them as well. [...]

The machine was taken to Lager 3 and, within a few days, work was begun on the very spot where the third grave was to be dug, with the digger pulling out trees and roots. A pit was excavated, but it was smaller and shallower than the other two. Once it was finished, rails were criss-crossed over the top, forming a rudimentary grid.”

Accordingly there are said to have been three pits in camp III: two used for the interment of corpses and one on top of which the cremation pyre was constructed. The number of burial pits was confirmed by a sketch drawn by Bolender while in custody.³⁰⁸ This shows two graves, one of which is only half the size of the other.

Arad gives the following description of the Sobibór mass graves:³⁰⁹

“The burial pits were 50 to 60 meters long, 10 to 15 meters wide, and 5 to 7 meters deep. For easier absorption of the corpses into the pits, the sandy sidewalls were made oblique.”

Arad never states the number of graves, and the map reproduced by him does not outline the graves.³¹⁰ Novitch only mentions an unspecified number of “common graves,”³¹¹ while Schelvis accepts Bolender’s claim that there only were two burial pits.³⁰⁷

Arad’s description lacks a reference, but it is apparent that he has simply copied it from Adalbert Rückerl,³¹² who in turn is summarizing

³⁰⁷ J. Schelvis, *ibid.*, p. 111.

³⁰⁸ Viewable online at: www.deathcamps.org/sobibor/pic/bmap4.jpg

³⁰⁹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 33.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35. This map is identical with the so-called Blatt-Bauer map.

³¹¹ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 24.

³¹² “A camp railway led from the outer doors of the cells of the gas chamber building to large pits for placing the corpses, which had been dug, one after another during the first

the verdict of the 1966 Hagen trial. The map used during this trial,³¹³ compiled by the alleged supervisor of the gassings Erich Bauer, shows only two mass graves.

In 1947 the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland wrote as follows on the disposal of corpses at Sobibór:³¹⁴

“In all the Hitlerian extermination camps the burning of the corpses was used systematically to hide traces. This was also the case at Sobibór. In the minutes of the interrogations of witnesses there are many descriptions of this. It was difficult, however, to hide the incineration of the corpses, because the wind would spread a specific odor of incineration over a wide area; the smoke, as well as the fire of the burning sites could also be seen from far away. We must underline the fact that the incineration system had already been developed and perfected while the camp was still in operation. Initially the corpses were interred in layers in large pits and covered with chloride of lime. Large scale incinerations began in the winter of 1942/1943 and continued up to the liquidation of the camp. At first simple pyres were used, but eventually this system was replaced by the use of grates made from railway rails.

Such an installation was very simple. Rails were mounted on two parallel rows of concrete blocks, layers of corpses were placed on them, and a fire was lit below. It is probable that easily flammable material was used. Over the period during which this installation was used large pits filled with corpses existed in the camp. Mechanical shovels were used to dig up the corpses and take them to the grates. The corpses from transports arriving at that time were burned immediately after being gassed. The ashes from the incinerations were dumped into the pits within the camp or, as witnesses have stated, partly taken away by rail in an unknown direction.”

Again we note the peculiar vagueness of the report. How many mass graves were there? What kind of “easily flammable material” was used as fuel? The claim that initially simple pyres were used to burn the bodies and that cremation grates were constructed only later is in clear contradiction with Bolender’s testimony. It should further be pointed

extermination phase of the camp and which had a length of about 50-60 meters, a width of 10-15 meters and a depth of about 5-7 meters; on account of the sandy soil they had inclined sidewalls”; A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 165.

³¹³ Viewable online at: www.deathcamps.org/sobibor/pic/bmap2.jpg

³¹⁴ Z. Łukaszewicz, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 55.

out that none of the numerous eye witness accounts studied by the authors of this book mentions the removal of ashes by train (or for that matter by trucks).

5.2.2. The Switch from Burial to Cremation

In order to proceed with our analysis of Kola's report, we must first determine the answers to the following two questions: when did cremations commence at Sobibór, and how many of the hypothetical corpses were cremated without prior interment?

The first question is especially difficult to answer, because mainstream Holocaust historians as well as eye witnesses provide widely divergent statements. Arad strongly implies that cremations started at some point in late summer or early autumn 1942. He writes that the operation began "as a result of the hot weather in the summer of 1942."³¹⁵ In his entry on Sobibór for the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* he writes confusingly that cremations commenced "toward the end of 1942," only to later date this event to "the end of the summer of 1942."³¹⁶ Novitch asserts that, "beginning with the winter of 1942, they [the corpses] were no longer buried, but were burned in large open crematoria."³¹⁷ Neither Arad nor Novitch provide a source for their respective statement. According to Ruckerl the burial pits were used only during the "first phase of extermination, lasting approximately half a year,"³¹⁸ which implies that cremations began in October or November of 1942, since the first transports to the camp arrived in the first days of May that year.³¹⁹ Schelvis is slightly more exact, writing that cremations had begun "by September or October 1942,"³²⁰ while de Jong dates the commencement of both cremations and exhumations to October 1942.³²¹

As for the eye witnesses, there are seven who provide some form of dating of the beginning of cremations. We have mentioned Bahir's claim that flames were visible already when he arrived at the camp in late April or early May 1942.³²² This, however, is not supported by any other testimony. According to Szmajzner, a digger "accompanied by a

³¹⁵ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 171.

³¹⁶ See chapter 2.1.

³¹⁷ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 24.

³¹⁸ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 165.

³¹⁹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 36, 390.

³²⁰ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 38. In the German edition of his book (*op. cit.* (note 70), p. 51) Schelvis dates the commencement to "about September 1942."

³²¹ L. de Jong, *op. cit.* (note 244), p. 21.

³²² See chapter 4.3., p. 96.

certain amount of rails,” presumably used for the construction of the cremation grate, was brought to camp III around August 1942.³²³ The former Trawniki commandant Karl Streibel testified that, during a brief visit to Sobibór, he had observed a cremation grate, but no cremation in process. The visit took place “at the end of 1942.”³²⁴ Bolender’s account of the mass graves implies that the burial of victims was stopped at the end of summer 1942. Hubert Gomerski testified in 1950 that no cremations took place until 1943,³²⁵ and the Ukrainian Razgonayev dates the start to December 1942,²⁸³ but both are contradicted by Werner Becher, who relates that the work of burning the corpses was initiated during his stay in the camp, which lasted from August through November 1942.³²⁶ Another consideration which also speaks out against a later date is the unlikely idea that the SS would have dug a cremation pit, exhumed mass graves, and started burning corpses in mid-winter.

While the dates found in eye witness testimony as well as Holocaust historiography are vague and divergent, the three most authoritative Sobibór historians – Arad, Rückerl, and Schelvis – all indicate that the beginning of cremations occurred around the same time as the rebuilding of the alleged gas chambers, which was accompanied by various other construction activities. According to Arad, this rebuilding was done during a two month lull in operations lasting from late July to the end of September 1942, which was caused by reconstruction work on the railway between Lublin and Chełm.³²⁷ The new gas chambers became operational at the beginning of October.³²⁸

Given that the reported cause for the interruption of burials was problems caused by the hot summer weather,³²⁹ it makes most sense that the preparations for outdoor incineration were carried out during the aforementioned two month lull when a lot of free hands were available, rather than in October or November, when the work force was again busy with receiving transports. We therefore find it reasonable to assume, as a conservative estimate, that cremations began in the first days of October 1942.

³²³ S. Szmajzner, *op. cit.* (note 31), p. 188.

³²⁴ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 172.

³²⁵ Referenced in the verdict against Erich Hermann Bauer, LG Berlin, *op. cit.* (note 277).

³²⁶ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 171.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80. Schelvis (*op. cit.* (note 71), p. 103) has it that “the rebuilding took place between June and September 1942,” but such an early start is extremely unlikely considering that large-scale transports to Sobibór continued at the end of July that year.

³²⁸ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 123.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

How many of the alleged victims were buried prior to being exhumed and cremated, and how many were incinerated immediately after having been gassed? Schelvis has calculated the total number of deportees to be 170,165, rounded off to 170,000.³³⁰ As we know from the Höfle telegram, 101,370 Jews were sent to Sobibór up until 31 December 1942. It follows from this that (170,165 – 101,370 =) 68,795 deportees arrived during 1943. According to orthodox historiography they were all cremated without prior interment. Schelvis states that this group was comprised of Jews from the Netherlands (34,313), France (3,500), Reichskommissariat Ostland (13,700), Skopje (2,382), and the General Government (14,900).³³⁰

The victim figure for 1943, however, has to be slightly reduced. Schelvis admits that, according to “rough estimates,” approximately 1,000 Dutch Jews were transferred from Sobibór to labor camps in the Lublin district.³³¹ Despite the fact that those Jews did not perish in Sobibór, Schelvis has included them in his victim figure.³³² The real number of hypothetical victims for 1943 should therefore be 67,795.

Next we must determine how many Jews were deported to the camp from 1st October to 31st December 1942. According to Arad a total of 31,300 – 32,300 Jews were sent to Sobibór during this period.³³³ Arad assures his readers that his lists of transports are based on “existing information.” However, these lists consist to a large degree of figures lifted from testimonial evidence, estimates made by Jewish resistance members, or arrived at by mere conjecture.³³⁴ For example, the lists for Treblinka³³⁵ indicate that 824,170 Jews were deported to that camp during 1942, whereas the Höfle telegram shows that the actual figure amounted to 713,555 – an exaggeration of 16%. Faced with this tendency, we find it more reasonable to accept Gilead *et al.*'s estimate that 80,000 Jews arrived at the camp prior to the interruption of burials.³³⁶ In

³³⁰ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 198.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³³² Witnesses quoted by Schelvis speak of at least 40 French Jews transferred from Sobibór to Lublin and of 830-880 Byelorussian Jews transferred to Trawniki, but it is unclear whether those groups are included in the victim figure or not; *ibid.*, pp. 217, 219f.

³³³ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp. 390f.

³³⁴ Cf. C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 102f.

³³⁵ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp. 392-397.

³³⁶ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 25. Schelvis (*op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 112, 116 n. 64) writes that “there were already more than 100,000” corpses in the mass graves at the time cremations began, giving as his source a court document (VoHa-66-61b), but here he is clearly contradicting himself, as this would mean that cremations did not commence until early 1943.

our own calculations we will therefore assume the total number of hypothetical victims cremated without prior interment to amount to $([101,370 - 80,000] + 67,795 =) 89,165$.

5.2.3. Mass Graves Identified by Kola

In his description of the discovered mass graves Kola provides precious little data, qualitative or quantitative, on the actual contents of the grave pits as revealed by the relevant drilling samples. As at Bełżec, none of the mass graves was excavated, and no attempt whatsoever was made to quantify the amount of human remains present in them. The only real quantitative statement regarding the contents of the graves is found in the following passage:³⁰⁴

“[...] altogether there were 1,805 drillings made on 4 hectares. In 1,107 of these a natural, anthropogenically unspoilt stratigraphy was discovered, where underneath a newer layer of humus (0-30 cm on average) natural, yellowish sand (archeologically barren) occurred. Grave remnants were found in 128 drillings. They are accumulated in seven pronounced groups that can be assumed as being separate pits which contain remains of mass murder victims. Most of these graves contain cremated human bones. The grave bottoms reached the depth of approx. 4 meters from the surface. Only in one case (grave No. 3) the bottom reached a depth of 5.80 m. Particularly noticeable traces of cremation occurred in the lower parts of the graves where distinct layers of scorched bones, with a thickness up to 40-60 cm, could be identified.”

One should note here that Kola does not provide a clear definition of what he means by “distinct layers.” Are we talking of strata more or less exclusively containing ashes, or of ashes mixed with sand or other material? Further one would like to know how many of the 128 drillings actually turned up significant amounts of human remains, and not only evidence of soil disturbance.

Kola next goes on to briefly describe the characteristics of the individual mass graves:³⁰⁴

*“**Grave No. 1** was found in the northeastern part of hectare XVII, directly to the west of the monument mound which commemorates the victims. The grave was localized by 27 drillings. The approximate dimensions of the outline are 20 × 20 m with the depth reaching around 4.30 m. It contains remains of cremated corpses.*

Grave No. 2 lies in the western part of hectare XVII, to the south of the monument mound. It was localized by 28 drillings. It has an irregular outline, with dimensions of at least 20 × 25 m (the longer edge in NS orientation) and depth up to 4.00 m. It contains remains of cremated corpses.

Grave No. 3 is located in the southwestern part of hectare XI and the northwestern part of hectare XVII. It was localized by 17 drillings. It has an irregular outline, with dimensions measuring approx. 20 × 12 m (the longer side in NS orientation). Most of the grave is located under the northwestern part of the monument mound. The depth reaches up to 5.80 m.

In its lower parts it is a skeleton grave, with corpse remains which have undergone wax-fat transformation,^[337] while in its upper parts it contains remains of cremated corpses, interstratified with layers of limestone, sand and charcoals. The northern part of the grave is situated close to the northern part of grave 4. To determine the extent of both of these graves more precisely, further, more detailed coring is required.

Grave No. 4 is a grave of considerable size covering the southern part of hectare XI and the northern and central parts of hectare XVIII. It was localized by 78 drillings. The outline, which is oriented in north-south direction, measures 70 × 20-25 m and has a depth of approx. 5.00 m. In its lower parts it is a skeleton grave, with corpse remains which have undergone wax-fat transformation, while in its upper parts it contains remains of cremated corpses, interstratified with layers of limestone, sand, and charcoals.

Grave No. 5 is a grave of small area in the northwestern part of hectare XVIII. It was localized by 7 drillings. Its outline is irregular, with an area of at least 10 × 12 m and a depth reaching up to 4.90 m. In its lower parts it is a skeleton grave, with corpse remains which have undergone wax-fat transformation, while in its upper parts it contains remains of cremated corpses.

³³⁷ Saponification or wax-fat transformation “consists of the formation of adipocere, an insoluble soap of greasy and oily appearance having an unpleasant odor, produced by the combination of neutral fats from tissue and calcium and magnesium salts present in the water or in the humid soil in which the corpse rests. The absence of air is crucial. The process starts with the subcutaneous tissue and then spreads to the fatty perivisceral tissue. Saponification sets in after a few weeks and is complete after 12 to 18 months.”; <http://digilander.libero.it/fadange/medicina%20legale/tana.htm>

Table 3: Dimensions, location and contents of mass graves at Sobibór camp

DIMENSIONS [m]	AREA [m ²]	VOLUME [m ³]	# OF CORES	HECTARE #	HUMAN REMAINS	SHAPE
20×20×4.30	400	1,720	27	XVII	cremated corpses	
20×25×4.0	500	2,000	28	XVII	cremated corpses	irr.
20×12×5.80	240	1,392	17	XI-SW/ XVII-NW	cremated & saponified corpses	irr.
70×20-25×5.0	1,575	7,875	78	XI-S/ XVIII-N	cremated & saponified corpses	
10×12×4.90	120	588	7	XVIII-NW	cremated & saponified corpses	irr.
15×25×3.05	375	1,143.75	22	XVIII	cremated & saponified corpses	irr.
Total:	3,210	14,718.75				

Grave No. 6 is located in the central part of hectare XVIII to the south of grave No. 5. It was localized by 22 drillings. It has an irregular outline with an area of at least 15 × 25 m and depth up to 3.05 m. In its lower parts it is a skeleton grave, with corpse remains which have undergone wax-fat transformation, while in its upper parts it contains remains of cremated corpses.

Grave No. 7 (?) is a site where corpses were burnt, with an area of at least 10 × 3 m and a depth of up to 0.90 m, located in the central part of hectare XVIII, approx. 10 – 12 m to the south from the southern edge of grave No. 4. The deposits of cremated corpse remains appeared in 6 boreholes during drilling. There are soil transformations around the grave of unknown origins. The structure was classified as a grave only because of the cremated corpse remains. However, it is possible that it was just a place where corpses were burnt. In order to determine the function of the place accurately, more detailed excavations are required.”

Excluding the cremation pit (No. 7) the characteristics of the mass graves may be summarized as per Table 3.

5.2.4. The Significance of Unincinerated Corpses

Camp Sobibór was liquidated following the prisoner uprising and mass escape on 14 October 1943. This means that the SS had a full year to exhume the hypothetical 80,000 bodies in the burial pits. On average they would therefore have to exhume merely $(80,000 \div 365 =)$ 219 corpses per day. Given that the work reportedly was carried out by a big excavator and a special group of Jewish prisoners who apparently

worked full time digging up and transporting the bodies,³³⁸ this task would have been easily accomplishable. Yet in spite of this, 4 out of 6 mass graves discovered by Kola contain remains of unincinerated, saponified corpses in their lower strata. This finding is obviously incompatible with the claim that the SS did their best to eradicate all traces of their alleged crime.³³⁹

Where did the unincinerated corpses come from? One hypothesis could be that they are the remains of detainees shot during the uprising. According to Arad, those shot during the revolt or executed afterward numbered between 380 and 420.³⁴⁰ As the camp was hurriedly liquidated during the following weeks and as there was a lack of work force in the days immediately after the revolt (the dismantling of the camp was reportedly done by a group of Jews brought in from Treblinka), it is possible that their corpses were buried without prior cremation.

In Kola's preliminary survey report from 2000 it is further made clear that the corpses are not distributed over the entire area of graves No. 4-6. Of the initial 15 core samples taken on the eastern side of the memorial mound,³⁴¹ 6 encountered human remains; 4 of those contained "fragments of burnt human bones and charcoal," whereas 2 contained both human ashes and remains of saponified corpses.³⁴²

What seems to speak against this hypothesis is the fact that the saponified corpses were found in the *lower* parts of graves No. 3-6, with "remains of cremated corpses" reported as present in the *upper* layers. How did this come about? One possible explanation is that the burial detail opened up already existing mass graves instead of digging new ones. The reason for this would have been to save time and labor: since infill soil is significantly less compact than undisturbed soil, it takes less time and effort to dig through it, and there are no roots in the way. After the burial of the uncremated corpses, which were possibly covered with lime, the graves would have been filled in with the old infill soil as well as the dug up cremated human remains and wood ashes. That the corpses were placed at the very bottom of the graves could easily be explained by cautiousness on the part of the SS – after the discovery of the Soviet massacre victims in the Katyn forest, the Germans would have

³³⁸ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 171.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-178.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 363f.

³⁴¹ These samples form a cross just to the south-east of the mound, most of which is inside the area of what Kola later designated as grave No. 4; cf. Document 6, p. 405.

³⁴² A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 302), pp. 90f.

been careful when carrying out mass burials of their own, so as to not risk having mass graves with corpses usable for atrocity propaganda fall into Soviet hands. Buried at a depth of 3-5 meters, the uncremated corpses would be difficult to find.

5.2.5. Area and Volume of the Graves

What is the actual area and volume of the Sobibór mass graves? In order to discuss this issue, one has to consider it as a two-fold problem: how reliable is Kola's estimate of the area and volume of the mass graves in their present state, and how large were the mass graves in their original state at the time of the liquidation of the camp in late 1943?

The method used by Kola to locate the Sobibór mass graves – a grid of manually executed probing drills with 5 meter intervals – is identical with that previously used by him at Belżec. It goes without saying that this method is highly approximative and that the mapped outlines of the graves are arbitrary to a certain degree. There is a very real possibility that the actual present volume of the graves is smaller than the stated 14,719 cubic meters. On the other hand we have no reason to believe that Kola has underestimated their dimensions.

As for the *original* area and volume of the graves, we know that, similar to Belżec and Treblinka, extensive wildcat diggings were carried out by local Poles at the former Sobibór camp site following the German retreat and that those clandestine searches for buried valuables continued for several years.³⁴³ According to the witness Thomas Blatt, who lived in Poland until 1957,³⁴⁴ the diggings continued “for about ten years” after the end of the war.³⁴⁵ The Polish witness Parkola describes one of the first wildcat excavations – carried out by a single man – as covering an area of about fifteen square meters.³⁴⁶ Gilead *et al.* report that such diggings have continued to occur even into the present century.³⁴⁷ Diggings are naturally aided by the fact that the soil at the former camp site is soft and sandy.

The witness Piwonski has further stated that, during the liquidation of the camp, Jewish workers had to fill in holes “that had been caused

³⁴³ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 191.

³⁴⁴ R.L: Rashke, *op. cit.* (note 44), p. 345.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

³⁴⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 191.

³⁴⁷ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 15.

by blowing up the concrete buildings.”³⁴⁶ To the wildcat pits should also be added the unknown number of diggings carried out by the surveyors of the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland.³⁴⁸ In this context one should further keep in mind that the mass graves were reportedly dug with oblique sidewalls, so that the surface areas of the pits were larger than the bottom areas.³⁴⁹

At Bełżec the activity of the wildcat diggers caused a “great number of human bones” and “ash from the corpses and from wood” to be spread over the surface of the camp,³⁵⁰ and as seen from the above quoted 1947 report of the Central Commission, this was the case also at Sobibór. It is entirely reasonable to assume that the more or less random diggings at Sobibór also deceptively enlarged the graves in camp III by destroying soil walls, thus connecting previously separate pits, or otherwise altered the original dimensions of the graves. When the holes were later filled in, bones and ashes from the surface mixed with sandy soil would have ended up in them, creating the illusion that they were part of the original graves.

As seen above, four out of six mass graves (#2, 3, 5, 6) are of irregular shape. There is no reason to assume, however, that originally they were not of regular shape, such as the square Grave No. 1. It follows that the irregularly shaped graves have probably been enlarged in the fashion described above. One may thus conclude with high probability that the original size of the mass graves was considerably smaller than Kola’s estimate of 14,718.75 m³.

As for the capacity of the Sobibór mass graves, we will simply note that the graves in their *present* size are able to contain the alleged number of 80,000 uncremated interred corpses, given a maximum density of 8 bodies per cubic meter,³⁵¹ but that this does not mean that 80,000 corpses *were* buried in them.

One might argue that it would make no sense to excavate such large pits if the Sobibór dead amounted to only some thousands. This argument, however, is fallacious for two reasons. First, if there were no

³⁴⁸ To this should further be added the mysterious excavations in camp III noted by Martin Gilbert in 1996, *op. cit.* (note 298).

³⁴⁹ That this claim corresponds to reality is indicated by the fact that in the first series of drillings made in hectare XVII south-west of the memorial mound (in the area of graves No. 1 and 2), the thickness of the grave strata varied between 60 and 430 cm; A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 302), p. 90.

³⁵⁰ C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), pp. 88f.

³⁵¹ C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), p. 137.

hundreds of thousands of corpses to dispose of, there would also exist no pressing need to save burial space. We know of several documented mass graves that have a density of 1-2 corpses per cubic meter.³⁵² Second, as already discussed, the original grave volume might have been significantly smaller than that estimated by Kola in 2001. It is therefore entirely possible that the mass graves at Sobibór contained only some thousands of corpses.

In their 2009 article, Gilead *et al.* reproduce a color photograph of the open field with the mass graves, taken from a weather balloon, accompanied by the following comment:³⁵³

“It appears to have delineated areas of mass graves in the open field, as defined by deeper green hues in the vegetation. This supports the conclusion of the 2001 coring activities carried out by Kola’s expedition.”

Those deep green areas are indeed clearly visible against the yellow-brownish color of the remaining field. This phenomenon, where the outlines of old graves are detectable due to changes in surface vegetation caused by increased nutritional support from decomposing human remains and ashes as well as the looser, more aerated character of the infill soil, is well known from forensic literature.³⁵⁴ But to what degree does the photograph actually support Kola’s data on the mass graves? To determine this we have placed it side by side with the plan of the 2000-2001 excavations also included with the article.³⁵⁵ Of the six burial pits identified by Kola, only two, graves No. 2 and 6, are matched by green areas of more or less the same shape and size. Grave No. 1 is visible only as a small, faint green smudge near the monument. The large graves No. 3 and 4 are only partially green, indicating that they are not joined together and may have originated as several smaller pits. The small grave No. 5 is partially obscured by the shadow of the rope connecting the camera-equipped balloon to the ground. “Grave” No. 7, the cremation pit, is not visible at all, implying that it was not used as an ash deposit and that the amount of cremated remains found in it was small. This comparison indicates that the present area – and in turn, vo-

³⁵² Cf. J.C Ball, “Air Photo Evidence” in: G. Rudolf (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 34), p. 270; C. Mattoigno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), p. 77.

³⁵³ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 31.

³⁵⁴ John Hunter, Margaret Cox (ed.), *Forensic archaeology: advances in theory and practice*, Routledge, New York 2005, pp. 30f.

³⁵⁵ Document 3, p. 402.

lume – of the mass graves is considerably smaller than estimated by Kola.

As seen above, the 1947 Central Commission report mentions a pit with an area of $(20 \times 5 =) 300 \text{ m}^2$, characterized as being filled with chloride of lime and located “close to the eastern limit of the camp.” Of the seven pits identified by Kola, graves No. 4 and 7 are the ones furthest to the east. However, grave 7, measuring $10 \times 3 \text{ m}$, is clearly too small to be the same pit. On the other hand, the area of grave No. 4 is $(1575 \div 300 =) 5.25$ times as large as the pit described in the report. Could it be that Grave No. 4 was drastically enlarged by various diggings, including those of the commission surveyors? According to Kola, limestone is among the contents of Grave No. 4.

Finally it should be noted that Kola’s findings regarding the Sobibór mass graves contradict certain conclusions arising from his own previous survey at Bełżec, where mass graves having a total volume of $21,310 \text{ m}^3$ were identified.

The Sobibór mass graves have an average depth of $(14,718.75 \div 3,210 =) 4.58 \text{ m}$ and a total area of $3,210 \text{ m}^2$. With a 30 cm layer of sand covering the interred corpses, the available burial space would have amounted to $([4.58 - 0.30] \times 3,210 =)$ approximately $13,739 \text{ m}^3$, resulting in a density of $(80,000 \div 13,739 =)$ approximately 5.8 bodies per cubic meter. On the other hand, at Bełżec the mass graves were estimated to have a total area of $5,490 \text{ m}^2$ and an average depth of 3.88 m, which means that $([3.88 - 0.30] \times 5,490 =)$ $19,654 \text{ m}^2$ of burial space would have been available. Since it is claimed that 434,508 uncremated corpses were buried at Bełżec, the density would have been $(434,508 \div 19,654 =)$ 22.1 bodies per m^3 .

If the alleged Bełżec victims had been buried with the same density as the alleged Sobibór victims, they would have occupied an effective volume of $(434,508 \div 5.8 =)$ 74,915 cubic meters, i.e. 3.5 times the total size of the mass graves discovered at Bełżec! This clearly contradicts the notion that the Sobibór camp staff did their best to utilize the available burial space as effectively as possible.

5.2.6. A Note on the Ground Water Level at Sobibór

After the successful prisoner revolt, the Sobibór camp was soon dissolved. To oversee this operation a number of SS men were transferred from Treblinka to Sobibór. One of them was Franz Suchomel, who in

the early 1960s left a brief account of his stay at Sobibór, in which we read:³⁵⁶

“I remember clearly that two Jews, a married couple from Holland, were found in Camp 1 hidden under the floor. By way of explanation I have to say that the barracks in Sobibór were constructed on top of meter high piles to avoid the danger of flooding.”

Suchomel later confirmed the swampy nature of the camp site in an interview conducted by Gitta Sereny sometime in the early 1970s:³⁵⁷

“In Sobibór [...] one couldn’t do any killing after the snow thawed because it was all under water. It was very damp at the best of times, but then it became a lake.”

The Sobibór camp was located in eastern Poland, a few kilometers southwest of the village of the same name, which is in turn situated on the Bug River and the former Soviet-German demarcation line. The camp was constructed on a piece of land immediately west of the Chełm-Włodawa railway line, facing the Sobibór train station. It was surrounded by a forest consisting predominantly of red pines,³⁵⁸ as well as by several marshland areas and a number of smaller lakes. As seen on a 1933 map of the area (a section of which is reproduced as Document 1, p. 401), there are patches of marshland marked out in the immediate vicinity of the future camp perimeter. The map further shows no less than six small lakes located within a 3 kilometer radius of the camp. The Bug River is found 2.5 kilometers to the east.

Regarding the location of the camp, Schelvis notes that “the single railway line [...] ran through marshland,”³⁵⁹ further noting that no deportation trains arrived to the camp between June and September 1942 because:³⁶⁰

“The railway line had subsided in various places between Chełm and Sobibór due to swampy soil conditions, slowing the trains down or even preventing them from using the track altogether.”

³⁵⁶ “Protocol of official examinations carried out in Altötting, Bavaria, on 24 January and 7 November 1962.” Quoted online at: www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/sobibor/sobiborliquidation.html

³⁵⁷ Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, Vintage Books, New York 1983, p. 115.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; R.L. Rashke, *op. cit.* (note 44), pp. 361f.; M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 82, 147.

³⁵⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 28.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 103f. In the German edition (*op. cit.* (note 70), p. 58, note 142) it is stated that this period lasted from the end of July to October and that the problems affected the stretch between Chełm and Włodawa.

Arad writes that “the whole area was swampy, wooded, and thinly populated.”³⁶¹ The 1933 map in fact shows symbols denoting marshland in the immediate vicinity of the future camp I.³⁶² At the beginning of his archeological survey in 2000, Kola identified an old drainage ditch at the former eastern border of the camp, beyond which a marsh emerges.³⁴⁹ How high then was the ground water level in the area of the “death camp proper”? During the 2001 survey of the former camp III area, Kola and his team discovered the remains of a well filled with sand (“Object C”) in the northern half of the hectare numbered XXV, not far from the mass graves. When excavating this well, ground water was encountered already at a depth of 3.60 m, and the work had to be halted at a depth of 5 m because of the steady inflow of ground water.

The 1933 map reveals that the Sobibór station is found at an elevation of 167 meters. Lake Spilno, about a kilometer to the west, has an elevation of 164 meters, as is also the case with the swampy area located north of the future camp area and the road to the village of Żłobek, just to the west of the railroad. This was likely also the ground water level. The brown contour lines around the camp area indicate that it had a higher elevation. A look at a modern topographical map of Sobibór³⁶³ in turn shows that the open, vaguely trapezoidal area with the memorial mound,³⁶⁴ where the mass graves are located, has an elevation of 170 meters.³⁶⁵ This means that the ground water level in this part of camp III was found (170 – 164 =) 6 m below the surface. It is known, however, that the ground water level varies with the seasons and rainfall (or the thawing of snow). It is also possible that the average level was somewhat different in 1942-43.

The location of the Sobibór camp was not chosen at random, but carefully selected by the SS Central Construction Office of the Lublin District.³⁶⁶ The local Polish witness Jan Piwonski states that German of-

³⁶¹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 30.

³⁶² That this was true also in the early 1940s is shown by the aforementioned sketch drawn in custody by Kurt Bolender (see note 308), which has the word *Moor* (bog) written just above (i.e. west of) the workshop area (= camp I).

³⁶³ Document 4, p. 403.

³⁶⁴ This monument is commonly referred to as the “mound of ashes” and described as containing ashes from the victims. However, when Kola investigated its contents, he discovered that it contains no human remains whatsoever; A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 302), p. 91.

³⁶⁵ A comparison with a picture showing the present day memorial structures overlaid on the Rutherford map (www.deathcamps.org/sobibor/pic/Sobibór.jpg) reveals that the small round spot with an elevation of 171.5 m, to the west of the mound, is located outside of the grave area.

³⁶⁶ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 30.

ficers visited the future camp site on three occasions during the autumn of 1941.³⁶⁷ According to Y. Arad there originally existed no plans to burn the victims at the Reinhardt camps, and the commencement of cremations at Sobibór in early autumn 1942 is said to have been caused by local reasons.³⁶⁸ This is claimed to mean that the people who decided on the location of the camp were looking for a spot where the bodies of several hundred thousand potential victims could be interred without problem. But why then choose Sobibór, located in the middle of marshland?

The Hagen court, in the reasoning of its verdict at the end of the Sobibór trial, stated:³⁶⁹

“As early as the summer of 1942, a different reason had brought about a partial change in the extermination mechanism: As a result of the heat, the corpse pits that had already been filled bulged upwards, releasing corpse water, attracting vermin, and filling the entire camp area with a frightful stench. Furthermore, the camp command feared an intoxication of the drinking water, which came from deep wells in the camp building [sic].”

This was the motive which caused the camp officials to disinter and burn the corpses. The danger of contaminating the ground water by the products of decomposing corpses had been known for decades. In 1904 Max Pauly had summarized the medical knowledge of his time as follows:³⁷⁰

“The decomposition [of the corpses] goes through several intermediate stages, involving corpse alkaloids or ptomaines (cadaverines) first discovered by Selmi of Bologna around 1870; they were later studied by Brieger, Baumert and others, but are still far from being completely known. Some of these substances are choline, neurine, saprine, neuridine, cadaverine, putrescine, mydaléine, muscarine, trimethyl amine, mydine. Some of them are extremely toxic and, furthermore, have the dangerous capacity of increasing the recep-

³⁶⁷ Statement made by Jan Piwonski in Lublin on 29 April 1975, ZStL 643/71-4-441; quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 27.

³⁶⁸ Cf. Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 171.

³⁶⁹ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 173. The last sentence reads in the original: “Die Lagerleitung befürchtete außerdem die Vergiftung des Trinkwassers, das im Lagergebäude durch Tiefbrunnen gewonnen wurde.” Ruckerl may possibly be referring to the camp kitchen or to a pump house.

³⁷⁰ Max Pauly, *Die Feuerbestattung*, Verlagsbuchhandlung von J.J. Weber, Leipzig, 1904, pp. 19f., 24.

tiveness of the body for an attack by and a spreading of the particular morbid agents. [...]

Ground water, even more so than soil or air, is suitable for the propagation of the decomposition products. It is all the more dangerous as the subterranean currents can take on changes which are not noticeable on the surface. Thus, it is entirely possible for wells on the cemetery itself or close to it to have good water, free from organic substances, whereas the secretions of the graves may be carried away by underground currents to reach wells or other types of usable water and then exercise their harmful potential."

For those very reasons the managers of the Theresienstadt ghetto decided to build the local crematorium.³⁷¹

"As early as the spring of 1942 the command of the ghetto decided on the construction of a crematorium. The cemetery being situated in a depression was sensitive to ground water; often the corpses were lowered in water-logged layers. The SS worried about the drinking water becoming contaminated."

Pery Broad declared that "in the large fish ponds in the vicinity of Birkenau, at Harmense for example," the fish were struck by a pandemic in the summer of 1942 and that "experts tied this event to a contamination of the ground water by corpse toxins."³⁷²

Although nowadays there is a tendency to consider such phenomena to be less dangerous, there are still directives for specific measures to ensure the health of the ground water:³⁷³

"When a large number of bodies require[s] disposal, for instance after a major disaster, the remains are most likely to be cremated. However, in many cases temporary storage facilities are required. In all cases, a 'wet' area must be designated to contain bodily fluids/wastes and chemicals. If drain discharges from this area are unsuitable (for example, a soakaway), then all drains must be sealed and liquids must be collected and disposed of safely by a specialist contractor."

³⁷¹ "Das Krematorium am Jüdischen Friedhof," www.ghetto-theresienstadt.info/pages/k/krematorium.htm

³⁷² P. Broad, "KZ-Auschwitz. Erinnerungen eines SS-Mannes der Politischen Abteilung in dem Konzentrationslager Auschwitz," in: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, Wydawnictwo Państwowe Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, No. 9, 1966, p. 27.

³⁷³ "Assessing the Groundwater Pollution Potential of Cemetery Developments," Environment Agency, <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SCHO0404BGLA-e-e.pdf>

This also applies to cemeteries where a rather limited number of corpses is interred in coffins, dispersed over a rather large area,³⁷⁴ although they do not present the same degree of risk as mass graves with an enormous number of corpses buried without coffins in a very limited area.

One therefore cannot believe that the two chains of command controlling the alleged extermination camps – Hitler, through the Führer chancellery and Wirth, on the one hand and Himmler, via Globocnik and Höfle, on the other – would have opted for a swampy area as the spot to be used for the burial of tens or hundreds of thousands of corpses, only to be forced to have them dug out again and incinerated at the first signs of the inevitable phenomena caused by the decomposition of the dead bodies.

It would not have required the mind of a genius to avoid this problem: it would have been easy to choose a site more suitable for the cremation of the corpses from the very beginning of the operation.

5.3. Fuel Requirements

5.3.1. The Percentage of Children among the Deportees

As we have seen in chapter 1, Schelvis comes to the following distribution by country of origin for the Jews deported to Sobibór:

– from Holland:	34,313
– from France:	3,500
– from the town of Skopje:	2,383
– from <i>Ostland</i> :	ca. 13,700
– from the General Government:	ca. 54,500
– from Slovakia:	28,284
– from the Protectorate:	ca. 10,000
– from Germany and Austria:	ca. 23,500

The transport lists of the Westerbork camp show a total of 34,324 deportees sent to Sobibór, 5,855 of whom are labeled “K[inder]”³⁷⁵ (children up to the age of 16), i.e. 17.05%. The two transports from

³⁷⁴ Ahmet S. Üçisik, Philip Rushbrook, “The Impact of Cemeteries on the Environment and Public Health. An Introductory Briefing,” Waste Management WHO Regional Office for Europe, European Centre for Environment and Health, Nancy Project Office, [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/euro/1998-99/EUR_ICP_EHNA_01_04_01\(A\).pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/euro/1998-99/EUR_ICP_EHNA_01_04_01(A).pdf)

³⁷⁵ ROD, C[64]312.1.

Drancy to Sobibór comprised a total of 2,002 deportees, among them 110 children up to the age of 16,³⁷⁶ i.e. about 5.5%. Schelvis³⁷⁷ has two more transports from Drancy which he assigns to Sobibór (departure from Drancy on 4 and 6 March 1943), but which Klarsfeld assigns to Majdanek. These transports comprised 2,001 deportees, with 7 boys and girls under the age of 17, i.e. about 0.35%.

The percentage of “Kinder” in all of the above Dutch and French transports thus amounts to 15.6% on average, or 1 out of 6 persons.

Helena Kubica estimates that out of the roughly 1,095,000 deportees to Auschwitz³⁷⁸ some 216,300³⁷⁹ were children, corresponding to 19.75% or 1 out of 5 persons.

For Poland H. Kubica finds some 66,000 children out of a total of 300,000 deportees, i.e. 22%; for Slovakia 9,000 out of 27,000 or 30%. She has a percentage of about 11.5% (2,636 out of 23,000 deportees) for Germany and Austria, and about 14.04% (6,460 out of 46,000) for the Protectorate (Theresienstadt).

Her estimate for Poland is probably too low. If we take as a yardstick the population of Polish Jews in the Łódź ghetto on 30 June 1942,³⁸⁰ there were 25,947 children under the age of 16 among the total of 96,874 persons, or some 26.8%. We may thus assume roughly 27% instead of 22%.

On the other hand, the estimate with respect to Slovakia is rather on the high side. According to Andrej Steiner, altogether 57,837 Jews were deported from Slovakia, among them 2,482 children below 4 years of age and another 4,581 between the ages of 4 and 10 years of age,³⁸¹ resulting in a total of 7,063 children below age 10 or 12.21% of the total. As compared to this, there were 12,891 children below age 10 in the Łódź ghetto, some 49.7% of all children. Hence, the percentage of children below the age of 16 deported from Slovakia may have been as high as 25%.

³⁷⁶ S. Klarsfeld, *op. cit.* (note 75), p. 17 (our pagination).

³⁷⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 217.

³⁷⁸ Franciszek Piper, *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz*, Verlag des Staatlichen Museums in Oświęcim, Oświęcim 1993, p. 200.

³⁷⁹ H. Kubica, “Kinder und Jugendliche im KL Auschwitz,” in: Waclaw Długoborski, Franciszek Piper (eds.), *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*, Verlag des Staatlichen Museums Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim 1999, vol. II, p. 349.

³⁸⁰ “Die Ghettobevölkerung am 30. Juni 1942 (laut Meldungen),” WAPL, PSZ, 863, pp. 16, 16a.

³⁸¹ State of Israel, *op. cit.* (note 137), vol. II, p. 912.

From Germany and Austria, 14,442 Jews were deported to the Łódź ghetto in 1941, among them 999 children less than 16 years old, or 6.91%.³⁸²

Five transports left Prague for Łódź in 1941 with 4,999 Jews on board, of whom 575 or 11.50%³⁸² were children below 16 years of age.

If we assume the highest percentages mentioned above, assigning to *Ostland* the ratio applied to Poland, we come to a total of some 36,400 children deported to Sobibór (out of whom 5,972 are on record) which would bring their percentage to $(36,400 \div 169,000^{383} \times 100 =)$ about 21.5% or practically 1 out of 5 persons.

5.3.2. The Average Weight of the Children

Based on scientific tables for the growth of children, the average weight of children below age 16 is about 30.5 kilograms.³⁸⁴ The tables cover children between 1 month and 16 years of age, giving weights spaced one year apart for the mid-point of the year concerned (i.e. 1 month, 6 months, 1.5, 2.5, 3.5... 16 years). The average weight given is applicable only if the ages of the children at Sobibór were distributed in the same manner as in the above tables. Actually, the nominative lists for three Dutch transports to Sobibór (those of 25 May, 1st June and 6 June 1943)³⁸⁵ with a total of 2,195 children under age 16 on board indicate that the number of older children is significantly higher (some 66.5% were more than 8 years old). This ratio amounts to about 63% for the 12 transports of the period between 3 March and 18 May. For the 14,442 Jews deported to Łódź from Germany and Austria the ratio is higher yet: some 70.2%, whereas for the Polish Jews in the Łódź ghetto itself it amounted to about 61.4%.

If we correct the above tables for the actual age distribution in the population concerned with higher percentages of children above the age of 10, we arrive at an average weight of 36.5 kg, which we will round off to 35 kilograms.

³⁸² “Eingesiedelte im Jahre 1941 aus dem Altreich, Wien, Prag, Luxemburg und aus Leslau und Umgebung,” WAPL, PSZ, 863, pp.76-81.

³⁸³ The total number of deportees (about 170,000) minus some 1,000 selected for work.

³⁸⁴ “Tabelle riassuntive per il calcolo del fabbisogno energetic” (Comparative tables for the calculation of energy requirements), www.abodybuilding.com/tab_ener.htm#tab1.

³⁸⁵ The transport lists have been published by J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 58), pp. 305-542.

Assuming an average weight of 70 kg for a normal adult, we thus come to a weighted average of 63 kg³⁸⁶ (4 adults of 70 kg and one child of 35 kg) for the deportees to Sobibór.

When dealing with the alleged gas chambers of Auschwitz, Robert Jan van Pelt accepted an average weight of 60 kg for the victims,³⁸⁷ a figure we will use in our calculations, rounding off the above value where applicable.

For the deportees, especially those coming from Poland, a weight loss due to second degree malnutrition may certainly apply (loss of 10% to 25% of their normal weight),³⁸⁸ bringing down the average weight to (65×0.75=) 45 kilograms. However, as we shall see below, this will not result in a significant reduction in the fuel requirements for the incineration, quite the opposite. We shall therefore stay with the average weight as set out above, giving more detailed explanations in section 5.3.5.

5.3.3. Fuel Requirements for the Cremation of One Body

Valuable information concerning the wood requirements for the cremation of human bodies in the open can be gathered from three systems developed in India.

The *Teri* apparatus is a true cremation oven, equipped with a closed chamber and an external gasifier in which wood is gasified, with the combustible gases thus generated fed into the cremation chamber by means of a blower. The result is a powerful flame.³⁸⁹

An official document explains:³⁹⁰

“It was observed that each cremation using the gasifier took approximately 60-80 minutes consuming 100-150 kg of wood as against 400-600 kg in the traditional system and about 250-300 in improved open fire system using a metal grate. After carrying out

³⁸⁶ An official publication by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment states: “The average weight of a corpse is assumed to be 65 kg. This assumption is based on the average weight of adults, children and emaciated corpses (from terminal illnesses).” “Cemeteries and Groundwater: An Examination of the Potential Contamination of Groundwater by Preservatives Containing Formaldehyde,” www.archive.org/stream/cemeteriesground00chanuoft/cemeteriesground00chanuoft_djvu.txt

³⁸⁷ Robert J. van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz. Evidence from the Irving Trial*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2002, pp. 470, 472.

³⁸⁸ A weight loss of 35-40% is normally fatal. S. McPhee, M. Papadakis, L. Tierney, *Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment*, McGraw-Hill Professional, 2008, p. 1085.

³⁸⁹ See www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRjsUh_bpcw

³⁹⁰ *Teri Development of gasifier based crematorium*, TERI Project Report No.1999BE63, New Delhi, 2003.

successful trials the gasifier based crematorium system has now been put into regular use at Ambernath. The time required for cremation ranged between 70–85 minutes while the specific fuelwood consumption ranged from 110 to 145 kg per cremation during trial runs.”

The second apparatus is the *Mokshda Green Cremation System*. It is basically a simplified cremation oven, open at either end, consisting of a cremation grate mounted above ground level, protected on both sides by a metal panel with small perforations. Two steel plates cover these panels at a certain distance from the former and support a heavy steel plate roof shaped like a truncated pyramid and carrying a tall chimney. A publicity pamphlet describes the apparatus, claiming that it “has brought down the wood consumption level to an average [of] 150 kg per cremation.”³⁹¹

Applying this to a body of 70 kg, the specific consumption would thus be 2.14 kg of wood per kg of body weight.

The third apparatus, labeled “improved open fire system using a metal grate” is the *Fuel Efficient Crematorium*, consisting of three connected brick walls, similar to a barbecue grill, about 1.5 m high, holding a metal cremation grate at a level of about 50 centimeters. This piece of equipment, open at either end, is the direct precursor of the Mokshda Green Cremation System and allows a 50% reduction in the amount of wood as compared to a traditional cremation which requires some 400 – 600 kilograms.³⁹² Hence, the *Fuel Efficient Crematorium* consumes some 200 – 300 kg of wood per cremation.

Thus, for a body of 70 kg, these operational data correspond to

- 7.14 kg of wood per kg of bodyweight for a traditional pyre
- 3.9 kg of wood per kg of body weight for a pyre equipped with a metal grate
- 1.8 kg of wood per kg of body weight for the cremation furnace.

Hence, for the cremation of corpses on the grates of Sobibór we would thus have a standard value of 3.9 kg of wood per kg of body weight.

³⁹¹ “Global Environment Facility,”

www.gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/India_Mokshda_Green_Cremation_System.pdf

³⁹² Council for advancement of peoples action and rural technology, Rural Technology Division, “Fuel Efficient Crematorium;” www.ruraltechindia.org/fec.htm. This document has been withdrawn, but can be found in a web archive: <http://web.archive.org/web/20051103042401/http://www.ruraltechindia.org/fec.htm>.

The differences in wood consumption mentioned above are essentially due to the combustion efficiency which is best in the *Teri* furnace, good in the *Mokshda* oven, and poor in the *Fuel Efficient Crematorium*.

No experimental data exist as far as the mass cremation of corpses in the open is concerned. However, one may draw conclusions on this important topic from the incineration of animals which had to be disposed of on account of their having died or been slaughtered in connection with infectious diseases.

A number of directives state the corresponding fuel requirements. However, they cannot be utilized as such, either because they also mention fuels other than wood (straw, coal, liquid fuels) or because they refer to the initial layout of the pyre, allowing for the addition of fuel depending upon the progress of the incineration.

The only reliable data refer to the technical study of the operational results of the *Air Curtain Burner*. This device for the cremation of animal carcasses consists of a burner and a powerful blower, linked to an enclosure of refractory material or to a ditch into which the carcasses are placed. Over two days, on 29 and 30 January 2002, two incinerations were carried out, involving 15 cattle carcasses each per day, for a total weight of 16.1 tons. The incinerations required 49 tons of timber, having an average humidity of about 20 percent.³⁹³

Fuel consumption thus was $(49 \div 16.1 =) 3.04$ kg of timber per kg of carcass, in spite of the favorable conditions provided by the *Air Curtain System*.

This result is confirmed by the observation that “approximately 350 kg of ash is produced per tonne of animal.”³⁹⁴ Since a typical fresh carcass contains approximately 32% dry matter, of which 52% is protein, 41% is fat, and 6% is ash,³⁹⁵ it follows that one ton of carcass weight contains $(1,000 \times 0.06 =) 60$ kg of ash, with the remainder of $(350 - 60 =) 290$ kg stemming from the wood. It is known that, “on the average, the

³⁹³ “Investigation into Burning Characteristics of an Air Curtain Burner,” www.airburners.eu/DEFRA_UK-Air_Curtain_Burner_Report_S-321.pdf.

³⁹⁴ J.A. Mercer, N. Hesketh, J. Hunt, D.H. Oughton, “Burning of carcasses,” [http://www-infocris.iaea.org/en/w3.exe\\$EAFull?ID=67#2725](http://www-infocris.iaea.org/en/w3.exe$EAFull?ID=67#2725). According to another source, “a typical pyre for 300 cows,” of a total weight of about 150 tons, produced “15 tonnes of carcass ash and 45 tonnes of other ash,” altogether 60 tons, i.e. 400 kg of ash per ton of carcass weight. “Environment Agency North West Region Area. Extracts from Submission to Cumbria County Council’s Inquiry into the Foot and Mouth Crisis,” <http://cmis.carlisle.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=6837>

³⁹⁵ “Carcass Disposal: A Comprehensive Review,” <http://fss.k-state.edu/FeaturedContent/CarcassDisposal/PDF%20Files/Executive%20Summary.pdf>.

burning of wood results in about 6-10% ashes³⁹⁶ with an average of 8%. Therefore the ash mentioned is furnished by $(290 \div 0.08 =)$ 3,625 kg of wood, yielding a specific consumption of 3.6 kg per kg of carcass weight.

Similar data are provided by the description of the incineration of poultry in Virginia: 2,268 tons of carcasses were burned by means of 10,000 tons of wood,³⁹⁷ i.e. using 4.4 kg of wood per kg of carcass weight.

In Carlo Mattogno's experiments with waste beef, a weight ratio of wood/flesh of 2.6 was needed in a makeshift closed furnace, of 3.1 in an open furnace and of 3.5 in a pit.³⁹⁸

For the mass cremation of corpses the above data allow us to assume a ratio of 3.5 on a weight by weight basis. The wood required to burn the corpse of an average deportee with a weight of 60 kg would thus be about 210 kilograms.

5.3.4. Decomposed Bodies

The above data concern fresh corpses. However, as we have seen above, 80,000 of the alleged 169,000 victims at Sobibór were initially buried. Later on, from October of 1942 onwards, they were exhumed and incinerated. The remainder of 89,000 victims was, instead, incinerated immediately.

The carcass of a dead adult sheep of a weight of 50 kg releases 7 – 8 kg of body fluid over the first week after its death, and 14 – 16 kg over the first two months; an adult cow of an initial weight of 500 to 600 kg will lose 80 and 160 kg respectively.³⁹⁹ However, loss of body fluids will continue for months. According to another source, “animal leachate e.g. body fluids from carcasses are released (about 0.1 m³ per adult sheep and 1.0 m³ per adult cow) within the first year, and gas.”⁴⁰⁰ Dyan

³⁹⁶ <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~blpprt/bestwoodash.html>

³⁹⁷ www.deq.virginia.gov/vpa/pdf/CarcassIncinerationPres-NatCarcassDisposalSymp-12-2006.pdf

³⁹⁸ Carlo Mattogno, “Combustion Experiments with Flesh and Animal Fat on cremations in pits in the alleged extermination camps of the Third Reich,” in: *The Revisionist*, vol. 2, Number 1, February 2004, pp. 64-72.

³⁹⁹ “Carcass Disposal Options: A Multidisciplinary Perspective,” <https://www.ift.org/fooddefense/8-Nutsch.pdf>

⁴⁰⁰ “Burial of Carcasses,” www.strategyec.org.uk/EURANOS_D6C1R1/Euranosdatasheets/associateddocs/Burial%20of%20carcasses.doc; this document has since been moved to www.docstoc.com/docs/17701393/Burial-of-carcasses

Pratt has monitored this for up to 25 months after the burial of the carcasses.⁴⁰¹ 466,312 carcasses were buried between the end of March and 7 May 2001 in Cumbria (northern England), and a system for the recovery of the body fluids was installed. Even as late as 2006 some 240 cubic meters of leachate were collected in a week.⁴⁰²

During the process of decomposition the soft parts of the carcass turn into body fluids, and this phase of the process often goes on for over a year.⁴⁰³ This process also affects the proteins and the triglycerides (body fat), which decompose into glycerol and fatty acids.⁴⁰⁴

From the point of view of heat technology, the body will lose not only water – which, when it comes to combustion, would be an advantage – but also combustible substances, which represents a disadvantage.

Assuming that the human body consists on average of 64% water, 14% fat and 15.3% proteins,⁴⁰⁵ a corpse of 60 kg contains 34.80 kg of water, 8.40 kg of fat, and 9.18 kg of proteins.

The heat consumption for the evaporation of body water and the superheating of the steam to 800°C thus amounts to $[640+(0.493 \times 700)] \approx 986$ kcal for 1 kg of water. Animal fat has a heating value of some 9,500 kcal/kg, hence, in the thermal balance the heat added by 1 kg of fat is equal to the heat lost by the vaporization of $(9,500 \div 986 =) 9.6$ kg of water. For the proteins with a heat value of about 5,400 kcal/kg this ratio is roughly 1:5.5 in terms of weight.

Therefore, even assuming an extreme case where the alleged corpses at Sobibór would have lost their total water content over a period of 4 months, the heat of vaporization thus saved would have been $38.4 \times [640+(0.493 \times 700)] \approx 37,800$ kcal for each corpse.

⁴⁰¹ D. Pratt, "Environmental Impact of Livestock Mortalities Burial," <http://library2.usask.ca/theses/available/etd-05212009-160732/unrestricted/DyanPrattMScThesis.pdf>

⁴⁰² "Foot and Mouth Disease in Cumbria – 2001," www.visitcumbria.com/footandmouth.htm.

⁴⁰³ Giorgio Canuto, Sergio Tovo, *Medicina legale e delle assicurazioni*, Piccin, Padova 1996, p.73.

⁴⁰⁴ "The decay process," http://media.wiley.com/product_data/excerpt/65/04700127/0470012765.pdf; Shari L. Forbes, "Decomposition Chemistry in a Burial Environment," in: Mark Tibbert, David O. Carter (eds.), *Soil Analysis in Forensic Taphonomy*, CRC Press, Boca Raton (FL) 2008, pp. 205-209.

⁴⁰⁵ Douglas J. Davies, Lewis H. Mates (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Cremation*, Ashgate, London 2005, p. 134.

To balance this saving in heat, a loss of, say, 40% of body fat and 12% of proteins would have been sufficient: $[(0.4 \times 8.4 \times 9,500) + (0.12 \times 9.18 \times 5,400)] \approx$ circa 37,800 kcal.

Experiments with animal carcasses carried out in England in 2001 have shown, however, that this hypothesis is far too optimistic.

On 6 April 2001, 7,000 carcasses of sheep were unearthed at Mynydd Epynt (Wales). The *Epynt Action Group* reports that, together with an additional 14,000 carcasses, they caused such environmental problems that it became necessary to burn them. This took place over a period of 4 months from 24 April until the end of August. The task turned out to be very hard, because the incineration required an amount of fuel and a timeframe far in excess of those that had been observed with fresh carcasses.⁴⁰⁶

The 21,000 carcasses of a total weight of 1,050 tons⁴⁰⁷ necessitated, in fact, 4,000 tons of coal, or 3.8 kg of coal per kg of carcass weight. If 1 kg of coal has a heating value of 6,200 kcal⁴⁰⁸ as compared to dry wood with a water content of 20% having 6,800 BTU/lb,⁴⁰⁹ the equivalent of 3,800 kcal/kg, then 1 kg of coal corresponds to some 1.6 kg of dry wood. Hence, the above consumption of coal corresponds to an equivalent of $(3.8 \times 1.6 =)$ 6.0 kg of dry wood per kg of carcass weight.

The report explains:⁴⁰⁶

“When the decision was finally taken to remove the carcasses from the pit they had disintegrated to an extent that it was impossible to remove all the carcasses and those that were removed required approximately 120 tons of coal per day to burn about 50 carcasses (hence the astounding result of 20,000 tons of ash^[410] to be removed).”

5.3.5. Emaciated Corpses

The following considerations concern bodies showing second degree malnutrition. During the so-called *Minnesota Starvation Experiment* (November 1944 through December 1945), 36 volunteers underwent a restricted diet over 24 weeks and saw their weight dropping from an ini-

⁴⁰⁶ “Epynt Action Group,” www.epp-ed.org/Activities/pcurrentissues/fmd/doc/contribution-EpyntActionGroup.pdf.

⁴⁰⁷ $21,000 \times 50 \div 1,000 = 1,050$ tons.

⁴⁰⁸ www.engineeringtoolbox.com/fuels-higher-calorific-values-d_169.html

⁴⁰⁹ http://cta.ornl.gov/bedb/appendix_a/The_Effect_of_Moisture_Content_on_Wood_Heat_Content.xls

⁴¹⁰ This amount stemmed from the cremation of 40,000 carcasses.

tial average of 69.4 kg to 52.6 kg at the end of the period. On average they lost 16.8 kg or 24.4%, split up in the following manner:⁴¹¹

- Water: 37% of total loss or 6.2 kg
- Proteins: 9% of total loss or 1.5 kg
- Fat: 54% of total loss or 9.1 kg

As we have seen above, the heat loss brought about by the loss of 1.5 kg of proteins is the equivalent of the heat necessary to evaporate $(1.5 \times 5.5 =)$ 8.2 kg of water, whereas the 9.1 kg of fat lost would have evaporated $(9.1 \times 9.6 =)$ 86.3 kg of water, for a total of 94.5 kg of water. Since body water dropped by only 6.2 kg during the emaciation process, the negative effect of the loss of fat and proteins is enormous, corresponding as it does to the heat of vaporization of $(94.5 - 6.2 =)$ 88.3 kg of water.

In other words, the loss of 6.2 kg of body water saves some $6.2 \times (640 + 0.493 \times 700) \approx 6,100$ kcal in terms of fuel requirements, as opposed to a loss of available fuel of $(9.1 \times 9,500 + 1.5 \times 5,400) \approx 94,500$ kcal caused by the loss of body fat and proteins. This results in a negative balance of some 88,400 kcal, the equivalent of 23 kg of dry wood.

In conclusion it may be said that, even though the average weight of the deportees may actually have been lower⁴¹² than the values computed above, this would not have brought about any benefit as far as the thermal balance is concerned; on the contrary, it would have constituted a disadvantage, as it would have raised the fuel requirements.

5.3.6. Factors Influencing the Cremation

Available information on the burning of carcasses tells us that there are two factors favoring the combustion: the fat content of the carcasses and the dryness of the wood:

*“A very important factor observed during the incineration process was that carcass body fat added significantly to the incineration rate. It was observed that the small carcasses weighing less than 100 pounds [45 kg] were not incinerated as quickly as the carcasses with increased body fat. The body fat appeared to increase the incineration rate and provide higher burn temperatures.”*⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ Flamini Fidanza, “Effects of starvation on body composition,” www.ajcn.org/cgi/reprint/33/7/1562.pdf

⁴¹² But T. Blatt writes: “There was no end to the quest for efficiency: it was found that the pyres burned hotter if *fat* women were alternated with the wood.” T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 18.

⁴¹³ “Swine carcass disposal evaluation using Air Curtain Incinerator System, Model T-359,”

*“Open-air burning is the most lengthy of all incineration processes. The type of species burned influences the length of time; the greater the percentage of animal fat, the more efficient [sic] a carcass will burn [...]. Swine have a higher fat content than other species and will burn most quickly [...].”*³⁹⁵

As far as the second factor is concerned, it has been ascertained that “dry wood for fuel is critical to ensuring a proper air/fuel mixture”;³⁹⁵ furthermore, “experience gained in North Carolina in 1999 (following Hurricane Floyd) and Texas (following flooding in 1998) confirms the importance of having dry wood for incineration”;³⁹⁵ finally, “kindling wood should be dry, have a low moisture content, and not come from green vegetation.”³⁹⁵ This became evident during a poorly run incineration:³⁹⁵

“An excellent example of trial-and-error occurred during the 2002 AI[avian influenza]-related disposal effort in Virginia: After burning several tons of [poultry] carcasses at an extremely slow rate, it was quickly determined that wood from the landfill was not a good fuel source due to its high moisture content.”

We must also look at the quality of the burning process:⁴¹⁴

“Smoke from such fires can be high in particulates and/or produce offensive odors if the burn is not complete.”

Obviously, “successful burning of carcasses is somewhat dependent on weather conditions (rain can hamper effectiveness).”⁴¹⁴

5.3.7. Wood Requirements for Corpse Cremation at Sobibór

These considerations having been set forth, we will now return to the cremation of the alleged corpses at Sobibór. As the corpses already buried could not be burned with an amount of fuel lower than that need for fresh corpses, even needing more fuel in all likelihood, it is safe to assume a ratio of 3.5 kg of dry wood per kg of body weight for all corpses.

Before attempting to evaluate the amount of wood needed for the cremation, we must first go back to the description of the operations

December 19 - 20, 1994. Pilot Point, Texas. U.S. Department of Agriculture/Texas Animal Health Commission, www.airburners.com/DATA-FILES_Tech/ab_swine_report.pdf
⁴¹⁴ B. Ellis, “Carcass Disposal Issues in Recent Disasters, Accepted Methods, and Suggested Plan to Mitigate Future Events,”
<http://ecommons.txstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1068&context=arp>

provided by Holocaust historiography. The tribunal at Hagen in Germany accepted the following:⁴¹⁵

“A heavy excavator with an outrigger clamshell was then brought into the camp, with Jewish detainee laborers having to assist. The partly decomposed corpses were lifted out of the pits by the excavator and then burned on large grates in a prearranged but as yet empty pit. The grates consisted of old railway rails which had been placed over concrete foundations. From then on, all corpses stemming from the gassings were immediately burned over these fires, also during the night. The light from the fires was visible not only within the camp, but also outside, and the stench of scorched flesh filled the air all around.”

Schelvis describes the matter as follows:⁴¹⁶

“It was then decided to start burning the bodies instead, and to get a machine in to dig up the tens of thousands of buried bodies to burn them as well. In the autumn of 1942 a heavy machine arrived in the middle of the night. [...] It was of a type similar to the one used at Treblinka. The machine was taken to Lager 3 and, within a few days, work was begun on the very spot where the third grave was to be dug, with the digger pulling out trees and roots. A pit was excavated, but it was smaller and shallower than the other two. Once it was finished, rails were criss-crossed over the top, forming a rudimentary grid. The grabber was then used to excavate the decomposing bodies from the two existing mass graves and to haul them over to the new pit. The operator would drive right up [to] the grid, where the Arbeitshäftlinge [inmate workers] from Lager 3 piled the bodies into human pyramids. Then they were burnt.

Once the Germans had started using the cremating pit, all the gassed bodies were taken there straight from the gas chambers to be burnt immediately. Both of the mass graves were eventually cleared and filled in with sand and dirt, and trees were planted in the soil covering them.

The cremation of the exhumed bodies, of which there were already more than 100,000, required huge quantities of wood, but plenty could be found in the neighbouring forest. A Waldkommando was formed, consisting of about thirty Arbeitshäftlinge. They had to cut down large numbers of trees and chop up the wood under the

⁴¹⁵ A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 173.

⁴¹⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 111f.

supervision of a few SS men and Ukrainian guards. To begin with, only young, strong men were chosen for the commando; later young women also became eligible. One of the few postcards that remain reveals that Walter Poppert from the Netherlands was the commando foreman at the end of August 1943.

The mass cremations resulted in huge fires, which flared up so high they could be seen far and wide, especially at night. The Ukrainians in their watchtowers could see the flames whenever the wind blew in their direction, making it hard for them to breathe. They were visible even from Piwonski's house in the village of Zlobek three kilometres to the north-west, and the stench was also noticeable from there. Some Ukrainians told him that in a single day as many as 5,000 to 6,000 bodies were exhumed and burnt."

Schelvis later comes back to this question and writes:⁴¹⁷

"When it was decided around September 1942 to burn the bodies instead of burying them, firewood had to be collected from the nearby forest. A Waldkommando was formed, initially consisting of 20 to 25 men – the composition varying each day – who had to fell trees and chop them up. [...] The work was carried out in an area situated between one and three kilometres away."

Finally, Zdzisław Łukaszewicz writes:⁴¹⁸

"The burning of the corpses was, however, difficult to hide, as the wind would spread a specific smell of fire all around and because the smoke and the fire from the burn sites were visible from far away."

As we have already seen, Sobibór was surrounded by a forest consisting mainly of red pines. The wood of that tree has an upper heating value of 9,078 BTU/lb or 5,040 kcal/kg.⁴¹⁹ However, green wood contains at least 60% of water⁴²⁰ and has a heating value of only some

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴¹⁸ Z. Łukaszewicz, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 55.

⁴¹⁹ Peter J. Ince, "How to Estimate Recoverable Heat Energy in Wood or Bark Fuels," www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documnts/fplgtr/fplgtr29.pdf.

⁴²⁰ "The green moisture content of wood is normally above 60 percent, and can range as high as 120 percent for some species," in: "Moisture Content of 'Seasoned' Firewood," www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/wfiles/W179.pdf; "Mostly English and European Oak, when freshly felled, has a moisture content of between 60% and 80%," in: "South Downs Green Wood Centre – Timber Frame Green Oak Timber Frames," www.southdownsgreenwoodcentre.co.uk/timberframes.html; "What is the moisture content (MC) of wood compared to its dry weight? Typically 60% for green hardwoods, up to double that for softwoods." John Sankey, "Wood Moisture," www.johnsankey.ca/wetwood.html

1,900 kcal/kg.⁴²¹ At 60% humidity, red pine has a heating value of about 2,000 kcal/kg – without taking into account the heat required to evaporate this water during combustion (640 kcal/kg of water). At a water content of 25% the heating value is 3,780 kcal/kg⁴²²

It follows that 1 kg of dry wood (20% humidity) with a calorific value of 3,800 kcal/kg is the equivalent of 1.9 kg of green wood.

Thus, for the cremation of a corpse at Sobibór, some (210×1.9=) 400 kg of fresh wood were needed. Thomas Blatt, however, asserts that “the pyre, sometimes more than three yards high, was then doused with kerosene^[423] and ignited.”⁴²⁴ Kurt Ticho/Thomas speaks also of coal as fuel for the cremations.⁴²⁵ To demonstrate *a fortiori* the inconsistency of the Holocaust thesis, we will assume that the use of kerosene and/or coal would have brought down the fresh wood requirements by one quarter, i.e. to 300 kg per corpse, even though such a hypothesis would be rather unlikely.⁴²⁶

What is more, the Third Reich could not afford to waste gasoline or other liquid fuels in such a manner. Schelvis tells us:⁴²⁷

“The pressing shortage of petrol and fuel oil had turned peat into a significant energy resource, as it was suitable not only for burning in stoves, but also as a fuel for generators. Globocnik complained about his dwindling petrol rations and of barely being able to keep his gassing engines running.”

⁴²¹ See note 409: 3,400 Btu/lb = circa 1,900 Kcal/kg.

⁴²² “Energie rinnovabili” (renewable energies), [www.pd.camcom.it/dev_cciaa/Web_nsf/C1256C75005AA1D4C125735200246A54/\\$file/biomasse.pdf](http://www.pd.camcom.it/dev_cciaa/Web_nsf/C1256C75005AA1D4C125735200246A54/$file/biomasse.pdf); according to other sources, the heating value is 3,700-3,800 kcal/kg for a humidity of 12-15%: www.cofea.it/public/all_00029.pdf

⁴²³ In a later German version (2004) quoted by Jens Hoffman, the term “Benzin” (gasoline) appears here, presumably with the consent of Thomas Blatt. See J. Hoffmann, “*Das kann man nicht erzählen.*” “*Aktion 1005.*” *Wie die Nazis die Spuren ihrer Massenmorde in Osteuropa beseitigten*, KVV konkret, Hamburg 2008, p. 244. The fuel value of gasoline is 10,500 Kcal/kg, almost identical to that of kerosene. It must be noted, however, that the use of gasoline would have been very dangerous on account of its volatility: by the time the corpses would have been thoroughly doused, ignition could have caused an explosion of the gasoline/air mixture.

⁴²⁴ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 18.

⁴²⁵ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 78.

⁴²⁶ For example, in order to replace the heat produced by 100 kg of fresh wood, $[(2,000 \times 100) \div 10,300 =]$ 19,4 liters of kerosene (or 19 liters of gasoline), or else $[(2,000 \times 100) \div 6,200 =]$ 32.2 kg of coal per corpse would have been required, for a total of $(169,000 \times 19.4 =)$ 3,278,600 liters of kerosene (or 3,211,000 liters of gasoline) or $(169,000 \times 32.2 =)$ 5,441,800 kg of coal, or amounts intermediate between the two, if both were used.

⁴²⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 139.

On 4 September 1942 he therefore wrote to SS-*Hauptsturmführer* W. Grothmann, Himmler's adjutant at the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA, Imperial Security Main Office) in Berlin, asking to be assigned "*mehr Treibstoff*" (more fuel).⁴²⁸

Even so, the requirements of green wood for the Sobibór cremations would have amounted to $(169,000 \times 0.3 =) 50,700$ tons.

The forests in the Lublin area, including those around Sobibór, presently contain some 224 m^3 of wood per ha⁴²⁹ or 197 tons,⁴³⁰ which means that the 30 workers of the *Waldkommando* would have had to cut down $(57,700 \div 197 =)$ about 293 ha of forest, corresponding to nearly 3 km^2 or more than a square mile.

If we assume that the burnings went on continuously for 12 months from October 1942 through October 1943, then the 30 men of the forest detail would have had to fell and bring in $(50,700 \div 365 =)$ ca. 139 tons of lumber every day – an impossible task.

With traditional tools (axes, saws, billhooks), 6 lumberjacks working from dawn to dusk needed 15 days to fell, saw, and split 50 tons of wood.⁴³¹ This translates to $(50 \div 15 \div 6 =)$ 0.55 tons of wood per man-day, which means that the 30 detainees of the forest detail would have been able to handle $(0.55 \times 30 =)$ 16.5 tons of wood per day, but the daily requirements (to cremate the total number of victims within 12 months, up to October 1943) were 139 tons and would have taken more than 8 days to provide. A full $(50,700 \div 16.5 =)$ 3,072 working days, or 8 years and 5 months, would have been needed to fell and prepare the 50,700 tons of fresh wood needed to cremate 169,000 corpses!

This wood would also have had to be moved into the camp, an operation which would have required 28 truckload movements per day over 365 days. But there is no testimony mentioning this enormous load. As against this, the aerial photographs of the Sobibór region, taken on 11 July 1940 and 30 May 1944,⁴³² do not show any apparent reduction in the wooded area around the camp – even indicating an increase in the

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138 (facsimile of the document).

⁴²⁹ *Przyroda*, www.wios.lublin.pl/tiki-download_file.php?fileId=232.

⁴³⁰ The weight of freshly cut red pine is 880 kg per cubic meter. "Dizionario forestale," www.regione.fvg.it/rafv/export/sites/default/RAFVG/AT9/ARG5/allegati/Dizionario_forestale_link.pdf

⁴³¹ "I Carbonai di Cappadocia," www.aequa.org/public/documenti/AOnLine/CarbonaiCappadocia.DOC.

⁴³² John C. Ball, *Air Photo Evidence*. Ball Resource Services Limited, Delta, B.C., Canada, 1992, pp. 99-101; "Mapping Sobibór," www.deathcamps.org/sobibor/maps.html.

vegetation on the southern side – nor did the Polish investigators raise this important issue.

5.3.8. The Duration of the Cremation

According to the official Holocaust historiography, the cremation of the corpses was carried out in a trench, on grates made of railway rails which rested on blocks of concrete. This trench, A. Kola informs us, measured 10×3 meters and was 90 centimeters deep.⁴³³

For the assessment of the duration of cremations we may base ourselves on the cremation of animal carcasses. Between 1 p.m. on 15 April 2001 and 1 p.m. on 18 April two pyres were operated at Whithorn in Scotland. They measured 50 by 1.5 m each and allowed the cremation of 511 head of cattle, 90 sheep, and 3 pigs with a combined weight of 260,300 kg⁴³⁴ on a total surface area of 150 square meters. Taking the smaller pit area at Sobibór into account, this corresponds to some $(260,300 \times 30 / 150 =)$ 52,060 kg in three days.

For the fresh corpses we have established an average weight of 60 kg, hence their total weight amounts to $(89,000 \times 60 / 1000 =)$ about 5,340 tons. Assuming that the previously buried corpses had lost all of their body water, their residual weight would be $(60 - [60 \times 0.64] =)$ 21.6 kg each, and their total weight would amount to $(80,000 \times 21.6 / 1000 =)$ 1,728 tons. Thus, the total combined weight of the two types of corpses would be $(5,340 + 1,728 =)$ 7,068 tons, with an average weight of 41.8 kg for each corpse.

The 52,060 kg mentioned above would thus correspond to 1,200 corpses.

We must, however, consider that in the case taken as a model the three days in question referred to the actual duration of the fire consuming the carcasses, whereas at Sobibór a continuous cremation of this kind could not have been implemented in view of the working hours in force in the camp: from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. (in the summer) or to 5 p.m. (in the winter).⁴³⁵ Actually, “*die Arbeitsjuden konnten nachts schlafen*” (the

⁴³³ Cf. chapter 5.2.3.

⁴³⁴ We assume an average weight of 500 kg per cow, 100 kg per pig, 50 kg per sheep. Paul Watkiss, Alison Smith, AEA Technology Environment, “CBA of Foot and Mouth Disease Control Strategies: Environmental Impacts,” www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/fmd/documents/environmental_report.pdf; According to the official UK agricultural statistics, the average weights are 335, 80, and 18.2 kg respectively (*ibid.*).

⁴³⁵ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 46.

Jewish workers could sleep at night),⁴³⁶ hence they worked at most for 14 hours each day, which means that over one working day they could burn ($[(400 \div 24) \times 14 =]$ circa 230 corpses.

Thomas Blatt asserts that the pyres were “more than three yards high”⁴³⁷ (i.e. roughly 3 meters). However, the only incineration site identified for Sobibór (cf. above) covered a surface area of 30 square meters and was 90 centimeters deep. Actually, the volume below ground level should not be added to that of the pyre, because it was needed for the supply of combustion air, but we will still take it into account and thus assume a pyre 4 meters high with a total volume of some 120 cubic meters. One cubic meter of solid wood (i.e. without any air space between logs) yields a volume of 1.4 cubic meters when stacked in the form of sawn and/or split logs.⁴³⁸ Wood of red pine immediately upon cutting weighs 880 kg per cubic meter, hence the weight of a pile of such wood, stacked, occupying one cubic meter (including air space) would be about 630 kilograms. This amount of wood would have been sufficient for the incineration of 2 corpses, which would themselves have occupied a space of some 80 liters or 0.08 cubic meters. In practical terms, the volume of 300 kg of wood plus one corpse would have been roughly half a cubic meter.

It follows that one pyre of 120 cubic meters in overall volume would have contained about 240 corpses. We must, however, take into consideration that 1 cubic meter of stacked wood is not equivalent to 1 cubic meter of pyre volume, because in this case additional space for the passage of combustion air must be provided. Hence, a cubic meter of stacked red pine in a pyre would weigh less than 630 kg, and the actual incineration capacity would have been less than the theoretical value of 240 corpses estimated above. For our subsequent calculations we therefore use a value of 230 corpses.

To the time needed for the actual cremation we have to add the time it took to build the pyre and the time needed for its dismantling, i.e. the removal of the ash. Each load of 230 bodies thus involved:

1) The building of the pyre, using $(230 \times 0.3 =)$ 69 tons of green wood and 230 corpses.

⁴³⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 135.

⁴³⁷ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 18.

⁴³⁸ Workshop on: “Le biomasse agricole e forestali nello scenario energetico nazionale” (agricultural and forestry biomass from the point of view of national energy) Progetto Fuoco 2004, Verona (18-19 March 2004), www.progettofuoco.com/media/piemmeti/documents/sezione_3/Sez_III_Hellrigl.pdf

2) One day for the cremation as such.

3) The removal of $(230 \times 0.06^{439} \times 0.35 =)$ 4.8 tons of ash (assuming that 350 kg of ash was produced per ton of corpses cremated).

Given an average specific gravity of 0.4 for the ash, the ash volume would have come to $(4.8 \times 0.4 =)$ 11 m³ per day. This means that the cremation trench with its volume of $(10 \times 3 \times 0.9 =)$ 27 m³ would have filled up with ash within two cremations.

Even if we assume that operations 1 and 3 above could have been carried out within a total of 24 hours (one working day), then the pyre could have incinerated 230 corpses within two days and the cremation of all alleged victims would have taken $(169,000 \div 230 \times 2 =)$ ca. 1,450 days, i.e. some 49 months or 4 years and 1 month, thus ending in November of 1946.

As far as the removal of the ash is concerned, we must also consider the rate of cooling of the ash. In the experimental cremation of animal flesh in a small pit carried out by Carlo Mattogno it turned out that 14 hours after the extinction of the flames the ash still had a temperature of 320°C and 160°C after 29 hours.⁴⁴⁰ At Sobibór the greater volume of ash would certainly have needed a day and a half for cooling down to a temperature at which it could be safely handled – we must not forget, after all, that the ash is reported to have contained bone fragments, which had to be crushed by hand. Forced cooling, e.g. by means of water, would have resulted in a layer of soaked ash and soil in the pit which would have caused a corresponding loss of heat in the succeeding cremation due to evaporation of the water.

In mainstream Holocaust historiography the descriptions of the fires provided above speak of smoke and dust as phenomena which normally accompanied the incinerations, but this only goes to show, as we have already noted, that the combustion proceeded poorly.

We must also keep in mind that, while fresh corpses could be arranged on the grate in a somewhat orderly fashion allowing for open spaces to be provided for the passage of air, the unearthed corpses were simply dumped from the excavator, forming vague piles similar to the shapeless masses of exhumed carcasses seen at Mynydd Epynt which

⁴³⁹ The percentage of ash is calculated on the basis of an average weight of 60 and not 41.8 kg, because the loss of water (or body fluids) from the corpse has no effect on its ash content.

⁴⁴⁰ C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 398), p. 70. The experiment was carried out in February.

we have spoken of above and which required amounts of fuel and burning times far in excess of the fresh carcasses.

This signifies that the cremation of the 80,000 corpses reportedly unearthed would have taken much longer and would have required much more wood than the cremation of the 89,000 fresh corpses.

Furthermore climatic and weather conditions slowing down the cremation process must be taken into account as well, in particular days of rain, snow, and frost during the winter months.

5.3.9. The Ashes

The human body contains about 5% ash,⁴⁰⁵ similar to the ash content of cattle (6%). We will assume a value of 6% by volume for the wood, because it is fresh wood, very rich in water. Hence, the 169,000 corpses will yield ($169,000 \times 60 \times 0.05 =$) 507,000 kg or 507 tons of ash, with the wood contributing ($169,000 \times 300 \times 0.06 =$) 3,042,000 kg or 3,042 tons, resulting in a total of 3,549 tons of ash.

We come to the same result if we assume that one ton of corpses plus the necessary wood yield 350 kg of ash.

Concerning the ash found in the camp, A. Kola asserts:³⁰⁴

“Particularly noticeable traces of cremation occurred in the lower parts of the graves where distinct layers of scorched bones, with a thickness up to 40-60 cm, could be identified”

But this in disagreement with his description of the contents of the individual pits which claims that “the lower parts” of pits number 3, 4, 5, and 6 did not contain “clearly identifiable layers of burnt bones having a thickness of 40 to 60 cm” but “remains of uncremated corpses in a state of saponification” whereas “in the upper layers” there were “remains of cremated corpses.” Pits number 1 and 2 also contained “remains of cremated corpses.” Such statements are not specific enough to permit a quantitative evaluation of the ash present in the camp.

Still, even if we were to accept that all pits contained a layer of some 50 cm of wood and corpse ash from cremations, not mixed with limestone and sand (which Kola mentions in particular for pit number 3), the respective volume would be ($3,210 \times 0.5 =$) 1,605 m³, equal to ($1,605 \times 0.4 =$) 642 tons, corresponding to about 34,500 corpses. In this somewhat unrealistic hypothesis we would still be left with another 2,900 tons of ash, enough for 580 truckloads or 100 railway freight cars. Where would such enormous quantities of ash have ended up?

5.4. Excavated Building Remains

5.4.1. The Alleged Second Phase Gas Chambers in Testimony, Verdicts and Historiography

Mainstream Holocaust historians assert that, similar to Belżec and Treblinka, the alleged extermination at Sobibór went through two phases: a first where a smaller gassing installation was used, and a second where this was replaced by a larger building containing more chambers. What distinguishes the alleged second phase gas chambers at Sobibór from the corresponding installations at Belżec and Treblinka is the claim that this structure was erected on the same spot as the first phase gas chamber building, which was partially or entirely demolished. This means that any archeological remains would primarily derive from the later structure.

The eye witness statements about the second gas chamber building are generally vague with little detail provided on the appearance of the chambers or the mechanics of the killing installation. The former SS-*Scharführer* Franz Hödl confusingly stated that⁴⁴¹

“a concrete building, 18 to 20 metres long, with about 6 to 8 gas chambers had been erected. The gas chamber had either 4 or 6 chambers on either side of the central corridor, three on the left, three on the right.”

The former Ukrainian auxiliary Vassily Pankov described the same building thus:⁴⁴²

“At the camp there were 6 not-large gas chambers, sized about 3 × 4 meters, and 50-70 and even up to 100 detainees were put into each chamber, and then the doors would be hermetically closed and a diesel motor operated, from which the exhaust fumes would be piped into each chamber. For an hour or more the detainees were killed by the gas in the gas chambers.”

Mainstream Holocaust historians seem to agree that the second building was a solid structure of brick or concrete, but when it comes to other details they frequently disagree. Arad holds that the rebuilding consisted in adding three new chambers and a corridor to the three

⁴⁴¹ Statement by Franz Hödl, StA.Do-Gom-PB-III-1270; quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 104.

⁴⁴² V. Pankov, *op. cit.* (note 282).

chambers of the first structure, which he describes as a “solid brick building.”⁴⁴³

“The new six-room gas chamber building had a corridor that ran through its center, and three rooms on either side. The entrance to each gas chamber was from the corridor. The three gas chambers were the same size as the existing one, 4 × 4 meters. The killing capacity of the gas chambers was increased to nearly 1,300 people simultaneously. With the renewal of the extermination activities in Sobibór, in October 1942, the new gas chambers became operational.”

According to Novitch, the five new chambers measured 4 × 12 meters each with an individual capacity of 70 to 80 victims.⁴⁴⁴ No source is provided for this description, though, and it does not match any known witness statement.⁴⁴⁵ Louis de Jong speaks of six chambers with a total capacity of “about 500 people.”³²¹

In the English language edition of his Sobibór study, Schelvis asserts that the first gas chambers were built of wood,⁴⁴⁶ while the new ones were housed in a brick building,⁴⁴⁷ implying that the first structure was demolished completely. Schelvis does not state anything about the number or size of the new chambers, but finds it sufficient to quote the Hödl testimony mentioned above – as well as Kurt Gerstein’s and Rudolf Reder’s statements regarding the alleged gas chambers at Bełżec!

Rückerl writes in his summary of the Hagen verdict:⁴⁴⁸

“A group of construction workers from the Lublin head office, directed by the defendant L.[ambert], partly tore down the old gas chamber building and replaced it with a new and larger building of solid materials having twice the number of chambers. Each cell had a floor area of 4 by 4 meters and a clear height of 2.20 meters.”

The same verdict states that the first building contained three chambers,⁴⁴⁹ so that the new chambers numbered six in total. No dimensions for the building itself are given, but based on the number and size of the chambers we may conclude that it measured approximately 13 × 10 m, allowing for a 1.5 meter wide central corridor and 20 cm thick walls.

⁴⁴³ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 31, 123.

⁴⁴⁴ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 26.

⁴⁴⁵ The number of chambers is possibly derived from the 1947 Main Commission report, cf. chapter 2.3.2.

⁴⁴⁶ For more on this issue see chapter 8.4.

⁴⁴⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 103.

⁴⁴⁸ A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), pp. 172f.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

It is apparent that Arad is basing his description on Rückerl's summary (without stating his source), but whereas Arad claims that each chamber had a capacity of (1300÷6=) 217 people, the Hagen court came to the conclusion that merely 80 people could be herded into each chamber, "if they stood tightly packed."⁴⁵⁰

Three years after the publication of his standard work on the Reinhardt camps Arad lowered the individual capacity of the new chambers to 160-180 victims in the entry for Sobibór in *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*.⁴⁵¹ Léon Poliakov on the other hand, in his preface to Novitch's Sobibór anthology, writes that the new chambers had a total capacity of 2,000 victims.⁴⁵² Schelvis admits:⁴⁵³

"It is virtually impossible to deduce from the various witness examinations and documents how many people were actually killed at any one time in the gas chambers; the numbers given by the SS men and one Ukrainian are too divergent."

He then adds in a note to this passage the following chronicle of inconsistency:⁴⁵⁴

"Bauer on 6 October 1965 in Hagen: around 50 to 60 per chamber; Frenzl on 10 October 1966 in Hagen: in groups of 250, possibly 150; Bolender on 5 June 1961 in Munich: 40 to 50 in one chamber; Gomerski on 19 September 1961 in Butzbach: 60 to 80 in one room ('I remember clearly that 250 people were counted off each time and then gassed'); Daniltschenko, a Ukrainian guard, in Lisakowsk on 25 January 1985: 'Each room could accommodate 250 persons. There were six chambers.' Since Daniltschenko started work at Sobibór only in 1943, the numbers given by him relate to the new, enlarged gas chambers. As for the others, it is not known whether their figures relate to the old or the new chambers. The judges in Munich concluded that, after the new gas chambers had been established, a gassing procedure could have killed up to 1,500 people at a time. The court at Hagen included in its verdicts of 1966 and 1985^[455] that the most likely number of people gassed per procedure can be put at 480. It was found to be a reasonable assumption that each of the six gas chambers could hold 80 people."

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. chapter 2.1.

⁴⁵² M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 12.

⁴⁵³ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 102.

⁴⁵⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 114-115, note 30.

⁴⁵⁵ The latter being the appeal trial of former SS man Karl Frenzel.

Thus the Munich court reached the verdict that the murder weapon had a capacity three times the *maximum* figure presented in the Hagen court's findings. How is that possible, if in fact we are dealing with real events?

The construction of the second gas chamber building is supposed to have taken place during late summer or early autumn 1942. Erwin Lambert, who allegedly supervised the construction, mentions receiving instructions for the rebuilding work from Franz Reichleitner, who was appointed commandant in early September 1942.⁴⁵⁶ This does not stop Schelvis from writing that the construction took place "between June and September 1942," when Stangl was still commandant of Sobibór.⁴⁵⁷ Even more curious is Lambert's claim that he and Lorenz Hackenholt travelled to a sawmill near Warsaw where they "ordered a large quantity of wood for the rebuilding works."⁴⁵⁶ Why would acquiring *large* amounts of wood be necessary if the new gas chambers were to be built of bricks and/or concrete?

5.4.2. Building Remains Excavated by Kola

Of the 1,805 drillings made on the 4 hectares of the former camp III, 569 detected disruptions of soil layers directly underneath the surface, some of them reaching a depth of over 2 m. Kola writes:⁴⁵⁸

"The disruptions are located mostly in the area of the graves, especially between the graves. Their identification is impossible without excavations. Considering the location (the region of the graves), we can suspect that they may be remains of the camp buildings with functions directly linked to the killing of the victims. They could be remains of e.g. a gas chamber or marks of intensive activity in the region of the graves e.g. soil surface transformations, which can be the result of moving the corpses or cremated remains. Excavations could possibly reveal the origins of these structures."

In the end no diggings were undertaken within the grave zone despite Kola's suggestion (which is contrary to eye witness evidence) that the alleged gas chambers possibly could have been located there. Another zone with disruptions was found in the western and southwestern part of Hectare XVII, around Grave No. 2. This zone was left un-

⁴⁵⁶ Erwin Lambert in Stuttgart on 2 October 1962; ZStL-251/59-8-1542/43, quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 104.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁴⁵⁸ A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 300), p. 117.

excavated too, as were a number of dispersed disruptions detected near the mass graves especially to the southwest and southeast of them.

The excavations carried out were concentrated on two other zones where soil disruptions had been detected by drillings, both located in the southern half of the former camp III: the central and southern parts of Hectare XXIV and the central part of Hectare XXV near today's tarmac square with monuments and plaques commemorating the alleged victims. The disruptions detected in the latter zone were found to cover an area of approximately 40 × 30 m. In the process of numerous archeological digs carried out in hectares XXIV and XXV, the remains of a total of five structures were unearthed. They are designated by Kola as objects A to E. Objects A to D, all of relatively small size, are located in Hectare XXV, while the much larger Object E is situated in Hectare XXIV. Kola's archeological findings pertaining to these five objects will be presented in the following paragraphs.

A total of 800 drillings were also performed within the former area of camp I and II (the hectares XXXI and XXXII on the border between camp II and III, hectares XXXIX and XL just to the east of them, and Hectare XLVIII further south, within the former camp I). Soil disruptions were found scattered around the area with a notable concentration found in the northern part of Hectare XXXI. Kola describes this as a continuation to the south of the disruptions in the central and southern parts of Hectare XXIV (where Object E was discovered). Numerous disruptions were also detected in hectares XL and XLVIII. In the former hectare they are concentrated in the northern and eastern parts, while in the latter they are randomly scattered. All disruptions detected by probing drills in the former camp I and II were left unexcavated.

5.4.2.1. Object A

This building object is located in Hectare XXV, Ar 53, 54, 63 and 64. It was unearthed by the diggings 1/01, 1a/01, 1b/01 and 1c/01. Kola writes about it:⁴⁵⁹

“The relic of a small building, probably a wooden barrack with some internal brick elements. The building had a basement with depth up to 2.50 m below ground level. The outline at ground level had dimensions of 2.75 × 2.75 m. The building's wooden elements were completely disassembled. The remains of the building are ar-

⁴⁵⁹ A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 300), pp. 118f.

chaeological structures from the inside of the basement. These are humus mixed with sand containing disintegrated elements of the building (bricks and rubble, mortar, iron elements from walls, doors and ceilings – hooks, screws, nails, pins, staples, hinges, parts of a door frame, a window knob, and bars e.g. parts of the grill from an oven etc.). Some of the bars have characteristics of half-finished products. 4 chamotte bricks were also found. These structures are very distinctive in the sand base. From the collection of relics from the building numerous other items were found: spectacle frames and lenses, an iron drill, a file, an iron chisel, an iron element of a shovel, jars, an inkwell, perfume bottles, combs, parts of hair clips etc. From 80-90 cm below the ground to ground level there was a concentration of caked coal in the centre of the basement. The layer was 10-15 cm thick and covered an area of 1.5 × 1.5 m. Next to this coal, in the northwestern part of the building, there was a greater amount of coal, approx. 300-400 kg, reaching a depth up to approx. 2.20 m.

The property found in object A allows for a hypothetical interpretation of its function. A high concentration of coal with enough supply of wood (from forests in the vicinity) shows that the coal wasn't used as fuel, but for other purposes. Large amounts of bricks and rubble, including chamotte bricks and mortar, indicate that an oven was located here. The large amounts of pre-fabricated iron bars⁴⁶⁰ as well as some iron tools (drill, file, and chisel) that were discovered could indicate that this was a blacksmith's workshop. If this hypothesis is correct, then the coal could have been used at the workshop. While the workshop was in use, the coal was stored on the ground level, and after the building had been demolished, the coal was moved to the basement where its concentration can be found in a layer lying between the northwestern wall of the building and its centre."

Kola's explanation of this object may be logical, but it stands quite in contrast to his overlying thesis. For what reason would a smithy be placed in the "extermination area"? All maps of the camp further agree that a smithy was located in camp I among various other workshops,⁴⁶¹ and there is no mention of a camp III smithy in eye witness testimony.

⁴⁶⁰ *polfabrikaty zelaznych sztabek*

⁴⁶¹ The Bauer map, reproduced in M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), pp. 36-37, marks this as building No. 3 in camp I. The Blatt-Bauer map, reproduced in Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp. 34-35, shows this as building No. 21. B. Rutherford's map of Sobibór in June 1943 designates it as building No. 24.

Also, in a small camp such as Sobibór there would certainly be no need for more than one smithy. An alternative interpretation of the function of this building will be presented in chapter 9.1., p. 286.

5.4.2.2. Object B

This small building object is located in Hectare XXV, Ar 23 and 33. It was unearthed by the diggings 2/01, 2a/01 and 2b/01. Kola writes:⁴⁶²

“Object B is what is left of a small (possibly wooden) building, completely demolished, with the floor level going up to 1.3m into the sandy soil. The outline of the building at ground level had dimensions of approx. 4.0 m × 3.5 m. At the bottom the outline was getting smaller. It had dimensions of 3.5 × 3.2 m. The interpretation of the relics of Object B is difficult.

The relic structures of the object (compressed and decayed organic structures) lack elements that would help to identify the structure or function of the building (bricks, nails, wooden boards, tar paper). By looking at the layout of the relics of this object we can assume that it was either a small barrack with a shallow basement or a building with the characteristics of a semi-dugout dug into the ground.

Among the relics of Object B, as opposed to those of building A, numerous items belonging either to the victims or to the Jewish personnel of Camp III were found. Most of the items were only fragmentarily preserved and corroded, for example elements of glass dishes, bottles and plastic soapboxes, food tins, remains of leather shoes, bucket handles, and many unidentified iron items which were highly corroded. Some of the items in better condition were taken out for conservation to be placed in a future exhibition. There were 73 fragments of ladies’ combs, 12 fragments of hair clips, 46 elements of spectacle frames, 19 spectacle lenses, 11 perfume bottles, 19 rifle shells (Mauser) and pistol shells, 3 Polish coins, a tooth brush, 2 glass beads, 9 rubber endings from crutches or walking sticks, 4 fragments of scissors, 2 padlock keys, trowels etc. 12 dentures and fragments of flashlight batteries were also found.”

5.4.2.3. Object C

This object consists of the already mentioned remains of a water well built of concrete. It is located in Hectare XXV, Ar 35, and was un-

⁴⁶² A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 300), p. 119.

earthed by the digging 3/01. The well had an inner diameter of 90 cm and was filled with sand at the time when excavations began.⁴⁶²

5.4.2.4. Object D

This building object is located in Hectare XXV, Ar 33. It was unearthed by the diggings 4/01, 4a/01 and 4b/01. Kola writes:⁴⁶³

“It is the imprint of a small wooden building occupying a rectangular area of approx. 5.2 × 3.0 m. Here, similarly to the building relic designated as Object B (located directly to the north of Object D), the wooden construction elements were dismantled and removed. Judging from the archaeologically recognized relic structures, this building could have had a shallow cellar or might have been a semi-dugout, about 1.5 m deep into the ground.

Little can be said in the current stage of exploring Camp III about how this building would have been used. Notably, in the remains of Object D numerous objects were found – most likely belonging to the victims – such as: dentures, spectacle frames and lenses, fragments of combs and hairclips, mirror fragments, cigarette holder fragments, soap dishes, clothing buttons, a spoon, a fragment of an electric razor, perfume bottles, belt buckles, pocket knives, a scissors fragment, a cut-throat razor.

Between ten and twenty rifle shell-cases were also found – these were Mauser, Mosin-Nagant, and pistol shell-cases. The connecting elements of the building structure on the other hand contained numerous heavily corroded iron artifacts.”

As with Object B one may note the presence of a large number of toilet articles (combs, hairclips, soap dishes, perfume bottles) which, if like Kola we assume them to be the belongings of the alleged victims, seems inconsistent with the eye witnesses' claims that the deportees not only undressed, but also handed over all their belongings in the camp II reception area before they were led through the “tube” to camp III and the “gas chambers.”

Kola next makes the following comment on the location of the objects A-D:⁴⁶³

“When analyzing the topography of objects A, B, and D, their regular arrangement catches one’s attention – they are located along a line running in North-South direction. Plenty of further

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

anthropogenic changes were encountered close to the earth's surface, which suggests the presence of more objects, i.e. relics of unidentified buildings.

A water well was located here (Object C), which indicates the possible location in this part of Camp III of a row of buildings belonging to the personnel (perhaps a Jewish commando) directly involved with the extermination. This could be explored by carrying out further excavations in this area."

5.4.2.5. Object E

This very large building object is located in Hectare XXIV, Ar 17, 26-28, 36, 37, 46, 47, 56, 57 and 66. It was unearthed by the diggings 5/01 and 5a-L. Kola writes:⁴⁶⁴

"Object E consists of a relic of a long, wooden barrack with a length of approx. 60 m. and a width of 6 m. The longer side was situated more or less in NS direction. Despite the investigational dig being widened greatly in the south, the exact boundary was not found. Judging from the drilling results, this barrack's projection to the south could have been 20-25 m longer. At its northern side the barrack was closed off by a laterally situated smaller barrack with an area of 14.0 × 4.0 m.

The imprint of the two entirely demolished barracks is clearly defined in the light sandy forest floor as a pit currently filled with a dark, sandy humus containing nondescript organic detritus. The foundation of Object E is located 70 to 80 cm below the surface and displays in its entirety a horizontal position. Only in some places does the pit reach a depth of 120-130 cm.

Both barracks must have been built from wood since there were no brick, rubble, or mortar remnants in their vicinity, while in several places charcoal, decayed or charred wooden boards and planks were found.

In a few spots, especially in the central part of the large barrack, reverse imprints of vertically embedded pillars were discovered in the archeologically barren sand. It can therefore be presumed that the barrack's wooden floor was placed on a pillar structure some distance (approx. 60-70 cm) from the ground. Furthermore in some places, below the even bottom line of the barracks' remains, shallow

⁴⁶⁴ A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 300), pp. 120f.

pits of an unclear use were encountered, 30-60 cm deep into the archeologically barren sand. The outlines of these were oval in shape – with diameters ranging from 50 cm (no. 5) to 110 cm (no. 1) and a maximum plunge into the archeologically barren sand of up to around 60 cm (no. 3) – cf. the plan of Object E.^[465] In the relic structures of the smaller barrack (in the northwestern part of Object E) two massive, 210 cm long wooden beams were discovered, resting horizontally on 90 cm thick sandy soil. They had holes (of 5-6 cm diameter) placed regularly all the way along the top, a few of which still had pegs in them. These beams originating from the barrack's construction have probably been moved here during the disassembling of the building. Next to these beams the archeologists came across two structural beams of the barrack (no. 7 and 8) entrenched about 40 cm into the sand.

Many objects doubtlessly belonging to the victims or the personnel of Camp III were found among the remains of Object E. These objects were found immediately underneath the layer of humus and appeared on the entire site of Object E. They were: hairclips and hair combs, under- and outerwear buttons, spectacle frames and cases, spoons, forks and kitchen knives, scissors, belt buckles, belt clasps and attachments, gas lighters, metal boxes, fragments of electric razors and razorblades, casings and mechanisms from watches, cuff clips, medicine bottles and packages, mirror relics, pocketknives etc. It is worth noting that in the central part of the smaller barrack in Object E, on a plot of land of only between ten and twenty meters' area, a large number (around 1,830 units) of Mauser and Mosin-Nagant rifle bullets was found, shot into the ground and hence deformed. Pistol shells (9), Mosin-Nagant rifle shells (3) and a pistol bullet. It thus seems likely that sick and worn-out prisoners were shot here while lying down.

In the light of the above finds the following question comes to mind: What could have been the function of such a spacious barrack? In its northern appendix (the smaller barrack) doubtlessly prisoners' lives were ended by shooting. The considerable number of bullets accumulated in such a small area indicates that the prisoners were shot lying down, otherwise (in case of horizontal shooting) the bullets would have been dispersed. However it is commonly known

⁴⁶⁵ Despite being referred to by Kola, the plan in question is not included in his article.

that the main way of extermination in Nazi death camps was by gassing. That was also the case in Camp III in Sobibór, as is mentioned in all the eye witness accounts of prisoners (from Camps I and II) who survived. Is it possible that Object E is a relic of a gas chamber?

At this stage of research it is impossible to give a simple answer. The distance from this barrack to the closest mass grave is only around 60 m and to the centre of the grave region – approx. 100 m. This is the distance which the bodies of inmates were moved who had been shot in the northern appendix of the barrack. The same could have happened to the bodies from the gas chambers, if these were located in this barrack. It has to be remembered that numerous relics of camp buildings were found in the area of the mass graves, which need further archaeological verification. Perhaps it is there that relics of gas chambers can be unearthed. It seems – with our current understanding – that the larger barrack, the relic of which – so far not completely discovered – has been designated Object E, is more likely to have been used as an undressing facility where the victims' clothing and equipment was sorted. This working hypothesis needs to be verified through further excavations of the non-burial structures of Camp III."

The discovery of Object E poses three major problems to mainstream Holocaust historians. First, all maps of Sobibór place the gas chamber building in the southwestern part of camp III, which is exactly where Object E is located. None of the other objects excavated were found here, a fact that is consistent with the maps and models which all concur that the gassing installation (including the shed with the gassing engine) was the only building located in this part of the camp.⁴⁶⁶ However, the characteristics of Object E are absolutely incompatible with those of the alleged second phase gas chamber building.

To begin with, the latter was supposedly constructed of bricks and/or concrete, whereas Object E consists of the remains of two wooden bar-

⁴⁶⁶ The only other structure in the south-western part of camp III was supposedly an enclosed yard. The haircutting barrack (or shed, as Schelvis calls it) situated just south of camp III was clearly far too small to be identified as Object E, judging by the various eyewitness maps of the camp. It seems likely, given the unanimous eyewitness evidence, that the haircutting barrack was located not far from the southern border of camp III and the alleged "gas chambers" in the area corresponding to the northern part of Hectare XXXI, where drillings detected notable soil disruptions, viewed by Kola as a continuation of the zone of disruptions containing Object E.

racks. Kola even stresses the fact that no traces of bricks, rubble, or mortar were discovered at the excavation site.⁴⁶⁷ As for the dimensions, the larger barrack, having a width of 6 meters and a length of at least 60 (possibly 80-85) meters, covers an area almost three times as large as that of the alleged gas chambers, while the relatively small width of the barrack does not allow for the supposed structure with two rows of gas chambers placed alongside a central corridor. The length alone is more than three times that described by Hödl and five times that implied by Arad.

Second, at the northern end of the barrack, corresponding to where the witnesses place a small shed housing the gassing engine, we have another wooden barrack, measuring 14 × 4 m, wherein Kola apparently found no traces of an engine room, only spent ammunition.

Third, no witness has ever mentioned the presence in camp III of a structure the size of the larger barrack. But how could such a huge building have gone unnoticed?

The area in the smaller barrack containing numerous spent bullets can be explained in two ways. On one hand one may accept Kola's hypothesis of a site where handicapped and sick deportees were shot. This notion, however, contradicts eye witness statements that such shootings were carried out at a pit (the "Lazarett") near the old chapel during the first phase of operations and that they were later (during late summer 1942) moved to the edge of one of the mass graves.⁴⁶⁸ Moreover, if one posits that the alleged gas chambers were located within Object E, or else in an unidentified structure close to it, then it makes little sense that said deportees were brought all the way to the immediate vicinity of the gas chambers and shot there. Why waste ammunition on victims who

⁴⁶⁷ One may recall here that the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland discovered "a certain amount of rubble" at a location identified by witnesses as having been "the site of the building with the gas chambers." The Polish word translated as rubble, *gruz*, denotes remnants of brick or concrete; it is never used for describing the remains of wooden structures. Since it is extremely unlikely that the investigators removed all the rubble from the site, it is clear that the supposed "gas chamber" remnants mentioned in the 1947 report are not identical with Kola's Object E. The rubble must therefore have come from another structure, most likely Object A, which Kola describes as containing "some internal brick elements." Because of its dimensions (2.75×2.75 m), this structure can safely be ruled out as the remains of the alleged homicidal gas chambers. The witnesses' likely identification of the remains of Object A as the "gas chambers" is significant in the light of our hypothesis on the purpose of that structure, which will be presented in chapter 9.1.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 77; J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 64f.

could as well be jammed into the gas chambers located only a few meters away?

In the context of a transit camp it is possible that deportees who were severely disabled, infected by epidemic diseases, mentally ill, or dying, and therefore deemed unfit for further transport and resettlement or a hazard to other deportees, were liquidated on the spot.⁴⁶⁹ A more innocuous explanation would be that the site was used as a storage for spent ammunition collected for the sake of recycling the metal – a procedure practiced by the military not only in war time. However, until more exact details about this finding are revealed, such as the bullets' degree of deformation and their placement in the soil, the question of the nature of this site must remain open.

Kola's interpretation that Object E served as an undressing or sorting barrack lacks a basis in the testimonial evidence and is in fact contradicted by the eye witnesses who claim that the Jewish deportees had to undress⁴⁷⁰ before they entered the camouflaged pathway, known as the *Schlauch* (tube), which led from the reception area in camp II to the haircutting barrack and the alleged gas chambers in camp III. According to Arad the *Schlauch* was 150 m long.⁴⁷¹

As already mentioned in connection with Object D, the presence of toilet articles (hairclips, combs, mirrors) and remains of clothing (buttons, belt clasps) are inexplicable within the frame of the established narrative. The possible explanation that we are dealing with the belongings of members of the camp III work commando does not hold water. It is unanimously asserted that this group consisted of male prisoners only. What use would those men have for perfume bottles and hairclips? Furthermore, all witnesses concur that the sorting of the victims' confiscated belongings took place in barracks located in camp II. The

⁴⁶⁹ See further chapter 8.5.

⁴⁷⁰ This is not to say that this claim must necessarily correspond to the truth. In fact, it seems most likely, as indicated by the finds of toilet articles, buttons, etc., that the deportees entered camp III still clothed. Knowledge we have of other transit camps also indicate such a procedure. For example, a plan of the *Entlausungsanstalt* at Transit Camp Strasshof shows that deportees entered the building with their clothes on. They undressed inside and handed over their clothes to be deloused, went through a medical assessment, took a shower, and then were handed back their deloused clothes; Franz Puntigam, Hermann Breymesser, Erich Bernfus, *Blausäuregaskammern zur Fleckfieberabwehr. Grundlagen, Planung und Betrieb*, Sonderveröffentlichung des Reichsarbeitsblattes, Berlin 1943, pp. 56f. One may further recall in this context the claim found in S. Szmajzner's memoirs that the victims did not undress completely until they had passed through the "Schlauch" and reached the gas chambers (cf. chapter I, section e).

⁴⁷¹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 32.

above is why Kola has had to invent the claim that “barracks for the storage of the possessions of the arriving Jews” were located in camp III, namely in order to disguise the fact that Object E is a blatant anomaly.

To summarize: Object E cannot be the alleged gas chambers, while at the same time there is no other place for it in the official historiographic picture. As will be shown below, this situation has placed contemporary Sobibór historians in a difficult dilemma.

5.5. Continued Archeological Research 2007-2008

In October 2007 a new archeological team, headed by Isaac Gilead and Yoram Haimi of the Ben-Gurion University in Israel as well as Wojciech Mazurek from the Polish firm Sub Terra Archaeological Examinations, set out to continue Kola’s failed search for the gas chambers. In July 2008 the team was joined by Paul Bauman and Brad Hansen of the Calgary firm Worley Parsons Resources and Energy, Phillip Reeder of the University of South Florida, and Richard Freund of the University of Hartford, who carried out a geophysical survey using high resolution metal detection, magnetic gradiometer, terrain conductivity meter, ground penetrating radar, aerial photography, and GPS mapping. This work was carried out in the open field south of the circular monument where the mass graves are located, and in eight 20 × 20 meter squares placed immediately south and east of the area excavated by the archeological team in 2007. Several GPR profiles were also conducted across the “tentatively identified mass graves.”³⁵³

An actual report on the results brought by the archeological survey of 2007-2008 has yet to appear. In early 2009 a new American journal on contemporary history, *Present Pasts*, published an article, “Excavating Nazi Extermination Centres,” which we have already referred to, co-authored by Gilead, Haimi, and Mazurek. Of its 30 pages, less than 12 are devoted to Sobibór, and excluding the illustrations, most of which are of little interest, the description of the new survey covers a mere four and half pages. In this text there is relatively little information on what exactly was found and where. The team’s search for the alleged gas chambers is described as follows:⁴⁷²

⁴⁷² I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 27.

“In October 2007, acting on the assumption that we knew roughly where the gas chamber was located, we decided to dig first in the area bordering the west of Kola’s Building E. We worked in 5 × 5m squares which correspond to Kola’s grid, screened all the sediments we dug and used soft hair brushes to clean the surfaces we exposed. The sediment we excavated was sand, heavily mixed with ashes and burnt materials and artifacts. It was approximately 10 cm deep and overlaid deep layers of sterile sand. The nature and the extension of the archaeological deposit and the types of artifacts embedded in it indicate that the part of Sobibór we excavated is neither the gas chamber nor the undressing barrack.”

Thus while knowing “roughly” the location of the alleged gas chamber building, the archeologists failed to turn up any evidence for its existence. How likely is this, if the gas chamber allegation is indeed true? While the former area of camp III was divided into four hectares by Kola’s grid, the Rutherford map,⁴⁷³ which is partially based on the 1944 air photo and therefore fairly reliable when it comes to the dimensions of the camp sections, shows that the actual surface of that camp amounted to no more than approximately 3 hectares. Thanks to the previous research results of A. Kola, the area to be searched for gas chamber remains could be reduced by approximately 0.5 hectare, i.e. 5,000 square meter (equaling the surface of the identified graves and structures and some of the space between them). For a reasonably well founded and equipped archeological team, such as that of Gilead *et al.*, locating the remains of a large building within such a small area would have been a matter of weeks, if not days – provided, of course, *that the building really had existed*. Given that the new team had at least the published results of Kola as well as ground penetrating radar and other advanced equipment available to them, it is radically impossible that no remains of any existing gas chambers were found during the several months long survey period. The situation that Gilead *et al.* find themselves in can thus be likened to a checkmate.

Continuing with the article we learn that the artifacts discovered in the new excavation area to the west of Object E included, among various mundane objects, “larger jars, some [...] produced in the Netherlands, [which] could contain disinfectants.”⁴⁷⁴ This might possibly refer to a type of substance applied to the heads, armpits, and genital areas of

⁴⁷³ www.deathcamps.org/sobibor/pic/bmap21.jpg

⁴⁷⁴ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 30.

deportees in the course of a bath and delousing procedure at a transit camp.⁴⁷⁵

All in all, the team recovered “about 1,000 artifacts that do not seem to be associated with gas chambers.”⁴⁷⁴ Photographs are provided of a cigarette case, seven hangers for security fencing, and a non-descript excavation site where the possible remains of camp fences were discovered. The latter is described as the most important feature unearthed.⁴⁷⁶ Among the finds were also bullet cartridges and bullets deformed by fire.⁴⁷⁴

That the search for the elusive gas chambers in the end yielded a negative result is clear from Gilead *et al.*'s discussion of Kola's interpretation of Object E:⁴⁷⁷

“As mentioned above, the most important structure discovered during the dig of Kola is Building E. Although Kola suggested that this structure was the undressing barrack (Kola, 2001), in later reconstructions it appears as the gas chamber. The Sobibór booklet (Bem, 2006) includes a map labeled ‘Sobibór Death Camp Memorial Map.’ It consists of a combination of the present day structures and monuments of the site, with the suggested reconstruction as their background (Fig. 19). The ‘Memorial Map’ identifies the Sobibór gas chambers with Building E, which in Kola's opinion served as undressing complex. Rutherford (2002) follows this map in placing the gas chambers in the same place, although the structure he reconstructs is different in shape. It is obvious that the location of the gas chambers is a complex issue that has to be solved, an important objective for future archaeological research at Sobibór.”

That the team itself, at least at the time of their excavations, did not believe Object E to be the gas chambers, is apparent from the fact that they set out to find the building in the area west of this object. The statement that the location of the gas chambers is an issue that remains to be solved is of course nothing but an admission that Object E can *not* be positively identified as the alleged gas chambers and that no other possible remains of them had been discovered by the time of the ar-

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. the testimony of transit camp inmate Galina K. quoted by Janet Anschutz, Irmtraud Heike, “Medizinische Versorgung von Zwangsarbeitern in Hannover: Forschung und Zeitzeugenberichte zum Gesundheitswesen,” in: Gunter Siedburger, Andreas Frewer, *Zwangsarbeit und Gesundheitswesen im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Einsatz und Versorgung in Norddeutschland*, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 2006, p. 52.

⁴⁷⁶ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 28.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 33f.

ticle's publication in early 2009. This, however, has not prevented the team from writing the following on their official website:⁴⁷⁸

"In 2001 Polish archaeologists under the direction of Andrzej Kola carried out an excavation at the camp in Sobibór. The magnetic survey was carried out at the site in order to create a plan of the camp. Excavations revealed seven concentrations of mass graves and the structure that functioned as a gas chamber."

Thus in their online writings the team claims that Kola *did* find the gas chamber building, despite their own statement to the contrary and despite the fact that Kola interpreted Object E as an undressing or sorting barrack!

It should not come as a surprise that the team considers the search for the gas chambers to be of utmost importance, since they state on the same webpage that their archeological work "will constitute a basis for countering the claims of Holocaust deniers." In other words, they are looking for physical evidence supporting the mass gassings allegation. This task, long neglected by orthodox historians, is of course to be welcomed. There are, however, strong reasons to doubt the scientific honesty of Gilead *et al.* In their article we read:⁴⁷⁹

"We regard the Nazi extermination of Jews during the Second World War as a past reality. There is ample written and oral documentation to support it, as well as comprehensive and detailed historical studies that authenticate what Hilberg (1985) calls 'The Destruction of European Jews.' Arad (1987), in his study of the Einsatz^[480] Reinhardt extermination centres, further establishes the role of Treblinka, Sobibór and Belžec in the destruction process. Beyond the written documents, the evidence consists also of oral accounts of the survivors and SS perpetrators who served in the extermination centres and committed the murders [...]. Thus, the extermination of Jews in general, and the extermination of Jews at Sobibór and other centres in particular, is a historically established truth which does not need to be proven by archaeological excavations. Archaeology has the role of supplementing information on the layout of the sites, structures and artifacts in use there, thus providing data for the historical reconstruction of the sites. [...]"

⁴⁷⁸ "The Project," www.underSobibor.org/project.html

⁴⁷⁹ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), pp. 13f.

⁴⁸⁰ The term "Einsatz Reinhardt" is atypical, but it is used in some documents, for example in the Kuno Ther letter (note 83) the staff of the camps is designated "Sonderkommando 'Einsatz Reinhardt.'" Y. Arad used the term "Operation Reinhardt," though.

Being acquainted with the terrain of Sobibór and other extermination centres, and also being familiar with writings of revisionists, we take a more reserved position regarding the role of historical archaeology in substantiating the extermination in general and gas chambers in particular. Knowing that the evidence of the extermination centres was obliterated by the perpetrators, we assume that remains of gas chambers, even if preserved in situ, are in an extremely bad state of preservation. If the standing gas chambers of Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau are currently denied as such, there is a minimal chance, if at all, that future exposure of poorly preserved remains of gas chambers will assert any truth in the face of a revisionist's lie. The archaeology of extermination centres is not and cannot be an instrument to show deniers how wrong they are. We think that documentation of detail is intrinsically important even without the need to refute lies, but we believe that, paraphrasing Evans (2002:237), professors of geography and archaeologists as well should not waste time debating with people who think that the earth is flat."

To recapitulate: The extermination of Jews at Sobibór is a "historically established truth" based on eye witness testimony, Polish-Soviet reports, and a handful of documents relating to Jewish deportations, none of which mentions killings in any form. Since the extermination at Sobibór and other camps is an undisputed historical fact, there is no need to prove it with the methods of forensic archeology. Moreover, the remains of the alleged gas chambers are assumed to be in a state which makes impossible the verification of the gas chamber allegations, and therefore the results of the excavations and geophysical surveys carried out should not be, and cannot be, an attempt to verify the existence of the gas chambers. In turn, persons not satisfied with mere belief in eye witness claims and fanciful interpretations of documents are to be equated with flat-earthers and simply not debated with. The above is of course nothing but a pre-emptive clause, a guarantee to be able to pass off any uncomfortable data as irrelevant, and a *carte blanche* to ignore all negative critique of their conclusions, however well-founded it may be. The type of argumentation employed by Gilead *et al.* is typical of pseudoscience, as it is an impermissible attempt at immunizing one's thesis against any and all critique.

The dishonest approach of Gilead *et al.* becomes even more evident when considering the following passage in their article:⁴⁸¹

“It is generally agreed that one of the challenges facing the historical archaeologist is the artifact/text dichotomy. [...] If contradictions are apparent and real, we are talking about spaces between or within artifact and text, about dissonances, that may reveal additional aspects hitherto unknown [...]. However, to establish if in a given case dissonances exist, the nature and quality of the evidence, of both the archaeological and the historical data, should be re-examined carefully”.

But how can an honest and unbiased re-examination of the evidence even be possible if the existence of the Sobibór gas chambers – for which there exist only the weakest type of evidence, namely eye witness testimony – is taken as an *a priori* fact? In short, Gilead *et al.*’s reasoning serves only to betray their intellectual bankruptcy. Their only chance to redeem their honor as scientists would be to actually present physical evidence backing up the gas chamber allegations. To date, this has not happened.

5.6. The Official “Memorial Map” of the Sobibór “Death Camp”

Marek Bem, director of the Łęczyńsko-Włodawa Museum, is the author of a brochure aimed at foreign visitors to the memorial at the former Sobibór camp site,⁴⁸² published in 2006, which contains the official “memorial map” of the alleged extermination camp. A quick comparison makes evident that the memorial map’s description of camp III is based on Kola’s excavation map. As noted by Gilead *et al.*, the large barrack of Object E is here identified as the gas chambers (item #74) and the smaller one as the “room with gas producing engines” (item #75). Objects A, B, and D (items #78-80) are all conveniently passed off as “administrative buildings.” The map further places not one, but two cremation grates (item #82) inside graves No. 3 and 4, whereas the cremation pit discovered by Kola (“Grave” No. 7) is described as an ash

⁴⁸¹ I. Gilead, Y. Haimi, W. Mazurek, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 22.

⁴⁸² Marek Bem, *Masterplan Sobibór: ...a place to remember ...a place to learn*, Muzeum Pojezierza Łęczyńsko-Włodawskiego, Włodawa 2006. Also available online at: www.Sobibór.edu.pl

dump (item #81), despite Kola's description of it as a cremation site, not a deposit for ashes. Apparently we are to believe that the SS had cremation grates built on top of unincinerated corpses! It is clear that Bem in producing the map has dishonestly "improved" upon Kola's excavation results in order to better make them fit the official historiographic picture.

5.7. Estimate of the Sobibór Death Toll

How many people died and were buried at Sobibór? We can affirm with certainty that the number of Sobibór dead is far less than the figures advanced by mainstream Holocaust historians. However, to answer with exactitude the question of the actual victim figure is, at the present, more or less impossible due to the absolute lack of documentary evidence pertaining to the number of deceased deportees, as well as quantifiable forensic evidence. Nonetheless we will provide a rough estimate of this figure, which may be divided into three categories of deaths.

As for the first category, it is beyond any doubt that a large number of the Jews selected for work in the camp also perished there. As already mentioned, the October 1943 uprising led to the death of between 380 and 420 inmates. It is further to be assumed that an unknown number of inmates were executed in connection with earlier, failed escape attempts⁴⁸³ or for violating camp rules. Many eye witnesses also speak of epidemic diseases, such as typhus, claiming victims among the inmate population,⁴⁸⁴ which was replenished with new arrivals in case of losses. All in all the number of deceased inmates may have amounted to approximately 1,000 people.

The second category is that of those who died en route. This figure is difficult to estimate, but we know that the transports from the Netherlands and France took place under *relatively* humane conditions,⁴⁸⁵ often using passenger trains, so that the number of en-route deaths among this group of in total (34,313+3,500=) 37,813 deportees is likely to have been small. In order to avoid accusations of underestimating the number of en route dead, we will assume, however, that 3% of all 170,165 deportees perished on board the trains due to dehydration, illness, and

⁴⁸³ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 140-142.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 86f.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

pressure injuries or suffocation caused by panicking fellow deportees, leading to a total of $(170,165 \times 0.03 =)$ 5,104 en-route deaths. Since this is likely an overestimate, we will round off this figure downwards to 5,000 deaths.

As will be further discussed in chapter 8, we find it likely that deportees who were found unfit for further transport to the east due to being disease carriers, mentally ill, or dying, were euthanized at Sobibór. If we assume that 2% of all deportees, excluding the 1,000 Dutch Jews transferred to labor camps in the Lublin district,⁴⁸⁶ were put to death, we arrive at $(169,165 \times 0.02 =)$ 3,383 victims, which we will round up to 3,500. In addition to this, there are indications that patients from mental hospitals in the Lublin district were sent to Sobibór to be euthanized.⁴⁸⁷ Although there is no documentary evidence to rely on, we will estimate their number to 1,000 based on a claim of non-Jewish Sobibór victims made by Polish historians.⁴⁸⁸

Adding the three categories together we arrive at a total of $(1,000 + 5,000 + 3,500 + 1,000 =)$ 10,500 victims. It must be stressed that this is only a rough estimate, but we find it probable that the number of Sobibór victims is in the vicinity of 10,000 dead.

As shown above, we have several strong reasons to believe that the total volume estimated by Kola for the Sobibór mass graves, 14,718.75 m³, is significantly larger than that of the original burial pits. With an average of $(10,000 \div 16 =)$ approximately 600 corpses to dispose of per month, the camp staff would have had no reason to economize on the burial space. At the labor camp Treblinka I (not to be confused with the alleged extermination camp Treblinka II) the bodies of deceased prisoners were interred in three mass graves that averaged a burial density of 1 corpse per cubic meter.⁴⁸⁹ It follows that the original volume of the mass graves would have been compatible with our victim estimate.

⁴⁸⁶ The reason for this exclusion is that, judging by the eyewitness testimonies, those deportees were not brought to camp III and thus were not screened by the camp staff carrying out the euthanasia action.

⁴⁸⁷ Abraham Margulies (in M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 63) and Dov Freiberg (*op. cit.* (note 68), pp. 252f) both mention a transport consisting of mental patients.

⁴⁸⁸ A memorial plaque at Sobibór claims that “250,000 Jews and approximately 1,000 Poles” were murdered in the camp. A picture of this plaque is found on the book cover of Zbigniew Sulimierski, *Sobibór. Hitlerowski Obóz Śmierci*, Fundacja “Kamena” w Chełmie, Chełm 1993. See also Photograph 13, p. 412; Esther Raab testified in 1949 that Poles had also been gassed in Sobibór: Bogdan Musial, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement. Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939-1944*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 1999, p. 206, note 43.

⁴⁸⁹ C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), p. 77.

In the end, the only way to determine, however approximately, the number of Sobibór dead would be to open the mass graves and ascertain the amount of cremated human remains and the number of uncremated corpses actually present. This investigation should preferably be carried out by an international scientific committee and followed by a proper reburial of the excavated human remains. The fact that during the 2000-2001 as well as the 2007-2008 survey period no estimate of the amount of human remains was produced, to say nothing of a proper excavation of the graves, can only be taken as a strong indication that an amount of remains corresponding to approximately 170,000 victims was *not* discovered by the archeologists.

6. The Sobibór Trials

6.1. Legal Proceedings as the Basis for Historiography

Once the victorious Western Allies had created a puppet state called “Federal Republic of Germany,” its leaders ordered the judiciary to fabricate the evidence for the mirage of the murder of millions of people in gas chambers, for which not a single shred of evidence survived – if it ever existed. To prove our point, all we have to do is quote Martin Broszat, long-time head of the Munich *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* (Institute of Contemporary History), who said in his introduction to Adalbert Rückerl’s documentation about the “NS extermination camps:”⁴⁹⁰

“Without intending to anticipate a historical investigation and valuation of the part played by the German judiciary in the prosecution of NS crimes, we may retain as of today one aspect, particularly in respect of the activity of the central agency [at Ludwigsburg]: One must not judge the significance of the large-scale investigations carried out by the prosecuting and the judicial authorities since the end of the nineteen fifties merely by the – frequently minor – conviction rates. [...] Even though the fact of the ‘final solution of the Jewish question’ can be found in nearly all history and other schoolbooks about the NS era, the specific circumstances of those horrifying events have so far been documented hardly at all in a systematic manner. The methodical obfuscation by the agencies involved and the thorough elimination of all traces at the end of the campaigns have prevented a precise reconstruction of the events over long periods or rendered them very difficult. This applies in particular to the large and carefully hidden extermination camps set up in the occupied Polish territories. In spite of unfavorable starting conditions, the long and painstaking investigations of the judiciary have brought about a general clarification of the facts and the circumstances.”

Succinctly said: Although nearly all history and other schoolbooks mentioned the final solution of the Jewish question, the latter had been

⁴⁹⁰ A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 7 ff.

documented hardly at all in a systematic manner. This was done only later, thanks to the long and painstaking investigations of the judiciary! In other words: the public prosecutors and the judges had to fly to the side of the historians in order to prove belatedly what had not been proved so far.

6.2. The Trial of Erich Bauer in Berlin in 1950

Martin Broszat's statement that the "the large-scale investigations carried out by the prosecuting and the judicial authorities" began only at "the end of the nineteen fifties" is in disagreement with the facts: the first trials of SS personnel stationed in the so-called "extermination camps" during the war started in fact in 1950. The procedure of the judiciary can be convincingly demonstrated by the manner in which the trial against SS-*Oberscharführer* Ernst Bauer was conducted. Bauer was a driver and alleged "Gasmeister von Sobibór," sentenced to death in Berlin in 1950 on account of "continual crimes against humanity."⁴⁹¹ After the abolition of the death penalty, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

The indictment against Bauer consisted of 11 counts, the first and most serious of which read:⁴⁹²

"Activity as gas master. As soon as a new transport of detainees had arrived in the camp and the detainees had undressed, the defendant who was already known among the inmates as the 'Bademeister' led them to the gas chamber which was disguised as a bath. He sometimes preceded the convoy, sometimes walked next to the detainees beating them to make them walk faster. Subsequently, in camp III, he was the only one to operate the gas machine to annihilate them."

What is the basis of these assertions? In the early accounts of witnesses about Sobibór, Erich Bauer is either not mentioned at all or mentioned only in passing. His name appears neither in the two Pechersky reports nor in the testimony of Leon Feldhendler – which lists, after all, 10 SS men by name.⁴⁹³ Zelda Metz has a total of seventeen names of SS

⁴⁹¹ Verdict of Landgericht Berlin, 8 May 1950, PKs 3/50, p. 1.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁹³ "Wagner, Spiess, Neumann, Rose, Greischutz, Gomelski, Weiss, Getzinger, Beckmann, Müller" (Spelling of names unchanged from source). N. Blumental (ed.), *op. cit.* (note

men stationed in Sobibór, Bauer among them,⁴⁹⁴ but does not ascribe to any of them any specific crimes. Bauer's promotion to the rank of "Gasmeister" is the work of the former Sobibór detainees Esther Raab and Samuel Lerer who appeared in Berlin as witnesses for the prosecution.

Shaindy Perl, whose only source is the testimony of Esther Raab, gives the following account of the circumstances leading to Bauer's arrest: Esther Raab and Samuel Lerer are said to have lived in Berlin after the war. One day, Samuel Lerer burst into Esther Raab's Berlin apartment telling her that he had discovered Bauer and his family at a fair on a ferris wheel. The two of them ran to the fair and bribed a policeman with two pounds of coffee to arrest Bauer.⁴⁹⁵

"The policeman eyed the sack of coffee greedily. 'Okay,' he said finally, 'but I hope you two are not mistaken.' Esther and Samuel assured him that they weren't. Then they watched with trepidation as the policeman approached Erich Bauer and whispered quietly to him. Bauer's color drained from his face and the policeman took his arm and led him away."

We leave it up to the reader to decide whether this account is credible. On the other hand, it is a fact that the Berlin court, in its sentence, relied almost entirely upon the depositions of the witnesses "R." (Raab) and "L." (Lerer). The only other two witnesses, "the former detainees 'B.' and 'C.,' who have testified outside of court and have meanwhile emigrated," are mentioned only in passing. This means that Raab's and Lerer's credibility is extremely significant. We know little about Lerer, but the fact that he spoke of a million victims at Sobibór⁴⁹⁶ should make us pause, to say the least. We have already stressed the doubtfulness of the witness Esther Raab.⁴⁹⁷ Her notorious lack of reliability also becomes apparent when we see that she supplied her, as it were, biographer Shaindy Perl with inaccurate information concerning key questions. The following passages have been taken from Shaindy Perl's book,

22), p. 208.

⁴⁹⁴ "Szpic, Wagner, Frenkel, Niemand, Rost, Greischutz, Gomerski, Getzinger, Konrad, Gebrüder Wolf, Vetland, Michel, Veis, Bauer, Sztojbek, Richter" (Spelling of names unchanged from source), *ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴⁹⁵ S. Perl, *op. cit.* (note 62), p. 221.

⁴⁹⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 239.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. chapter 2.3.4.2. and 2.3.15.

which, as we have already mentioned, is based exclusively on Esther Raab's statements.⁴⁹⁸

“One day before his departure [to America], Samuel suddenly burst into Esther's apartment, his face flushed with excitement. ‘Esther, come quick! It's him!’ [499 ...] Since Samuel was scheduled to leave Germany the next day, he followed the police to the station and gave them a brief statement about the crimes committed by SS Oberscharführer Erich Bauer in Sobibór. [495 ...] ‘Samuel's testimony stretched into the late afternoon, and it was already early evening when he finally left the station. He ran home to finish packing his belongings, and the next day he left the country as planned. Now, Esther remained the only person to witness against the notorious Badermeister.”

The wording of the sentence against Erich Bauer squarely contradicts this account. When Bauer's lawyer asked to have the two witnesses “L.” and “R.” (Lerer and Raab) confront the two former SS men “G.” (Hubert Gomerski) and “K.” (Johann Klier), the court struck down the request, saying i.a.⁵⁰⁰

“An adjournment of the proceedings would also disallow another objective of the defense, i.e. a confrontation of these witnesses with the witnesses L. and R., because the latter have announced that they are about to emigrate; thus a new main hearing would have to take place without them.”

Hence, Samuel Lerer, at the time of the trial, had not yet emigrated at all and was still in Berlin, continuing to be a witness for the prosecution against Bauer. The arrest of the latter had incidentally taken place in 1949,⁵⁰¹ which means that several months had passed between Bauer's identification by Lerer and the trial. It is inconceivable that Esther Raab could have forgotten these circumstances and Lerer's participation in the trial, which means that she lied to Shaindy Perl on purpose. The only motive for this would be egocentricity: Esther Raab apparently wanted to be the only person to have tracked down Bauer all by herself and without any help from Lerer.

⁴⁹⁸ S. Perl, *op. cit.* (note 62), p. 222.

⁴⁹⁹ S. Perl, *op. cit.* (note 62), p. 219.

⁵⁰⁰ LG Berlin, *op. cit.* (note 277), p. 7.

⁵⁰¹ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sobibor-Prozess>. J. Schelvis confirms on p. 236 that Bauer's arrest took place in 1949. On p. 247, though, he asserts that Bauer was arrested as early as 1946 (*op. cit.* (note 71)). We assume that the former date, and not the latter, is in accordance with the facts.

Another excerpt from Shaindy Perl's book:⁵⁰²

"Only several weeks later [after the Bauer trial], she was contacted by a prosecutor from Frankfurt. 'Are you the woman who recently testified against Erich Bauer,' he asked. 'We've arrested Hubert Gomerski and Joseph [read: Johann] Klier. We are bringing them to trial here in Frankfurt. Will you come to serve as our witness?' Esther didn't really have much choice. There were so few survivors, and many of them had by now emigrated to Israel or the United States. Once again, the fate of the Nazi criminals was left in her hands alone."

Quite apart from the fact that Gomerski and Klier were already in jail during the Bauer trial and were not arrested "a few weeks" later, the fate of these former SS men was not at all left in Esther Raab's hands alone, as she made her biographer believe. She was, in fact, one of a group of eight witnesses who testified in Frankfurt: "L." (Samuel Lerer who still had not emigrated to America yet), "Josef and Herz Z.," "E.," "T.," "M." and "B."⁵⁰³ When telling about the trial of Gomerski and Klier, Esther Raab does not wish to have any competitors, and so she simply wipes out the names of the seven other witnesses.

All this goes to show that Esther Raab, witness for the prosecution, was an unrestrained liar, out to bolster her ego. Still, the Berlin district court in its verdict unhesitatingly assumed that her deposition (as well as Lerer's) was true in all respects and was thus sufficient to convict Bauer – who denied his implication in any crimes – of falsehood.⁵⁰⁴

"The defendant admits to having been aware of the goings-on in the extermination camp soon after his arrival in the Sobibór concentration camp some time in March or April of 1942 and, in particular, to have known that Jews of all nations were being gassed or shot there; he denies, however, to have participated in any atrocities and inhuman acts on Jewish detainees. He denies, in particular, to have been the Gasmeister of the camp and claims to have been a mere driver with the task of providing the camp with victuals. The gassings were performed initially by active SS personnel from Oranienburg. Later on, a certain 'Toni' had been Gasmeister, but he could not be more precise on his account. [...] In spite of his denial, the defendant is proven guilty on this count by the credible statements

⁵⁰² S. Perl, *op. cit.* (note 62), p. 224.

⁵⁰³ Verdict of Landgericht Frankfurt am Main of 25 August 1950, 52 Ks 3/50.

⁵⁰⁴ LG Berlin, *op. cit.* (note 277), p. 4.

provided under oath by the witnesses L. and R., former Sobibór detainees. Both of them have identified the defendant as having been the man who was acting as Gassemeister in the Sobibór camp.”

Sensing the extremely hostile position of the court, Erich Bauer apparently did not deem advisable to deny the alleged mass murders at Sobibór, as he feared that such a stand would be regarded as “persistent disavowal” and held against him. He thus limited himself to “deny the atrocities and inhuman acts with few exceptions.” In later years, countless defendants in NS trial would adopt the same strategy.

The man ‘Toni’ identified by Bauer as having been the *Gassemeister* was most probably the SS man Anton Getzinger, who did guard duty at camp III and was killed in late summer or fall of 1943 while trying to defuse a Soviet tank grenade, which exploded in his hands.⁵⁰⁵ As the court could no longer indict Getzinger, Bauer apparently decided to blacken a dead man by nominating him *Gassemeister* posthumously. It did not help him in any way, though.

As we have already stated, Bauer’s lawyer wanted to have Gomerski and Klier – awaiting trial in their Frankfurt jail at the time – testify on his client’s behalf. The court, however, refused to hear them, not only because of the impending emigration of the witnesses Lerer and Raab, but also because it *a priori* held them to be untrustworthy:⁵⁰⁶

“The witnesses G. and K. are SS men who were leaders of the Sobibór camp at the same time as the defendant; both of them have been indicted for having committed crimes against humanity in the Sobibór camp and are presently held awaiting trial or were formerly so held at the time of their provisional interrogation by the Frankfurt local court [...] and this court thus did not hesitate in deciding that it had to accept the depositions of witnesses L. and R. rather than the untrue depositions of witnesses G. and K.”

This means the court believed that witnesses for the prosecution were, by definition, always telling the truth whereas former SS men were, by the same token, always lying – except, of course, in those cases where they testified against themselves or against their former comrades.

The Berlin court was of the opinion that “hundreds of thousands of Jews” had been gassed at Sobibór.⁵⁰⁷ The judges accepted as “proof” of

⁵⁰⁵ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 255.

⁵⁰⁶ LG Berlin, *op. cit.* (note 277), p. 6.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

such an immense slaughter “the credible statements provided under oath by the witnesses L. and R.” They did not even think of looking critically into the structure and the dimensions of the “gassing building.”

All of the German trials of “NS perpetrators” accused of having participated in “gassings of Jewish persons” would follow this basic design. No forensic investigations or documentary evidence of the alleged mass murder were needed – after all, “credible statements provided under oath” were plentiful.

Shaindy Perl, Esther Raab’s publicity agent, provides us with the reason for this flagrant disregard of legal principles:⁴⁹⁸

“Since the Germans were eager to prove to the world that they were taking action against the vicious murderers who ran the infamous death camps, their government wasted no time in setting a date for Bauer’s trial.”

“The Germans” therefore conducted such trials in an effort to prove to “the world” that they were repentant. For “the world” to believe them, they not only had to accept the extermination of Jews in gas chambers as a historical fact, but also nail it down legally – and this worked only if one blindly accepted the veracity of the testimonies made for the prosecution.

We will conclude this chapter with a look at a sentence pronounced by the Berlin court which virtually takes one’s breath away. Among the eleven points of Erich Bauer’s indictment, number six states:⁵⁰⁸

“At one time there was a transport of some 15,000 Jewish detainees from Majdanek, to be gassed [here], as Majdanek did not have a gassing installation. As the Sobibór installation was unserviceable at that time, they had to await their extermination for days on end in camp I without receiving any food. This led to many of them dying of exhaustion. When others who had been given some food fought over it, SS personnel including the defendant shot into the pile of defenseless people. In the process, the defendant, too, killed at least four or five detainees.”

Hence, the sentence of the Berlin Court states that Majdanek *did not* possess a gassing installation. This clashes with the following excerpt from the sentence passed by a Düsseldorf court at the end of the Majdanek trial (1975 – 1981):⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁰⁹ Landgericht Düsseldorf, Verdict against Hackmann *et al.*, XVII 1/75, vol. I, p. 86 ff.

“The most terrible ordeal for the detainees, especially the Jews among them, was the selections for the killings by gas, which had begun in late fall of 1942 and which were most frequent in the spring and summer of 1943. [...] Gassing of the victims always followed the same procedure. The detainees destined for death were taken to the barrack and then, once they had undressed, herded into one of the gas chambers. As soon as the door behind them had been made air-tight, carbon monoxide or Zyklon B was fed into the chamber.”

The Majdanek trial ended with the conviction, i.a., of two female guards, Hildegard Lächert and Hermine Braunsteiner-Ryan, for their alleged participation in the selection of Jewish women and children for the gas chambers of Majdanek – but if we follow the Berlin court’s judgment of 1950, there never were any gas chambers at the Majdanek camp! Hildegard Lächert was sentenced to 12 years in prison, Hermine Braunsteiner-Ryan received a life sentence. After she had spent 17 years behind bars, Johannes Rau, Minister President of Northrhine-Westfalia at the time, pardoned her on account of her ill health; she died three years later.⁵¹⁰

This is the way justice is meted out in the “freest state of German history.”

6.3. The Frankfurt Trial of Hubert Gomerski and Johann Klier (1950)

On the heels of the Bauer trial in Berlin the case against the former SS-Unterscharführer Hubert Gomerski and Johann Klier opened in the German city of Frankfurt-upon-Main only a few months later. In addition to the two witnesses “R.” (Esther Raab) and “L.” (Samuel Lerer), six more former Sobibór detainees took the stand. On 25 August 1950 Gomerski was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of an indefinite number of persons⁵¹¹ (he was pardoned in 1972⁵¹²). Johann Klier – who had received favorable testimonies from the witnesses – was acquitted.⁵¹¹ Hence, for the Frankfurt court the mere fact that Klier had served at Sobibór did not lead to an automatic conviction. In this

⁵¹⁰ http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermine_Braunsteiner-Ryan

⁵¹¹ LG Frankfurt, *op. cit.* (note 503), p. 1.

⁵¹² http://holocaust-info.dk/sobibor/sobibor_personnel.htm

respect at least the court did not go quite as far in its arbitrariness as is common practice in today's Germany, where the nonagenarian John Demjanjuk is awaiting trial merely for having served (actually or allegedly) at the Sobibór camp.

The trial was accompanied by a massive campaign in the media still under Allied control, a campaign which was later orchestrated during all major NS trials. In an article entitled "Sobibór – the death factory behind the barbed wire fence" the *Frankfurter Rundschau* wrote on 24 August 1950:⁵¹³

"During the hearing, a number of written depositions were read, stemming from survivors who had emigrated to the United States. Hersch Cuckirmann, whose wife and three children had been gassed at Sobibór, spoke about a transport of 1,600 Jewish detainees who were brought in from the Majdanek camp. He said that at the time the gas chambers were out of order and the starved and decrepit detainees had to wait for three days before they were gassed. But close to half of them had previously been beaten to death. Gomerski had used a watering can for this purpose, whereas SS-Oberscharführer Wagner had used a steel water hose. As opposed to this, Klier had not behaved inhumanely. [...]"

The witness Zelda Metz was present when detainees had to fetch water from a village. On the way, some detainees killed the Ukrainian guard and fled; the others were shot, and Gomerski participated in the shooting. One could learn from this witness that on certain days 5,000 people were brought into the camp and gassed. Prior to that, they had to write letters to their families saying they were fine. Jewish laborers working in camp III also met their death.

'Sobibór was a murder factory' said witness Kurt Thomas. [...] Gomerski had not only taken part in the execution of 71 Jews who were shot because they were suspected of trying to escape, he also participated in the execution of 100 young Jews who were killed by being shot in the head. Sometimes Gomerski and SS-Oberscharführer Wagner would amuse themselves by using infants as missiles trying to outdo each other as to the distance thrown. When trees were felled, detainees were made to climb up the trees where they had to fix a rope with which both the tree and the detainees were then brought crashing down. Those who did not die from the crash,

⁵¹³ "Sobibór – Mordfabrik hinter Stacheldraht," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 24 August 1950.

lying on the ground with broken limbs, were given the coup de grace.

Witness Chaim Engel told the court that Gomerski had boasted of having killed a detainee with twelve blows, and Mrs. Engel-Weinberg, the only Dutch Jewess to have survived Sobibór, confirmed that Gomerski always took part in the gassings and the shootings.”

Obviously, this was nothing but black propaganda of the crudest kind, but there was one passage in the article which should have alerted a critical reader: it was Zelda Metz’ account of the detainees who “had to fetch water from a village” when “some detainees killed the Ukrainian guard” (not: *a* Ukrainian guard). If Sobibór had really been an inferno where the detainees had to suffer the most atrocious ordeals day after day and were facing death at any moment, the SS would hardly have taken the risk of sending out a platoon of detainees to fetch water, guarded by a single Ukrainian. It is obvious that, under the circumstances, desperate behavior had to be reckoned with at any time. That kind of operation was possible only if the camp command felt that there was little danger of an attempt at escaping – as the detainees did not have strong enough a motive to risk their lives doing so.

The Frankfurt trial of Gomerski and Klier strictly followed the pattern laid out by the trial of Bauer in Berlin, and so we will limit our description and quote only a few significant passages from the reasoning of the sentence on the subject of Gomerski:⁵¹⁴

“From the testimony furnished by the witness R. we may conclude that the defendant himself has shot a group of about 40 persons coming from another camp and destined to be killed. At the time, the witness was employed in the armory and asserted that on a certain day the defendant arrived to pick up a pistol and some ammunition. In doing so, he said that there were only 40 persons that day. Soon after, the witness heard shots.”

So a Jewish inmate was working in the *armory*, and a SS-man had to pick up a pistol there, apparently because he did not own one?

We see that Esther Raab did not claim to have seen Gomerski shooting 40 people with his pistol. She merely stated that he had picked up a pistol with some ammunition and that shots rang out a little later. Nonetheless, the court sentenced Gomerski i.a. “because he has shot a con-

⁵¹⁴ LG Frankfurt, *op. cit.* (note 503), p. 4.

voy of some 40 Jews apparently because the size of the convoy did not warrant the operation of the gas chamber.”⁵¹⁵ Furthermore, the court states in its reasoning:⁵¹⁶

“The court considers the participation [of the defendant Gomerski] in the killing of detainee laborers to have been established in the following cases: [...] The detainee Stark, who had to take care of the pigs held in the camp, was so severely beaten by the defendant and by Frenzel that Stark in desperation ran out of the camp through the gate which happened to be open at that time. The defendant and Frenzel ran after him and shot him several times. Seriously wounded – his body was ripped to the point that his entrails were hanging out – Stark was brought back into the camp and presented in this state to the other detainees assembled for the purpose. These occurrences have been confirmed collectively by the witnesses L. and R. The latter has also asserted that Stark was subsequently shot.”

Once the reader has stopped marveling at the fact that the gate at Sobibór at times “happened to be open,” he should consult Miriam Novitch’s book and read the testimony of Eda Lichtman:⁵¹⁷

“Shaul Stark took care of the geese, fed them and weighed them every day. One time, a goose became ill and died. Frenzel, Bredow, Wagner and Weiss whipped Stark to death. The man’s last words were: ‘Avenge me, comrades, avenge me.’”

Now did the detainee take care of pigs or of geese? Who beat him after one of the pigs or one of the geese died – Gomerski and Frenzel, as was accepted by the Frankfurt district court on the basis of the credible witnesses Esther Raab and Samuel Lerer who testified under oath, or Frenzel, Bredow, Wagner, and Weiss, as we learn from Eda Lichtman? Was he shot (Esther Raab) or whipped to death (Eda Lichtman)?

The extraordinary blindness of the Frankfurt judges can be seen from the following passage of their verdict:⁵¹⁸

“The defendant denies ever to have shot or beaten to death anyone. [...] On the basis of the testimonies recorded during the main trial hearings and the interrogations and depositions of the witnesses not present, read during the main trial hearings, the court rejects the declaration of the defendant as having been disproved. [...]

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4f.

⁵¹⁷ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 57.

⁵¹⁸ LG Frankfurt, *op. cit.* (note 503), p. 3f.

The witnesses have strengthened their depositions under oath to the extent that they were questioned during the main trial hearings. Also during the initial investigations, the witnesses, independently of each other, had made statements which essentially agree with those made here.”

The court apparently never thought that the witnesses, who quite naturally were in constant touch with one another, might have mutually adjusted their statements. Still, the court remained unable to bring about a guilty plea by Gomerski:⁵¹⁹

“Without showing any sign of emotion, Gomerski followed the horrifying descriptions of the witnesses who were testifying under oath. He qualified their depositions as being false and would sometimes smile during the questionings.”

6.4. The Sobibór Trial at Hagen (1965/1966)

Between 6 September 1965 and 20 December 1966 twelve former Sobibór camp personnel were tried at Hagen in Germany. While on trial, one of the defendants, Kurt Bolender, committed suicide by hanging himself; he left a letter in which he insisted on his innocence.⁵¹⁹ Six defendants were convicted, whereas five others were acquitted on the grounds of putative state of emergency. Like their colleagues in Berlin and Frankfurt, the Hagen judges did not consider the mere fact of someone having served as an SS man in the Sobibór camp to be sufficient reason for a conviction. This level of infamy would only be reached four decades later in connection with the Demjanjuk case.

Contrary to the procedures in the Berlin and Frankfurt Sobibór trials of 1950, the Hagen court attempted to determine, by means of transport lists, the number of detainees shipped to Sobibór. It came to the following conclusion:⁵²⁰

“Using considerations most favorable for the defendants, it was determined on the basis on documentary evidence and witness testimonies heard in the main hearings that the deadly fate of at least 150,000 Jewish persons at Sobibór is known.”

⁵¹⁹ “Der ‘vergessene Prozeß,’” *Die Zeit*, No. 49, 1966, www.zeit.de/1966/49/Der-vergessene-Prozess

⁵²⁰ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 153.

We have already said that J. Schelvis believes some 170,000 Jews were deported to Sobibór, but his figure is probably too high by about 10,000 and should be reduced accordingly.⁵²¹ Hence, the conclusion of the Hagen court regarding the number of deportees (150,000) was absolutely realistic. At the same time, their dogmatic conviction that the deportees were all murdered immediately on arrival (except for laborers directly employed at Sobibór or a small number that were sent to work camps) is clearly apparent. The judges never even thought that the documentary evidence cried out for different interpretations.

Listed below are the names of the persons convicted, together with their respective sentence and offense:

- Karl Frenzel: Life imprisonment for aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 150,000 persons and for the murder of nine persons;
- Franz Wolf: Eight years imprisonment for aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 39,000 persons;
- Alfred Ittner: Four years imprisonment for aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 68,000 persons;
- Werner Dubois: Three years imprisonment for aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 15,000 persons;
- Erwin Lambert: Three years imprisonment for aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 57,000 persons;
- Erich Fuchs: Four years imprisonment for aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 79,000 persons.⁵²¹

Except in the case of Frenzel, these sentences were surprisingly mild. This can be explained by the general reasoning valid for all trials of personnel having worked in the “extermination camps”: The judges assumed that the defendants had not volunteered for serving in these camps and that a refusal to participate in the maintenance of the “machinery of murder” could have exposed them to sanctions, including the death penalty. Thus, the court did not *a priori* attribute to them base motives – a condition which was and still is necessary in Germany for a murder charge. Base motives only came into play if a defendant had committed *unrequested* crimes, for example killing or ill-treating Jewish laborers, or whipping Jews on their way to the gas chamber. In such cases of “excesses,” the defendants could face the toughest sanctions.

⁵²¹ Cf. chapter 2.3.19.

Whether an SS man had committed such “excesses” in an extermination camp was obviously something which the court could only ascertain on the basis of testimonies. As there were always plenty of witnesses on hand during these trials, all eager to ascribe the most horrifying deeds to any one of the defendants, the court could easily put pressure on the SS men in the dock. After all, it was entirely up to the judges to classify witness statements as “credible” or not.

The unbreakable rule was that a defendant could deny specific charges leveled against himself, but not the extermination of the Jews *per se*. Such latter arguments were considered “obstinate denials” and led to a more severe punishment. It is obvious that the defendants had been instructed accordingly by their lawyers who, for reasons of expediency, preferred not to question the concept of “extermination camps” drawn up by the courts, restricting themselves to insisting on the personal innocence of their clients or, at least, claim that the men had acted under military orders.

This was obviously true for the Sobibór trial at Hagen as well. Thus Albert Ruckerl could state unopposed:⁵²²

“In the main hearings, the defendants argued strongly against any excessive individual murder charges. They did not, however, deny their having participated under orders in the activities accompanying the mass gassings of Jews at Sobibór.”

The sentencing of SS-Unterscharführer Erich Fuchs must be interpreted against this background. Fuchs was on trial for aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 79,000 persons, but had escaped with a black eye and four years imprisonment. In March of 1963, long before the Hagen trial, Fuchs had declared the following in an interrogation by the prosecution:⁵²³

“On Wirth’s orders,^[524] I drove a truck to Lemberg and picked up a carburetor engine which I took to Sobibór. On my arrival at Sobibór, I could see, near the station, an area with a concrete structure and several solid houses. The local Sonderkommando was headed by Thomalla. Other SS men present were F., B., Stangl, F., Schwarz, B. as well as some more. We unloaded the engine. It was a heavy Russian gasoline engine (probably a tank or tractor engine) of at least 200 HP (V-engine, 8 cylinders, water-cooled). We placed the Motor

⁵²² A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 85.

⁵²³ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 166.

⁵²⁴ Christian Wirth, Inspector for Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka.

on a concrete foundation and installed a connection between the exhaust and the piping. I then tested the engine. Initially, it did not work. I repaired the ignition and the valves and the engine finally started. The chemist whom I had already met at Belzec went into the gas chamber with a measuring device and tested the gas concentration."

Then Fuchs goes on to describe a "test gassing" of 30 or 40 Jews.⁵²⁵ While the other courts had not made the slightest attempt at elucidating the murder weapon and the gassing procedure, the Hagen judges were at least able to base their verdict on Fuchs' statement in this regard. Thus, the gas chambers together with the gasoline engine as a murder weapon went on record. The fact that Fuchs supplied the names of several others, who had helped him with the installation of the engine and were present at the first gassing, may have helped him as well. We do not doubt in the least that the mild sentence was the result of a bargain. Fuchs supplied the desired evidence and was assured of the court's leniency.

What is perhaps even more interesting is a look at the acquittals at the Hagen trial. Adalbert Ruckerl is surprisingly taciturn in this respect when he writes:⁵²⁶

"The remaining five out of the eleven defendants – a twelfth had committed suicide – were excusable, as the written reasoning states, on account of their unopposed claims of an emergency state of putative compulsion."⁵²⁷ Although for each one of them a realistic suspicion remained as to their actions under the individual circumstances, they had to be acquitted for lack of evidence."

We can find some additional information via the internet encyclopedia Wikipedia, which supplies us with the names of the five persons acquitted together with the charges against them:

- Erich Lachmann, charged with aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 150,000 persons;
- Hans-Heinz Schütt, charged with aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 86,000 persons;
- Heinrich Unverhau, charged with aiding and abetting with others the murder of at least 72,000 persons;

⁵²⁵ Cf. chapter 8.4., S. 267.

⁵²⁶ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 85f.

⁵²⁷ "Putativer Befehlsnotstand" = A situation where one merely believes to be forced under threat of punishment to obey an illegal order.

- Robert Jührs, charged with aiding and abetting with others the murder of 30 persons;
- Ernst Zierke, charged with aiding and abetting with others the murder of 30 persons.⁵²⁸

While the acquittals of Jührs and Zierke may be understandable in the light of the low number of murders in which they allegedly participated jointly, those of Lachmann, Schütt, and Unverhau are surprising on account of the seriousness of the indictment and are in striking disagreement with the sentences in the cases of Wolf, Ittner, Dubois, Lambert, and Fuchs who had likewise claimed an emergency state of putative compulsion and had not been charged with any excesses.

Schelvis explains Lachmann's acquittal on the grounds that the court had considered Lachmann to be "mentally impaired."⁵²⁹ What is much more illuminating, however, is what Schelvis has to say about Unverhau.⁵³⁰

"He [Unverhau] was cleared after both the Hagen and the Belzec trials [the latter of which took place in Munich between 1963 and 1965]. He was the only SS man who voluntarily spoke of his part in Operation Reinhardt immediately after the war."

In other words: Unverhau had enlisted voluntarily as a witness for the prosecution in the NS trials after the war – and hence received his reward. Schütt's acquittal as well can be explained by his readiness to adopt the prosecution's cause, for he said in the trial:⁵³¹

"In answer to the question why I was on the ramp when the transports arrived, I declare I was there out of curiosity. I wanted to convince myself of the inhumanity of the final solution, and to relay my impressions back to Berlin so that I might be released. Under no circumstances did I ever get actively involved [in the crimes committed] at Sobibór. In fact, the crude manner in which the Ukrainians carried on repulsed me. The Jews were often pushed and beaten by them. They were merciless."

All this indicates that the Hagen Sobibór trial, in line with most of the trials against "NS perpetrators," was primarily seen as an instrument to establish the judicial notoriety of the alleged mass murders. Defen-

⁵²⁸ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sobibor-Prozess>

⁵²⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 258.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

dants who were ready to cooperate with the court could more often than not count on a lenient sentence.

The Hagen judges behaved at times as if they were mentally deficient, swallowing even the most ridiculous lies uttered by the witnesses. Here is one example:⁵³²

“The witness Moshe B. asserted credibly: while he was waiting at the tables in the German mess hall in the entry camp, SS-Scharführer B. had approached him, asking him bluntly whether he was aware of what was happening in camp III. When he said he did not know, B. was dissatisfied. He then placed an empty can on [Moshe’s] head and tried to knock it off by pistol shots, all the time asking him whether he really did not know anything.”

Hence, the *Scharführer* himself did not know what was going on in camp III, but expected a detainee, who (at least according to the traditional accounts of Sobibór) was strictly forbidden to enter that part of the camp, to tell him! The person behind the abbreviation ‘Moshe B.’ was actually our old acquaintance Moshe Bahir, whose credibility can be judged by the fact that, earlier on, he had spoken of a gas chamber with a collapsible floor and had asserted that in February of 1943 there had been a celebration at Sobibór on the occasion of the annihilation of the first million Jews.⁵³³

The fairy tale of SS men shooting tin cans off detainees’ heads also appears in connection with other camps: at Auschwitz Gottfried Weise⁵³⁴ and at Majdanek Anton Thumann⁵³⁵ are said to have played the part of ‘Wilhelm Tell’ with fatal consequences for the detainees concerned.

It goes without saying that even the dustiest of shelf-warmers of black propaganda, Himmler’s visit in early 1943 where he allegedly witnessed the gassing of Jewish ladies, was accepted by the Hagen court at face value.⁵³⁶

“Actually, at that time, very probably on 12 February 1943, Himmler was present at Sobibór. The court based its clear conviction on statements of the defendants who belonged to the camp per-

⁵³² A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 191.

⁵³³ Cf. chapter 2.2.8., p. 32.

⁵³⁴ Claus Jordan, “The German Justice System: A Case Study,” in: G. Rudolf (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 34), pp. 145-179, here p. 149.

⁵³⁵ Tadeusz Mencil (ed.), *Majdanek 1941-1944*, Wydawnictwo Lubielskie, Lublin 1991, p. 167.

⁵³⁶ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 193f.

sonnel at that time, as well as on testimonies of former detainees heard as witnesses, and on the irrefutable opinion provided by the expert, Dr. Scheffler. [...] In Himmler's honor, a group of pretty young Jewish women was brought in from some labor camp and gassed to provide Himmler with a show."

By saying that the victims had been brought in from "some labor camp," the court circumvented the difficulty of saying where the women actually came from. There was a good reason for that: while most of the witnesses claim that the victims came to Sobibór from Lublin, Moshe Bahir stated that they came from Trawniki, and for Toivi Blatt they hailed from Włodawa.⁵³⁷ Blatt, incidentally, caused a stir during the Hagen trial when he placed on the witness table two braids allegedly found on the former Sobibór camp site.⁵³⁸

Finally, we have to talk about the inglorious part Erich Bauer played in the run-up to the Hagen trial. Once the abolition of the death penalty had saved him from the guillotine, Bauer attempted to obtain his freedom by blaming his former comrades. Among other things, he drew a map of the Sobibór camp for the Hagen court, including the "gas chamber,"⁵³⁹ and he stated:⁵⁴⁰

"I estimate that the number of Jews gassed at Sobibór was about 350,000. In the canteen at Sobibór I once overheard Karl Frenzel, Franz Stangl and Gustav Wagner. They were discussing the number of victims in the extermination camps of Belżec, Treblinka and Sobibór and expressed their regret that Sobibór 'came last' in the competition"

It is said that traitors reap money but no gratitude, but in this case, Bauer reaped neither. After thirty-one years behind bars, at the age of seventy-nine, Bauer died in jail in 1980⁵⁴¹ – because two liars named Samuel Lerer and Esther Raab had decided to nominate him *Gasmeister* and because a court had decided to believe every syllable they uttered. After all, they had testified under oath!

⁵³⁷ Cf. chapter 2.5.

⁵³⁸ Heike Kleffner, Miriam Rürup, "Das vergessene Vernichtungslager Sobibór: Überblick über die juristische Verfolgung der NS-Täter und die Wahrnehmung in der Öffentlichkeit," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 7 Nov. 2003 (www.klick-nach-rechts.de/ticker/2003/11/Sobibór.htm)

⁵³⁹ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 158-161.

⁵⁴⁰ E. Klee, W. Dressen, V. Reiss, *op. cit.* (note 278), p. 232.

⁵⁴¹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 247.

6.5. The Sobibór Trial that Never Took Place

As opposed to the defendants in the Sobibór trials in Berlin, Frankfurt, or Hagen, who had merely occupied low-level posts during the war, the man brought to trial in Vienna in 1962 in connection with the events at Sobibór, Belżec, and Treblinka was a real heavyweight. Hermann Julius Höfle, born in 1911, had been “*Referent für Judenangelegenheiten – Aktion Reinhardt*” (counselor for Jewish affairs – *Aktion Reinhardt*) in Lublin and deputy of Odilo Globocnik, the chief of SS and police in Lublin. It was he who reported in a radio message that up to the end of 1942 1,274,166 persons had been transported to “B.,” “S.” and “T.” Referring to a meeting with Höfle, Fritz Reuter would write in March of 1943 that the Jews deported to Belżec would be moved on “across the border and would never return to the General Government.”⁵⁴²

Hermann Höfle had been taken prisoner by the British in 1945 and handed over to the Austrian judicial authorities in 1947 but was liberated soon thereafter. In 1961 he was arrested once again and indicted. On 20 (other sources make it the 21st) August 1962, just prior to the opening of the trial, he hanged himself in his Vienna prison.⁵⁴³ This, at least, is the official version, which is not altogether convincing, though.

After Höfle’s arrest, enough evidence was collected against him to fill nine volumes, but “the Vienna prosecutor’s office had not managed by that date [Höfle’s alleged suicide] to extract a formal indictment from those substantial files.”⁵⁴⁴

This clearly indicates that Höfle had never admitted the annihilation of the Jews that the prosecution intended to lay at his feet. If he had indeed confessed, it would have been the easiest thing in world for the prosecution to prepare “a formal indictment from those substantial files.” This leads one to believe that Höfle, who knew very well what went on in the camps at Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka, had stolidly maintained in the face of the Austrian judiciary that the three camps had been transit camps and that the alleged annihilations were nothing but propaganda.

In view of the important part played by Höfle in connection with the deportations of the Jews, the impending trial would have encountered

⁵⁴² Cf. chapter 9, p. 297.

⁵⁴³ www.deathcamps.org/reinhard/hoefle.html

⁵⁴⁴ www.nachkriegsjustiz.at/prozesse/geschworeneng/rezeption.pdf

great international coverage in the media. The Austrian authorities simply could not afford a defendant who refuted, point blank and in front of journalists from all over the world, the alleged extermination of Jews in the three camps of “*Aktion Reinhardt*.” Seen in this light, we believe that Hermann Höfle did not commit suicide but was probably eliminated.

6.6. The Three Sobibór Trials in the Soviet Union

Three trials were conducted in the Soviet Union against former Ukrainian guards of the Sobibór camp. On the subject of the first trial, we have not been able to find out such details as the number of defendants or the place and date of the trial. The website “*Aktion Reinhard Camps*” gives only the following somewhat laconic information on this point:⁵⁴⁵

“A few of the Ukrainian guards who served at Sobibór were brought to trial in the Soviet Union, such as B. Bielakow, M. Matwijenko, I. Nikfor, W. Podienko, F. Tichonowski, Emanuel Schultz and J. Zajcew. They were found guilty and executed for their crimes.”

The second and third trials took place in Kiev in April of 1963 and June of 1965, respectively. During the former, ten defendants were sentenced to be shot, another was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. During the latter, the Soviet court pronounced three death sentences. If we follow the website “*Aktion Reinhard Camps*,”⁵⁴⁵ A. Pechersky took the stand in the first trial, but according to B. Distel⁵⁴⁶ he was a witness for the prosecution at both trials. Alexander A. Pechersky could thus boast of having brought ten or thirteen men in front of a firing squad and of having had another man locked up for a decade and a half through his lies.

⁵⁴⁵ www.deathcamps.org/sobibor/sobibortrials.html

⁵⁴⁶ B. Distel, *op. cit.* (note 69), p. 400.

6.7. The Brazilian Extradition Proceedings against F. Stangl and G. Wagner

The first commander at Sobibór, Franz Stangl, as well as SS-*Oberscharführer* Gustav Wagner who had also been stationed at Sobibór emigrated to Brazil after the war. Stangl was arrested in 1967 at the instigation of Simon Wiesenthal and extradited to Germany. Gustav Wagner gave himself up to the São Paulo police in 1978, after Wiesenthal had launched a hunt against another man by the name of Wagner. The Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* reports in its edition of 2 June 1978 that he adamantly denied the existence of gas chambers at Sobibór.⁵⁴⁷ After having been jailed for some time, Wagner was released. No fewer than four states (Israel, Poland, Austria, and Germany) requested his extradition, but the Brazilian courts rejected all demands.⁵⁴⁸ In the proceedings against both Stangl and Wagner the former Sobibór detainee Stanislav Szmajzner appeared as a witness for the prosecution⁵⁴⁹ – we have drawn his profile elsewhere in this book.⁵⁵⁰

Franz Stangl was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Düsseldorf court in December of 1970 for the murder of ‘at least 400,000 Jews.’⁵⁵¹ He launched an appeal. While the appeal was being processed, the journalist Gitta Sereny visited him in his cell on several occasions. He suddenly died on 28 June 1971. After his death Gitta Sereny wrote her book *Into that Darkness*, which has become a classic of ‘Holocaust’ literature. The book claims that Stangl had confessed without reservation to the mass murders at Sobibór and Treblinka, which he had been charged with. Still, Gitta Sereny could not really prove her point: there is no recording of her conversations with Stangl, and since dead men don’t talk, she could have Stangl say whatever she liked. Gitta Sereny gives us an interesting account of her last interview with Stangl, though:⁵⁵²

“The last day I spent with Stangl was Sunday, 27 June 1971. He had not been feeling well during the better part of that week and had stomach problems. I had brought him, on that day, a special soup in a thermos bottle. It was an Austrian soup that he said his wife

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. chapter 4.5., p. 105.

⁵⁴⁸ [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Wagner_\(SS-Mitglied\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Wagner_(SS-Mitglied))

⁵⁴⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 72), p. 300, 302.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. chapter 2.3.5, p. 28.

⁵⁵¹ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 86.

⁵⁵² G. Sereny, *op. cit.* (note 357), p. 362.

cooked for him when he was feeling poorly. When I came back after being away for half an hour to have lunch, he had changed completely – he was in good spirits, his face was smooth and his eyes were fresh. ‘I cannot tell you how fine I feel, all of a sudden,’ he said. ‘I have eaten this wonderful soup and then taken a nap. And I have never had such a good rest. Ach, I feel wonderful,’ he repeated.”

A day later, Franz Stangl, who had liked Gitta Sereny’s soup so much, left this world, and the master chef could write her book without worrying about any arguments. We leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions from these bare facts.

Once the requests for Gustav Stangl’s extradition had been definitely rejected in October of 1980, Gustav Wagner allegedly committed “suicide by stabbing himself.” Schelvis designates the suicide thesis as the “official Brazilian version” and adds:⁵⁵³

“Szmajzner, however, let on that he had not been an entirely passive bystander at his death.”

Shaindy Perl tells us more about this matter.⁵⁵⁴

“Wagner’s victory [i.e. the refusal by the Brazilian legal authorities to let him be extradited] was short-lived; he could not escape his avengers forever. One day in 1980, he was suddenly attacked and killed outside his home. His assailants left his mutilated body on his property and disappeared without a trace.”

⁵⁵³ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 264.

⁵⁵⁴ S. Perl, *op. cit.* (note 62), p. 232.

7. National-Socialist Policy of Jewish Emigration

The establishment of the Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka camps took place within a historical context which must be well understood, before one can judge whether these camps – as traditional Holocaust historiography asserts – were extermination camps. For that purpose it is necessary to outline once again, with some more recent amplifications, the framework of the National-Socialist policy towards the Jews, which has been presented before in a separate study.⁵⁵⁵

7.1. Emigration

In one of the first written documents of his political career, Hitler, in a letter dated 16 September 1919 addressed to his friend Adolf Gremlich, proposes:⁵⁵⁶

“An anti-Semitism based merely on emotion will ultimately result in pogroms [sic]. Rational anti-Semitism, however, must lead to a planned [and] lawful fight against, and to the removal of, Jewish prerogatives, which set the Jew off from other aliens living in our midst (legislation concerning aliens). The final unalterable objective, though, must be the removal of the Jews.”

A few months later, on 13 August 1920, Hitler made a speech in Munich on the subject “Why are we anti-Semites?,” in which he stressed that scientific evaluation of the Jewish question should result in moves bringing about the “removal of the Jews” from among the German people.⁵⁵⁷

This aim became the cornerstone of Hitler’s Jewish policy after his ascent to power.

⁵⁵⁵ C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 179-202.

⁵⁵⁶ Ernst Deuerlein, “Hitlers Eintritt in die Politik und die Reichswehr,” in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 7(2), April 1959, p. 204.

⁵⁵⁷ Reginald H. Phelps, “Hitlers ‘grundlegende’ Rede über den Antisemitismus,” in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 16(4), October 1968, p. 417.

As early as 28 August 1933, the Reich ministry of economics concluded an agreement with the Jewish agency for Palestine which was to constitute the basis for the emigration of some 52,000 German Jews to Palestine over subsequent decade.⁵⁵⁸ In a note of 19 March 1938, the ministry rescinded the agreement on the grounds that Germany was not interested in the emigration of rich Jews taking along their capital, but rather “in a mass emigration of Jews.”⁵⁵⁹

The Nuremberg Laws of 15 September 1935 would reaffirm in a legislative manner articles 4 and 5 of the Party’s program as elaborated in Munich on 24 February 1920. The aim of the law regarding Reich citizenship and of that concerning Germanic blood and honor was to separate and isolate the alien Jewish body from the German host with a view towards its pending expulsion. Gerald Reitlinger comments: “The Jews were meant to leave the Reich for good.”⁵⁶⁰

At the end of 1936, a “Jewish section” was set up within the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service), the main objective of which, according to Léon Poliakov, was “the examination of all problems in the preparatory stages of a mass emigration of Jews.”⁵⁶¹

A *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung* (central office for Jewish emigration) was established in Vienna on 26 August 1938 and was entrusted to Adolf Eichmann by Reinhardt Heydrich, the head of the Security Police.

A few days after the so-called “Night of broken glass,” on 12 November 1938, Hermann Göring called a council of ministers to discuss the difficult situation which had arisen. Heydrich stated that the exclusion of Jews from German economic life had “not really resolved” the basic problem, i.e. the removal of the Jews from Germany. Thanks to the Vienna “*Judenauswanderungszentrale*” (Center for Jewish Emigration), at least 50,000 Jews had already left Austria, whereas, over the same period, only 19,000 emigrated from the *Altreich* (Germany in the borders of late 1937). He therefore proposed to set up an emigration office in the Reich proper modeled on Vienna and to embark on a vast migration policy, to be carried out over the next eight to ten years. Finance minister Johann L. Graf Schwerin von Krosigk seconded Hey-

⁵⁵⁸ R. Vogel, *Ein Stempel hat gefehlt. Dokumente zur Emigration deutscher Juden*, Droemer Knauer, Munich/Zürich 1977, p. 46 and 107-109.

⁵⁵⁹ NG-1889.

⁵⁶⁰ G. Reitlinger, *The Final Solution. The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., London 1953, p. 8.

⁵⁶¹ L. Poliakov, *op. cit.* (note 97), p. 16.

drich's proposal: it was necessary to move the Jews abroad by all means available. Interior minister Wilhelm Frick stressed that the objective should be to bring about the emigration of the maximum possible number of Jews.⁵⁶²

On 24 January 1939, after having received Heydrich's proposal, Göring issued a decree approving the establishment of a *Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung* (Imperial Center for Jewish Emigration), which was inaugurated in Berlin on 11 February. It was to put into practice the core idea of National-Socialist policy towards the Jews: "The emigration of the Jews from Germany must be promoted by all available means." The task of the new office was, in fact, "to take all measures necessary for the preparation of an increased emigration of the Jews," to further, preferentially, the emigration of poor Jews and, where necessary, to ease the bureaucratic practices in individual cases. Göring made Heydrich the head of this office.⁵⁶³

A report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 25 January 1939, entitled "The Jewish question as a factor of foreign policy in 1938," stresses unequivocally.⁵⁶⁴

"The ultimate goal of German policy towards the Jews is the emigration of all Jews residing on the territory of the Reich."

Following the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Eichmann – meanwhile promoted to the rank of *Hauptsturmführer* – was ordered on 15 July 1939 by Heydrich to establish a *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung* (Center for Jewish Emigration) in Prague as well. The founding act defines its objective as "the promotion and accelerated realization of the emigration from Bohemia and Moravia."⁵⁶⁵

This Jewish emigration program encountered an unexpected obstacle in the undisguised anti-Jewish attitude of the great democracies which, while decrying vociferously the persecutions of the Reich's Jews, refused to shelter the victims. In his speech of 30 January 1939, the Führer declared:⁵⁶⁶

"We are witnessing today the shameful spectacle of the whole democratic world shedding bitter tears, but remaining solidly hard-

⁵⁶² PS-1816, pp. 47, 55f.

⁵⁶³ NG-2586-A.

⁵⁶⁴ PS-3358.

⁵⁶⁵ Hans G. Adler, *Der Kampf gegen die "Endlösung der Judenfrage,"* Bundeszentrale für Heimatdienst, Bonn 1958, p. 8.

⁵⁶⁶ Max Domarus, *Hitlers Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945,* vol. II, first half, R. Löwit, Wiesbaden 1973, p. 1056.

hearted toward the sufferings of the poor Jewish people at a time when it is their obvious duty to help."

Hitler was alluding to the failure of the Evian conference, held from 6 to 15 July 1938 at the famous French spa. It had been convened at the suggestion of U.S. President Roosevelt and was to provide help for the victims of National-Socialist persecutions, primarily the Jews. But right from the beginning the good intentions of the U.S. President appeared dubious, as we hear from the Jewish historian Michael Mazor:⁵⁶⁷

"At his press conference in Warm Springs, President Roosevelt had already limited the possibilities for Evian by saying that no revisions or increases in the immigration quotas of the United States were planned in this respect. In the invitations to the conference sent to 33 countries, Roosevelt had underlined that it was not expected of any country to accept more immigrants than were presently scheduled by its laws."

On such a basis, the Evian conference was doomed from the start. The result was that "the free world abandoned the Jews of Germany and Austria to their merciless fate."⁵⁶⁷

On 25 November 1939 Ehrhard Wetzel and Gerhard Hecht, officials concerned with racial policy, penned a memorandum entitled "The question of the treatment of the formerly Polish territories from the point of view of racial policy," which constituted a first draft of the future "*Generalplan Ost*." It contained, i.a., a plan for the resettlement of "some 800,000 Jews from the Reich (*Altreich*, Austria, Sudetenland, and Protectorate)" into the occupied Polish territories and of "another 530,000 Jews" from the formerly Polish territories now incorporated into the Reich.⁵⁶⁸

The destination of these deportees was undoubtedly the General Government, which had been set up officially on 12 October. The plan followed directives by Heydrich, addressed by express letter to all heads of *Einsatzgruppen*, on the subject of the "Jewish question in the occupied territories" dated 21 September 1939.⁵⁶⁹ One of these directives, the Nisko⁵⁷⁰ plan, suggested the creation of a Jewish reservation in east-

⁵⁶⁷ M. Mazor, "Il y a trente ans: La Conférence d'Evian," in: *Le Monde Juif*, No. 50, April-June 1968, pp. 23 and 25.

⁵⁶⁸ "Die Frage der Behandlung der Bevölkerung der ehemaligen polnischen Gebietes nach rassenpolitischen Gesichtspunkte," PS-660, p. 25.

⁵⁶⁹ PS-3363.

⁵⁷⁰ Between 20 October 1939 and 12 March 1941, 6,615 Jews from Austria were taken to Nisko and other towns in the General Government. Cf. chapter 9.4., p. 316.

ern Poland. The attempt was possibly initiated by Eichmann, but it failed.⁵⁷¹

In any case, the idea of Jewish emigration had not been altogether abandoned, for it was recommended in the above memorandum.⁵⁷²

“In order to render the Jew fit for emigration, it will be advisable, if need be, to improve his education.”

Himmler wrote in a memorandum of May 1940:⁵⁷³

“I hope to see the notion of a Jew melt away through the possibility of a major emigration of Jews to Africa or some other colony.”

In the same document, he rejects “the Bolshevik method of the physical eradication of a people [as it is,] according to my deeply rooted conviction, ungermanic and impossible.”⁵⁷³

On 24 June 1940 Heydrich, the head of the RSHA, asked the minister of foreign affairs, Joachim Ribbentrop, to be informed of any ministerial meetings concerning the “final solution of the Jewish question,” explaining the request by saying:⁵⁷⁴

“In 1939, the General Field Marshal [Göring], in his quality as administrator of the Four-Year-Plan, entrusted me with the implementation of the Jewish emigration from the territory of the Reich. Subsequently, it was possible, even during the war and in spite of considerably difficulties, to carry on the Jewish emigration successfully.

Since 1st January 1939, when my office took over this task, more than 200,000 Jews have so far emigrated from the Reich area. However, the problem as a whole – we are dealing with some 3¼ million Jews in the areas presently under German sovereignty – can no longer be solved by emigration.

Thus, a final solution on a territorial basis will impose itself.”
(Underlings in the original)

As a consequence of this letter, the foreign ministry developed the Madagascar plan.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷¹ Seev Goshen, “Eichmann und die Nisko-Aktion im Oktober 1939,” in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 29(1), January 1981, pp. 74-96.

⁵⁷² PS-660, p. 35. Cf. chapter 8.2.1., p. 236.

⁵⁷³ Heinrich Himmler, “Einige Gedanken über die Behandlung der Fremdvölkischen im Osten,” in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 5(2), April 1957, p. 197.

⁵⁷⁴ T-173.

⁵⁷⁵ An extensive treatment of this question is provided by Magnus Brechtken, “*Madagaskar für die Juden*”: *Antisemitische Idee und politische Praxis 1995-1945*, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, Munich 1998.

7.2. The Madagascar Plan

On 3 July 1940, Fritz Rademacher, head of the Jewish section in the foreign ministry, drew up a report entitled “The Jewish question in the peace treaty,” introducing it as follows:⁵⁷⁶

“The impending victory gives Germany the possibility and, I think, makes it our duty, to resolve the Jewish question in Europe. The most desirable solution is: All Jews out of Europe.”

Rademacher goes on to explain that France – in a peace treaty considered to be imminent – would relinquish the island of Madagascar as a mandate, with all European Jews to be deported there, forming an autonomous state under German supervision:

“Germany will be given the island as a mandate. [...] Within this territory, the Jews will be given autonomy in other respects: their own mayors, their own police, their own postal and railroad services etc. The Jews will be solidary debtors for the value of the island.”

Ribbentrop approved the project and forwarded it to the RSHA, which was to take care of the material preparations for the resettlement of the Jews on the East-African island and for the supervision of the evacuated Jews.⁵⁷⁷

This was precisely the “final solution of the Jewish question on a territorial basis” imagined by Heydrich.

On 30 August 1940, Rademacher elaborated a paper entitled “Madagascar project.” Its section on “Financial considerations” begins with the words:⁵⁷⁸

“The execution of the final solution proposed requires considerable means.”

Hence, “the final solution of the Jewish question” meant nothing but the resettlement of the European Jews on Madagascar. On 12 July 1940, Hans Frank, Governor General in Poland, made a speech announcing the decision⁵⁷⁹

“to ship the whole lot of Jewry from the German Reich, the General Government, and the Protectorate to some American or African colony as soon as this can be done after a peace treaty. Madagascar is being considered, and is to be ceded by France for that purpose.”

⁵⁷⁶ NG-2586-B.

⁵⁷⁷ NG-2586-J.

⁵⁷⁸ NG-2586-D.

⁵⁷⁹ PS-2233. *IMT*, vol. XXIX, p. 378.

On 25 July, Frank reiterated that the Führer had decided to deport the Jews “as soon as overseas transportation permits the deportation of the Jews.”⁵⁸⁰

In October of 1940, Alfred Rosenberg wrote an article entitled “Jews on Madagascar,” in which he reminded his readers that as early as the anti-Jewish congress at Budapest in 1927 “[...] the question of a future removal of the Jews from Europe [was] discussed, and here, for the first time, the proposal was made to promote Madagascar as the intended homestead of the Jews.” Rosenberg himself endorsed this idea and expressed his wish for the Jewish “circles of high finance” in Britain and the USA to help with the creation of a Jewish reservation on Madagascar, something which constituted a world-wide problem.⁵⁸¹

At a meeting dedicated to the topic “The Jewish question as a world-wide problem,” which took place on 29 March 1941, Rosenberg declared:⁵⁸²

“For Germany, the Jewish question can only be considered solved when the last Jew has left the Greater German space.”

Among other things in this connection, he mentioned a “Jewish reservation,” which apparently was to be located on Madagascar, even if he did not explicitly say so.

According to statements by Moritz von Schirmeister, a former official in the ministry of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels himself spoke about the Madagascar plan in public on several occasions,⁵⁸³ and Ribbentrop recalled the Führer’s decision to deport the European Jews to North Africa or Madagascar.⁵⁸⁴

The deportation of the European Jews to Madagascar was not a fictitious plan, but a real and concrete project. It was elaborated a few weeks after the armistice in France (22 June 1940), when a peace treaty involving the French surrender of Madagascar to Germany was being mulled over and, above all, when the end of the war was thought to be imminent. The protraction of the war prevented the implementation of this project.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

⁵⁸¹ Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris (subsequently quoted as CDJC), CXLVI-51, pp. 4, 7, 9.

⁵⁸² CDJC, CXLVI-23, p. 66 and 82.

⁵⁸³ *IMT*, vol. XVII, p. 250.

⁵⁸⁴ *IMT*, vol. X, p. 398.

Alongside these developments, the Reich administration continued to promote energetically the Jewish emigration, primarily from Germany.

On 20 May 1941 Reinhardt Heydrich stopped all emigration of Jews from France as well as Belgium “in view of the final solution of the Jewish question, no doubt about to be realized.”⁵⁸⁵ He obviously expected the imminent implementation of the Madagascar plan. Still, Heydrich reiterated the central tenet of NS policy toward the Jews:⁵⁸⁵

“In accordance with an instruction emanating from the Reich Marshall of the Greater German Reich [Göring], the emigration of Jews from the Reich territory including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia is to be implemented actively, even under the present state of war, within the conditions prevailing and taking into account the directives for the emigration of the Jews.”

Then Heydrich goes on to explain in no uncertain terms the reasons for his having prohibited the emigration of Jews from France and Belgium:⁵⁸⁵

“As the Jews on the territory of the Reich, for example, have only a limited choice of departure [routes], mainly via Spain and Portugal, an emigration of Jews from France and Belgium would further reduce these possibilities.”

Two months later, on 31st July, Göring entrusted Heydrich with the task of undertaking all necessary preparations for the “*Endlösung*” (final solution), i.e. emigration or evacuation to Madagascar of all Jews within the German sway. In the letter, Göring said:⁵⁸⁶

“In addition to the task already entrusted to you by the decree of 14 January 1939, viz. to bring about an optimum solution to the Jewish question by emigration or evacuation in accordance with the conditions prevailing, I order you herewith to undertake all necessary preparations – organizational, administrative, and material – for a comprehensive solution of the Jewish question within the German sphere of influence in Europe. To the extent that the competence of other central agencies is concerned thereby, the latter are [to be requested] to participate.

I order you furthermore to submit to me in the near future a comprehensive proposal concerning the organizational, administrative,

⁵⁸⁵ NG-3104. The letter is signed by Walter Schellenberg representing Heydrich.

⁵⁸⁶ NG-2586-E. PS-710.

and material requirements for the implementation of the final solution of the Jewish question so envisaged.”

This document is in complete agreement with the Madagascar plan. The instructions given by Göring to Heydrich “in addition” to those already contained in the decree of 24 January 1939 were for all intents and purposes the implementation of the solution of the Jewish question “by emigration or evacuation”⁵⁸⁷ of the Jews in the Reich exclusively, while simultaneously aiming for a territorial “final solution” by resettlement in Madagascar of all Jews in the European countries occupied by Germany. For the very reason that it was to include all Jews of the occupied European states, this solution was labeled a “comprehensive solution” [*Gesamtlösung*], a designation which echoes the “problem as a whole” [*Gesamtproblem*], the term used in Heydrich’s note of 24 June 1940 (cf. above).

Heydrich clearly alluded to the task entrusted to him by the decree of 24 January 1939 when, on 6 November 1941, he wrote that, years earlier, he had been given the order to prepare an “*Endlösung*” in Europe.⁵⁸⁸ He himself identified the “*Endlösung*” with the solution “by emigration or evacuation” targeted in Göring’s note of 31st July 1941. This is also the context of the order conveyed to the foreign ministry by Adolf Eichmann on 28 August 1941, which prohibited “an emigration of Jews from the territories occupied by us in view of the impending final solution of the Jewish question in Europe now being prepared.”⁵⁸⁹

7.3. From Madagascar Plan to Deportation to the East

Over the months to follow, with the vision of large territorial gains appearing on the horizon since the beginning of the Russian campaign, new perspectives opened up, leading to a significant change of course in the NS policy in respect of the Jews. The “*Endlösung*” by deportation to Madagascar was now replaced by a “territorial final solution” involving the deportation of the European Jews into the eastern territories occupied by the Germans.

⁵⁸⁷ Legal emigration to other countries or deportation to the East (Poland: October 1939 through March 1940) and/or to the West (unoccupied France: October 1940).

⁵⁸⁸ PS-1624.

⁵⁸⁹ PA, *Inland II A/B*, AZ 83-85 Sdh. 4, vol. 59/3.

This change of course was proposed on 22 August 1941 by SS-*Sturmbannführer* Carltheo Zeitschel, advisor to the German embassy in Paris, who wrote in a note to the attention of ambassador Otto Abetz:⁵⁹⁰

“The continuing conquest and occupation of large territories in the East could at present offer us a rapid solution of the Jewish problem throughout Europe. As we can see from the cries for help addressed to the American Jews in the press of all the Jews in Palestine, some 6 million Jews are living in the regions recently occupied by us, especially in Bessarabia, amounting to one third of world Jewry. In the course of any new disposition of the eastern space, these six million Jews would in any case have to be grouped and a special territory would have to be staked out for them. It should not be a major problem to include the Jews from the remainder of the European states and to move there as well the Jews who are presently crammed into the ghettos of Warsaw, Litzmannstadt (Łódź), Lublin etc.

As far as the occupied areas are concerned, such as Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg, Norway, Yugoslavia, Greece, it would be easy to issue military orders for the removal of the Jews to the new territory in mass transports; other states could be encouraged to follow this example and to expulse their Jews to this territory. Within a short period of time, Europe could be made free of Jews.

The idea of moving all Jews to Madagascar which has been mulled for years and has recently been revived by admiral Darlan, is not a bad thing in itself, but would run into serious logistic problems so soon after the war when the world tonnage of ships, seriously diminished by the war, would be needed for purposes other than offering cruises to masses of Jews. In addition, moving nearly ten million people by ship would take years, even if enough shipping capacity were available.

I therefore submit to you to raise this question with the Reich ministry of foreign affairs in the near future and to suggest a meeting in this sense with the recently designated future minister for the eastern Territories, Reichsleiter Rosenberg, and the Reichsführer-SS for an examination of my proposal. Moving the Jews into the eastern territories, even during the war, should not present insurmountable

⁵⁹⁰ CDJC, V-15.

difficulties, particularly so as the Jews in the General Government could use their own vehicles and public roads.”

After having alluded to the situation of the Jews in France, he concluded:

“Furthermore, I suggest approaching the Reichsmarschall [Göring] in this matter since he is, at the moment, receptive to the Jewish problem; as his present disposition and his experience indicate, he can certainly be expected to become a strong supporter for the implementation of the idea expounded above.”

A plan for the removal of the Jews into the East had been considered earlier on several occasions. On 2 April 1941, i.e. before the beginning of the Russian campaign, Reichsminister Rosenberg had envisioned “to make extensive use of Muscovite Russia as an area for undesirable elements of the population.”⁵⁹¹

On 17 July 1941, Governor General Frank noted in his official journal:⁵⁹²

“The Governor General does not favor any further ghettos because the Führer expressly declared on 19 June that the Jews will soon be removed from the General Government with the latter becoming, as it were, a mere transit camp.”

On 20 August 1941, Goebbels, noted in his diary after a visit to the Führer HQ:⁵⁹³

“Furthermore, the Führer promised me that I could remove the Jews from Berlin immediately after the termination of the eastern campaign.”

On 24 September 1941, the day after a conversation with Heydrich at the Führer HQ, Goebbels noted in his diary, that the Jews in the East “would all be deported to the camps [...] set up by the Bolsheviks.”⁵⁹⁴

On the same day he wrote that the Führer’s opinion was for the Jews to be pushed out of Germany step by step and wished:⁵⁹⁴

“Berlin will be first in line, and I am hopeful that we will succeed in moving a significant portion of the Berlin Jews to the East within this year.”

On 28 September, Himmler transmitted to Arthur Greiser, *Gauleiter* of the Wartheland district, Hitler’s order for the rapid deportation to the

⁵⁹¹ PS-1017.

⁵⁹² After Martin Broszat, “Hitler und die Genesis der ‘Endlösung.’ Aus Anlaß der Thesen von David Irving,” in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 25(4), October 1977, p. 748f.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 750.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 751.

East of the Jews from the *Altreich* and the Protectorate. For this purpose Himmler strived, if possible even before the end of 1941, to move these Jews “initially, as a first step, into the eastern territories that were made part of the Reich two years ago, and to move them further east next spring,” and thus he envisaged “to move some 600,000 Jews from the *Altreich* and the Protectorate to the Litzmannstadt ghetto [...] for the winter.”⁵⁹⁵

In a memo dated 7 October 1941, Werner Koeppen, a liaison official for Rosenberg, recorded that Hitler had made the following declaration the day before on the subject of the Protectorate:⁵⁹⁵

“All Jews must be removed from the Protectorate, and not just into the General Government as a first step, but right away further on to the East. We just cannot do this right now because of a shortage of transport capacity. Together with the Jews from the Protectorate, all Jews from Berlin and Vienna are to disappear.”

On 10 October 1941, during a meeting at Prague on the subject of “Solution to Jewish problems,” Heydrich declared that he planned to deport some 50,000 Jews from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to Minsk and Riga between 15 October and 15 November. They were to be housed in the “camps for communist prisoners in the operational area.”⁵⁹⁶

On 13 October 1941, Frank and Rosenberg met for a discussion which also touched on the deportation of the Jews from the General Government:⁵⁹⁷

“The Governor General then raised the subject of the possibility of deporting the Jewish population of the General Government into the occupied eastern territories. Reichsminister Rosenberg remarked that similar suggestions had already come to him from the military authorities in Paris.”^[598] *At the moment, however, he did not think that such resettlement plans could be implemented. Still, for the future he was ready to promote Jewish emigration toward the East, al-*

⁵⁹⁵ Letter from Himmler to Greiser dated 18 September 1941. BAK, NS 19/2655, p. 3. Facsimile of the document in: Peter Witte, “Zwei Entscheidungen in der ‘Endlösung der Judenfrage’: Deportationen nach Łódź und Vernichtung in Chelmno,” in: *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente*, Academia, Prague 1995, p. 50.

⁵⁹⁶ T/37(299), p. 2.

⁵⁹⁷ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 252. The quotation is from the diary of H. Frank, 1941/IV, p. 930f.

⁵⁹⁸ A clear allusion to the proposal made by SS-*Sturmbannführer* Carltheo Zeitschel.

so in view of the intention to move undesirable elements from the Reich territory into the sparsely populated eastern regions.”

Thus, just a few months after it had been made, Zeitschel’s proposal was accepted by Hitler himself when he decided to shelve the Madagascar plan and to move all Jews living in the occupied territories into the East. He probably took this decision at some point in September of 1941. On 23 October 1941 Himmler stopped all Jewish emigration,⁵⁹⁹ effective immediately, and the evacuation of 50,000 western Jews to the East was ordered the following day. On 24 October 1941 Kurt Daluege, the chief of police (*Ordnungspolizei*) issued a decree on the subject “Evacuations of Jews from the *Altreich* and the Protectorate”:⁶⁰⁰

“Between 1st November and 4 December 1941, 50,000 Jews will be deported by the security police from the Altreich, the Ostmark [Austria], and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia into the region of Minsk and Riga in the East. The deportations will be carried out by Reichsbahn trains of 1000 persons each. The trains will be assembled at Berlin, Hamburg, Hanover, Dortmund, Münster, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Frankfurt/M., Kassel, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Munich, Vienna, Breslau, Prague, and Brünn.”

The new NS policy towards the Jews was announced to the higher party echelons at the *Wannsee-Konferenz*, a meeting specially convened for this purpose. It had originally been scheduled for 9 December 1941,⁶⁰¹ but was then postponed. It eventually took place in Berlin, Am Großen Wannsee 56/58, on 20 January 1942. The main speaker was Reinhardt Heydrich. The minutes of the meeting begin with a broad overview of the National-Socialist policy towards the Jews:⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ T-394: “*Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei* has ordered the emigration of Jews to be prevented with immediate effect.”

⁶⁰⁰ PS-3921.

⁶⁰¹ PS-709. NG-2586-F.

⁶⁰² This English translation of the *Wannsee Protokoll* can be found on the website of the Wannsee Memorial Institute in Berlin: www.ghwk.de/engl/protengl.htm. Editor’s remark: Although the authors of the present work consider the content of the Wannsee Protocol to be plausible and therefore see no need to doubt its authenticity, it should be pointed out that other revisionist authors strongly disagree, cf. Roland Böhlinger, Johannes P. Ney, *Zur Frage der Echtheit des Wannsee-Protokolls*, 2nd ed., Verlag für ganzheitliche Forschung und Kultur, Viöl 1994; Roland Böhlinger (ed.), *Die Stellungnahme der Leitung der Gedenkstätte Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz zu dem von Böhlinger und Ney verfaßten Gutachten zur Frage der Echtheit des sogenannten Wannsee-Protokolls und der dazugehörigen Schriftstücke*, Verlag für ganzheitliche Forschung, Viöl 1995; cf. Johannes P. Ney, “Das Wannsee-Protokoll – Anatomie einer Fälschung,” in: Ernst Gauss (ed.), *Grundlagen zur Zeitgeschichte*, Grabert, Tübingen 1994, pp. 169-191; Engl.: “The Wannsee Conference Protocol: Anatomy of a Fabrication,” online:

“SS Lieutenant General [Obergruppenführer] Heydrich, Head of the Security Police and the SD, opened the meeting with the announcement that the Reich Marshal [Göring] had put him in charge of preparations for the final solution of the Jewish question. He noted that this conference had been called to clarify fundamental questions. The Reich Marshal’s request that a draft be submitted to him regarding the organizational, technical and material aspects of the final solution of the Jewish question required prior joint consideration by all central agencies directly concerned with these problems in order to coordinate their subsequent course of action.”^[603]

The authority for directing the final solution of the Jewish question rests with the Reichsführer-SS and Chief of German Police [i.e. Himmler] (Head of the Security Police and the SD) [i.e. Heydrich], without regard to geographic boundaries.

The Head of the Security Police and the SD [Heydrich] then gave a brief review of the struggle conducted so far against this foe. The most important elements are:

- a) forcing the Jews out of the various spheres of life of the German people,*
- b) forcing the Jews out of the German people’s living space (Lebensraum).*

In pursuance of these endeavors, an accelerated emigration of the Jews from the territory of the Reich was seen as the only temporary solution and was accordingly embarked upon in an intensified and systematic manner.

On instruction of the Reich Marshal [i.e. Göring], a Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration was established in January 1939; its direction was entrusted to the Head of the Security Police and the Security Service (SD) [i.e. Heydrich]. Its particular tasks were:

- a) to take measures for the preparation of increased Jewish emigration,*
- b) to direct the flow of emigration,*
- c) to speed up the emigration process in individual cases.*

The aim of this task was to purge German living space of Jews by legal means.”

www.vho.org/GB/Books/dth/fndwannsee.html.

⁶⁰³ Translation corrected by www.ghwk.de according to what Heydrich probably said. The original German sentence here is nonsense grammatically, literally stating that “prior all central agencies directly concerned with these problems have to be treated.”

As a result of this policy and despite many difficulties, Heydrich stressed, roughly 537,000 Jews had emigrated by 31 October 1941:

“Of these,

ca. 360,000 left the Altreich [Germany with its 1937 borders].

ca. 147,000 left the Ostmark [Austria after 15 March 1938],

ca. 30,000 left the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia [after 15 March 1939].”

The protocol goes on to say:

“In the meantime, the Reichsführer-SS and Head of the German Police [i.e. Himmler] has forbidden any further emigration of Jews in view of the dangers posed by emigration in wartime and the looming possibilities in the East.

III. As a further possible solution, and with the appropriate prior authorization by the Führer, emigration has now been replaced by evacuation to the East. This operation should be regarded only as a provisional option, though in view of the coming final solution of the Jewish question it is already supplying practical experience of vital importance.”

Hence, on Hitler’s orders, expulsion to the occupied territories in the East replaced any voluntary or forced emigration of the European Jews to Madagascar, but it was to be only a “temporary possibility” while awaiting a definitive solution of this question to be realized after the end of the war.

As early as August of 1940 Hitler had announced his intention to evacuate all European Jews after the war.⁶⁰⁴ On 7 March 1942 Goebbels noted in his diary:⁶⁰⁵

“The Jewish question must now be resolved on a comprehensive European scale. There are more than 11 million Jews in Europe.^[606] At a later date, they will have to be initially concentrated in the East. Possibly, after the war, they could be given an island, say Madagascar. In any case, Europe will not be at peace as long as the Jews have not been neutralized completely on European soil.”

⁶⁰⁴ Luther’s memorandum for Rademacher dated 15 August 1940, in: *Auswärtiges Amt, Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, Series D, Volume X, London 1957, p. 484.

⁶⁰⁵ Fraenkel, Heinrich, Roger Manvell, *Goebbels, eine Biographie*, Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Collogne-Berlin 1960, p. 256.

⁶⁰⁶ Excessively high figure, taken from the population statistics given on p. 6 of the *Wannsee Protokoll*.

According to a note of the Reich chancellery dating from March or April of 1942, Hitler had repeatedly informed Lammers, the head of the chancellery, “that he wanted to postpone the solution of the Jewish question until after the war.”⁶⁰⁷ On 24 July 1942, according to Henry Picker, Hitler underlined this intention by saying squarely that “he would, after the end of the war, take the rigorous stand of squeezing one city after another until the Jews came out, ready to emigrate to Madagascar or to some other Jewish national state.”⁶⁰⁸

The intention of the National Socialists to solve the Jewish problem after the war results also from the so-called “Brown File” drafted by Rosenberg on 20 June 1941 and later integrated into the “Green File” of September of 1942. Its section “Directives for the treatment of the Jewish question” begins as follows:⁶⁰⁹

“All measures regarding to the Jewish question in the occupied territories in the East must be taken from the point of view that the Jewish question will be solved in a general way for the whole of Europe after the war. They must, therefore, be conceived as preparatory partial measures and must be in agreement with other decisions in this domain. On the other hand, the experience gathered in connection with the treatment of the Jewish question in the occupied eastern territories may have a bearing on the solution of the problem as a whole, as the Jews in these territories, together with those of the General Government, constitute the largest contingent of European Jewry. Any kind of purely vexatious actions, being unworthy of a German, are to be abstained from.”

In a typed copy of these “Directives,” undated but surely stemming from the same period, the text continues as follows after the word ‘domain’:⁶¹⁰

“This is applicable, in particular, to the creation of at least temporary facilities for the settlement of Jews from the territory of the Reich.”

A note by Martin Luther, an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, referring to Jews of Spanish nationality living in occupied France

⁶⁰⁷ PS-4025.

⁶⁰⁸ Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier*, Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Munich 1981, p. 456.

⁶⁰⁹ “Richtlinien für die Führung der Wirtschaft in den besetzten Ostgebieten” (Directives for the Management of the Economy in the occupied eastern territories) (Green File), Berlin, September 1942. EC-347. *IMT*, vol. XXXVI, p. 348.

⁶¹⁰ PS-212. *IMT*, vol. XXV, p. 302

and dated 17 October 1941, speaks of “measures to be taken after the end of the war towards a fundamental solution of the Jewish question.”⁶¹¹

During a meeting of *Reichsmarschall* Göring with the *Reichskommissars* for the occupied territories and the military commanders, which took place on 6 August 1942, Rosenberg declared:⁶¹²

“The Jewish question for Europe and for Germany can be considered solved only when no more Jews exist on the European continent.”

We may thus conclude that the Wannsee meeting was convened solely for the purpose of informing the agencies concerned that emigration and the Madagascar plan had been abandoned, replaced as they were by the start of a new policy of large scale deportations of Jews into the East, and of discussing the problems arising from the new situation. The Madagascar plan officially was shelved on 10 February 1942. The reasons are explained in a note by Rademacher to envoy Harald Bielfeld of the Foreign Ministry, written on that day:⁶¹³

“In August of 1940 I transmitted to you for your files the plan elaborated by my department for the final solution of the Jewish question, whereby the island of Madagascar was to be ceded by France, with the practical implementation of this task to be entrusted to the RSHA. In accordance with this plan, Gruppenführer Heydrich was ordered by the Führer to carry out the solution of the Jewish question in Europe.

The war against the Soviet Union has meanwhile opened up the possibility of providing other territories for the final solution. The Führer has decided accordingly that the Jews will not be deported to Madagascar but to the East. Hence, Madagascar need no longer be considered for the final solution.”

This shows clearly that the “*Endlösung*” was of a territorial nature and consisted in the deportation of the Jews to the territories held by Germany in the East. This is in perfect agreement with another important document, the Luther memorandum of August of 1942. In it, Luther resumed primarily the essential elements of NS policy towards the Jews:⁶¹⁴

⁶¹¹ PA, *Politische Abteilung* III 245, AZ Po 36, vol. I.

⁶¹² URSS-170. IMT, vol. XXXIV, p. 417.

⁶¹³ NG-5770.

⁶¹⁴ NG-2586-J.

“The basic premise of the German policy in respect of the Jews, starting with the seizure of power [by Hitler in 1933], was to promote Jewish emigration by all available means. For this purpose, Generalfeldmarschall Göring, in his quality as head of the Four-Year-Plan, created a Reich central agency for Jewish emigration and entrusted its leadership to Gruppenführer Heydrich, the chief of the security police.”

Having expounded the origins and the development of the Madagascar plan – which by now had been scrapped in view of the changed situation – Luther stressed that Göring’s letter of 31 July 1941 was a follow-up to Heydrich’s letter of 24 June 1940, which claimed that the Jewish question could no longer be solved by emigration but required a “territorial final solution.” Luther went on to say:

“For that reason, Reichsmarschall Göring requested Gruppenführer Heydrich on 31 July 1941 to carry out all necessary preparations for a comprehensive solution of the Jewish question within the German sphere of influence in Europe (cf. [document] DIII 709g). On the basis of this order, Gruppenführer Heydrich convened a meeting of all German agencies involved for 20 January 1942, with secretaries of state from the other ministries and myself from the foreign office attending. Gruppenführer Heydrich explained at the meeting that Reichsmarschall Göring had issued his order being so directed by the Führer, and that the Führer had now approved the evacuation of the Jews to the East.”

Luther added that on the basis of this order the evacuation of the Jews from Germany had been started. The eastern territories were their destination, to which they would be deported by way of the General Government:

“The removal to the General Government is a temporary measure. The Jews will be moved on to the occupied eastern territories as soon as the material means are available.”

A circular dated 9 October 1942 and sent to Party officials, entitled “Rumors concerning the situation of the Jews in the East,” explains in the following manner the measures taken against the Jews:⁶¹⁵

“In connection with the elaboration of the final solution of the Jewish question, the inhabitants of various parts of the Reich have recently been discussing ‘very severe measures’ against the Jews,

⁶¹⁵ PS-3244.

particularly in the eastern territories. We have been able to ascertain that such representations – usually in a distorted or exaggerated manner – had been conveyed by members of the various units operating in the east who had, themselves, been able to observe such measures.

It is conceivable that not all members of our people will be able to comprehend the necessity of such measures, those members in particular who are not in a position to form their own opinion of the horrors perpetrated by the Bolsheviks.

In order to counter the spread of such rumors which often have an intentionally tendentious character, we hereby furnish the information found below in an effort to reflect the present state of the situation:

For the past 2000 years, a fruitless fight against Jewry has been going on. It was only after 1933 that we have been able to look for ways and means allowing us to bring about a complete separation of Jewry from the German host body. The portions of the solution carried out so far can be described as follows:

1) The repulsion of the Jews from the various domains of life of the German people. The laws passed by the legislature are to constitute the foundation guaranteeing that future generations, too, will be shielded from a renewed onslaught of the opponent.

2) The effort to expel the opponent completely from the territory of the Reich. In view of the fact that the living space available to the German people is very small, it was hoped that this problem could be solved by an accelerated emigration of the Jews.

Since the beginning of the war in 1939, emigration has become increasingly more difficult; at the same time, the economic space of the German people steadily increased in size compared to its living space so that, at the present time, a complete elimination through emigration is no longer possible in view of the large number of Jews present in this [economic] space. It is to be expected that already the coming generation will no longer perceive this problem neither as vividly nor as clearly [as we do] on the basis of their own experience. Also, the matter has been set in motion and must be settled; hence, the problem as a whole must be resolved by the present generation.

Therefore, the complete expulsion or elimination of the millions of Jews present in the European economic sphere is an imperative task in the fight to guarantee the existence of the German people.

Starting in the Reich itself and then extending into the other European countries made part of the final solution, the Jews will be moved into large camps in the East, some already in existence, others yet to be set up, where they will be used directly as labor or moved on further east. Elderly Jews, as well as those with high military decorations (EK I [Iron Cross], Golden medal for bravery etc.) will be moved successively to Theresienstadt, a town in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

It is in the nature of this task that some of these very difficult problems can, in the interest of the survival of our people, be solved only by the utmost severity.”

On 23 November 1942, Himmler spoke at Bad Tölz, saying:⁶¹⁶

“There has also been a complete change in the Jewish question in Europe. The Führer once said before the Reichstag [the Reich parliament]: If Jewry were to instigate a war, for example to eradicate the Aryan peoples, it will not be the Aryan peoples that will be eradicated, but Jewry. The Jew has been removed from Germany; he now lives in the East and works on our roads, railways etc. This measure has been carried out thoroughly, but without any cruelty. We will not torture anyone, but we know that we are fighting for the existence and the survival of our Nordic blood.”

In a report written on 14 December 1942 by Walter Maedel, a German ministerial department head, and entitled “Financing the measures for the solution of the Jewish question,” the National-Socialist policy towards the Jews is summarized as follows:⁶¹⁷

“Some time ago, the Reichsmarschall ordered the Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police to prepare the measures serving the final solution of the Jewish question. The Reichsführer-SS has entrusted the Chief of the Security Police and SD with the execution of this task. The latter initially promoted the legal emigration of Jews overseas by special measures. When emigration overseas had become impossible after the outbreak of the war, he implemented the gradual cleansing of Jews from the Reich by their deportation to the

⁶¹⁶ Bradley F. Smith, Agnes F. Peterson (eds.), *Heinrich Himmler. Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und andere Ansprachen*, Propyläen Verlag, Frankfurt/Main 1974, p. 200.

⁶¹⁷ NG-4583.

East. Lately, within the Reich territory, old age homes (old age ghettos) for Jews have been set up, for example at Theresienstadt. For details see note of 21 August 1942. The establishment of other old age homes in the eastern territories is being planned.”

7.4. First Deportations to the East

The expulsion of 50,000 Jews from the Protectorate and the *Altreich* to Minsk and Riga, decided on at the meeting held on 10 October 1941, started a month later. It constituted only the first phase of these deportation, however, for the deportees were supposed to be taken further East eventually. One of the first reports concerning these transports to the eastern territories is a telegram sent on 9 November 1941 by Heinrich Lohse, Reichskommissar for the Reichskommissariat Ukraine to Rosenberg, Reichsminister for the occupied eastern territories, reading:⁶¹⁸

“Security police announces implementation of transport of 50,000 Jews into eastern territories. First transport to arrive Minsk 10/11, Riga 19/11. Urgently requesting to prevent transport, as Jewish camps must be moved considerably further east.”

On the same day, Dr. Georg Leibbrand, *Reichsamtsleiter* in the Rosenberg ministry, sent Lohse the following cable:⁶¹⁹

“Concerning Jew transports into eastern territories. More detailed letter in mail. Jews will be moved further east. Camps at Riga and Minsk only temporary measure, hence no objections here.”

The local administration was anything but happy about this influx of western Jews and objected on several occasions. On 20 November 1941, the German army commander for “*Ostland*” wrote Lohse a letter on the subject “Transportation of Jews from Germany to White Ruthenia”⁶²⁰ specifying:⁶²¹

“Hearing from 707 Division 25,000 Jews to be moved from Germany to White Ruthenia, apparently 3000 destined Minsk with 1500 already arrived from Hamburg. The influx of German Jews, consi-

⁶¹⁸ Gosudarstvenni Archiv Rossiiskoi (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Moscow (subsequently quoted as GARF), 7445-2-145, p. 52.

⁶¹⁹ GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 54 and 51 (Transcription of telegram).

⁶²⁰ “Generalbezirk Weissruthenien,” the political unit formed by the Germans in the western part of Byelorussia temporarily occupied by them.

⁶²¹ GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 60f.

derably more intelligent than the mass of White Ruthenian population, presents great risk for pacification of White Ruthenia."

The report goes on to state that the Jewish population of White Ruthenia was "Bolshevik and apt to adopt any kind of anti-German stance," being involved in clandestine resistance activities. Hence, the German-Jewish deportees would get in touch with communist organizations. For that reason, and also because the transports were hampering the German army, the commander asked "to ensure that no Jews will be sent from Germany to White Ruthenia."

The protests, however, would always be ignored. Franz Walter Stahlecker, chief of the security police and SD for the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, notified Lohse:⁶²²

"Jewish transports will continue to arrive at Minsk as planned. Of the 25 transports originally scheduled for Riga, the first 5 will be sent to Kowno."

On 13 January 1942, a note from Lohse's staff reiterated:⁶²³

"Submitted to Reichskommissar [Lohse] requesting acknowledgement of report from Minsk city Kommissar regarding evacuation of allegedly 50,000 Jews from Germany to Minsk.

In the absence of other orders from Reichskommissar, the instruction of 28/11 will remain in force to the effect that objections against any kind of transport from Germany are no longer to be raised."

The Minsk local Kommissar, Wilhelm Janetzke, who opposed deportations into this city, turned directly to Rosenberg on 5 January 1942. In a letter concerning "The evacuation of Jews from Germany to Minsk" he explained that he had learned that the central agencies intended "to send another roughly 50,000 Jews from Germany to Minsk."

The city lay literally in ruins, with some 100,000 civilians living there, in addition to "some 7,000 Jews from Germany," as well as "approximately 15 to 18,000 Russian Jews" as prisoners. Hence, it was impossible to house any more people. In addition to these difficulties, there were "the very serious problems of feeding the population (including the Jews)." For these reasons, Janetzke requested the deportations of Jews to Minsk to be suspended.⁶²⁴

⁶²² GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 62. The original has *Kauen*, the German name for Kowno.

⁶²³ GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 67.

⁶²⁴ GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 67.

Counselor Wetzel, a member of Rosenberg's staff, answered on his behalf by means of a letter dated 16 January 1942 addressed to Reichskommissar Lohse:⁶²⁵

"Re: Evacuation of Jews from Germany to Minsk.

I have received the letter dated 5 January 1942 from the city commissar at Minsk, of which I enclose a retyped copy for your information.

I have been informed by the RSHA that 25,000 Jews from the Reich were scheduled for Minsk to be temporarily housed there in the local ghetto. Of these, some 7-8,000 have arrived at Minsk. The remainder cannot be moved to Minsk for the time being because of transportation problems. However, as soon as these problems will have been overcome, it is likely that these Jews will reach Minsk. I ask you to instruct the Minsk city commissar in this sense and to request him to get in touch with the competent police commander in the matter of food and housing for the Jews. I ask you moreover, to advise him [the city commissar] to use the official way of communication in the future."

On 6 February 1942, however, the *Generalkommissar* for White Ruthenia, Wilhelm Kube, backed Janetzke's request. He restated that it was impossible to accept a further contingent of 25,000 Jews in a city like Minsk, 80% of which lay in ruins.⁶²⁶

On 26 June 1942, the Chief of the security police and the SD said in a report:⁶²⁷

"The measures taken by the security police and the SD must bring about basic changes in White Ruthenia as well. In order to establish control over the Jews, regardless of any future dispositions, Jewish councils of elders were set up which are responsible to the security police and the SD for the attitude of their racial brethren. Furthermore, registration of the Jews as well as their concentration in ghettos has started. Finally, the Jews have been identified by a yellow mark to be worn on the chest and on the back similar to the Jewish star used in the Reich territory. In order to make use of the labor potential of the Jews they are normally employed in groups and for clearing operations.

⁶²⁵ GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 68.

⁶²⁶ GARF, 7445-2-145, p. 72-73.

⁶²⁷ "Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten Nr. 9" (Messages from the occupied eastern territories, no 9), Berlin, 26 June 1942. Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Vojennii Archiv (Russian State War Museum, subsequently quoted as RGVA), 500-1-755, p. 190.

By these measures, the basis for a final solution intended for the future has also been established in White Ruthenia.”

These measures were nothing but the actual implementation of the policy set out in the “Brown File,” which specified a future solution to the Jewish question “after the war” for the whole of Europe.

The available railway documents⁶²⁸ enable us merely to reconstruct a portion of the whole picture for the Jewish transports that were moved directly into the eastern territories. The transports coming in from the Reich were arranged by the German *Reichsbahn* via the Königsberg *Reichsbahn* directorate whose task it was to inform all agencies concerned. The transports were labeled “Da”⁶²⁹ and numbered successively. The empty trains, labeled “Lp,” were given a number above 1,000. Altogether 66 such transports are known. Between 8 November 1941 and 28 November 1942 they moved 56,221 Jews⁶³⁰ into the eastern territories, comprising

- 26 transports from the *Altreich* with 16,057 persons aboard
- 11 transports from the Protectorate with 11,000 persons aboard
- 29 transports from Vienna with 29,164 persons aboard

The destinations of these transports were: Baranoviči (1), Kaunas (2), Maly Trostinec (5), Minsk (34), Raasiku (1), Riga (23).

In the period between 17 November 1941⁶³¹ and 6 February 1942, there were 25 transports conveying a total of 25,103 persons to Riga,⁶³² but only 15,114 can be found on the list published in the source mentioned. This brings the total number of persons deported to [56,221+(25,103–15,114)=] 66,210. The Korherr report helps us in closing the gaps in the documents and to draw a complete picture of the deportations of Jews into the East for 1942. We will come back to this question in chapter 9.4.

The National-Socialist policy towards the Jews, as discussed above, is well documented in all its aspects and in all its twists and turns (start-

⁶²⁸ A number of documents on the subject of the transports towards the East can be found in the National Archives of the Byelorussian Republic (Natsionalni Archiv Respubliki Belarus, Minsk, subsequently quoted as NARB) in file number 378-1-784.

⁶²⁹ According to some authors, this abbreviation stood for “David.” Hilberg asserts that the symbol “Da” stood for “Judentransporte außerhalb Polens zusammengestellt.” R. Hilberg, *Sonderzüge nach Auschwitz*, Dumjahn, Munich 1981, p. 76. German railway documents indicate that the persons transported were labeled “Aussiedler” (emigrants).

⁶³⁰ List of transports in: C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 200f.

⁶³¹ This transport reached Riga on 19 November.

⁶³² Enclosure to “*Meldungen aus den besetzten Ostgebieten*” No. 10, 3. July 1942. RGVA, 500-1-775, p. 233.

ing with the territorial final solution, initially targeting Madagascar, later on the East). No document, however, supports that radical change of principle, which an extermination policy would have been. When, how, why, and on whose orders would this policy of deportation and resettlement in the East have been turned into a program of total physical extermination? When did the deportation to the East become a mere “euphemism” for massacre? Who decided to build “extermination camps” and when, how, and why did this occur?

To these questions, mainstream Holocaust historians can furnish only conjectural and contradictory replies. What is certain is that such a radical about-face would have required an order just as radical: the alleged *Führerbefehl*, the order by Hitler.

The following chapter will deal with this fundamental question of Holocaust historiography.

8. The *Führerbefehl* and the Origins of the “Extermination Camps” in the East

8.1. The *Führerbefehl* and Holocaust Historiography

During the Nuremberg trial, at the morning hearing of 15 April 1946, the former commander of the Auschwitz camp, Rudolf Höß, declared that, in the summer of 1941, he was ordered, by *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler to come to Berlin and that Himmler told him on that occasion that Hitler had given the order to exterminate the Jews.⁶³³ This *Führerbefehl* immediately became the cornerstone of mainstream Holocaust historiography then taking shape but still lacking any kind of documentation. Over the following decades these historians went on to build upon this meager foundation a fortress of assertions and hypotheses so full of internal inconsistencies that in the late seventies David Irving would go so far as to question whether Hitler was even aware of the alleged genocide.⁶³⁴ The ensuing debate of these theses, moved along by Martin Broszat, then director of the Munich *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*,⁵⁹² generated new points of view which brought with them a new historiographic concept, known as the functionalist or structuralist concept. Right from the start and in a way inevitably, this concept was at odds with the ailing Nuremberg concept – which we may call intentionalist – because at heart it constituted a critical reaction to the teachings of this “courtroom-based” historiography, the historiographic failings of which it exposed all too clearly. Hitler’s role in the alleged genocide was reassessed along entirely different perspectives, becoming more and more obscure in the process and finally ending up in a “nod” by Hitler or in a “meeting of minds.”

Mainstream Holocaust historians dedicated two major meetings to these burning problems.

The first of them was an international congress on the topic “Nazi Germany and the extermination of the Jews,” organized by the *Ecole*

⁶³³ *IMT*, vol. XI, p. 398.

⁶³⁴ D. Irving, *Hitler’s War*. Wiking Press, New York, 1977.

des Hautes Etudes en sciences sociales and the Sorbonne, was held in Paris from 29 June through 2 July 1982. The proceedings were published in 1985 in a volume of the same name.⁶³⁵

On that occasion, Uwe Dietrich Adam analyzed the National Socialist policy on the subject of the Jews between September of 1939 and June of 1941, a period which “can be regarded as being the descent towards the ‘final solution.’” He stressed immediately, however, that:⁶³⁶

“[...] *the precise date at which this ‘final solution’ was ordered constitutes a problem not yet resolved for German and for world history.*”

On the subject of the origins of the alleged genocide of the Jews, Adam took a decided stand against the radical intentionalist thesis supported by Eberhard Jäckel, stating that he “agreed with the vast majority of historians in thinking that the order to liquidate the Jews on the German territory was never given, not even planned, in any way whatsoever, prior to the beginning of the war.”⁶³⁶ Given that “no written trace of this order has ever been found” and that it is highly unlikely that it will be found in the future, Adam stated that:⁶³⁷

“[...] *it becomes the task of the historian to date it in the most precise manner possible, using [the tool of] interpretation. Methods and hypotheses in this respect are limitless, we face very diverse opinions. Some people see the conception of the ‘final solution’ as having taken place at the time of Landsberg (Jäckel, Dawidowicz); another dates it to March of 1941 (Krausnick) or July of 1941 (Hilberg, Browning), still others to the fall of 1941 (Adam, Broszat). Neither the laws nor the measures taken by the Third Reich against the Jews allow us to fix a date for the issuance of the order. However, for those who are conversant with the institutional structure of the Third Reich after the beginning of the war, each measure taken reduces the possibilities of interpretation and allows, in the end, to eliminate certain dates or to confirm others with some degree of certainty.*” (Emph. added)

At the outbreak of the war the Jewish question, as it had been formulated in the Party program and defined by the early protagonists of race legislation, had been resolved; Adam:⁶³⁸

⁶³⁵ Colloque de l'École des Hautes Études en sciences sociales, *L'Allemagne nazie et le génocide juif*, Gallimard, Paris, 1985.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 177f.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

“If you want to summarize the essence of the Nazi policy towards the Jews, there is one permanent and primary objective: to separate the Jews from the ‘Aryans.’ This political and racial objective of Nazi ideology – the elimination of the Jews from the ‘Volkskörper’ (the body of the nation) – was reached in 1938.”

After the start of the hostilities the National Socialist policy towards the Jews aimed at a consolidation of this separation, but according to Adam:⁶³⁹

“[it was] worked out to a great extent under the influence of imponderable factors, of short-term ideas, of rivalries between officials, of accidental or intentional allusions by Hitler. The absence of any central authority for the coordination, the administration or the direction of anti-Jewish measures played a non-negligible role in this absence of unity and this aimless legislation.”

During this period before the outbreak of the war, the RSHA carried on with the policy of emigration. Adam:⁶⁴⁰

“Before the beginning of the war, the security service^[641] in particular insisted on a ‘solution of the Jewish question’ by way of emigration. The creation of the Central Agency for Jewish Emigration^[642] in January of 1939 allowed Heydrich to assume the leading role of the Jewish policy at ministerial level. He rapidly activated the SD plans for emigration and obtained his first major success when, in July of 1939, he created the ‘Reich Association of Jews in Germany.’^[643] It operated under the authority of the RSHA and he thus had the control of the large cultural Jewish associations and, above all, of the financing and the direction of the Jewish emigration.”

But the RSHA had not “reckoned with the anarchic structure of the Third Reich,” which slowed down the Jewish emigration and did not allow Germany to reach “the astonishing figures reached by Eichmann in Vienna. Once the war had broken out, we may assume that the RSHA policy was in tune with Hitler’s wish to attain as soon as possible a ‘judenreines Deutschland,’ a Germany free of Jews.”⁶⁴⁰

The RSHA desperately tried to solve the problem of emigration.⁶⁴⁴

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁶⁴¹ *Sicherheitsdienst, SD*

⁶⁴² *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*

⁶⁴³ *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*

⁶⁴⁴ *Colloque de l’École... , op. cit.* (note 635), pp. 186f.

“The taxes on emigration certainly went up continually, but at the same time the RSHA tried to soften the foreign exchange controls. In spite of all official regulations, it eventually obtained the employment of Jews in the agricultural sector ‘in order to ease their emigration by providing them with a professional education.’ The RSHA also managed to lower or to do away with all sorts of special taxes and limits on the export of capital. In December of 1940 they succeeded in convincing the Ministry of the Economy to accelerate the financial procedures in all cases of emigration against all regulations in force. This search for a global solution of the ‘Jewish question’ can still be found in the attempt by the RSHA to obtain a general directive for emigration from Göring. Later on this document^[645] would often be misinterpreted because of its wording. Göring ordered all Reich authorities to facilitate the emigration of Jews away from the Reich and the territories under protection to the extent possible, even in wartime. On the other hand, the emigration of Jews from France and Belgium was to be prohibited on account of the ‘final solution, which was doubtlessly drawing near.’ This seductive term ‘final solution’ was interpreted by generations of historians as to mean the physical destruction, whereas, at that time, it meant only the emigration of the Jews to Madagascar. The trap closed only in August of 1941. The RSHA prohibited the emigration of able-bodied Jews.^[646] At the end of August 1941 Eichmann extended this regulation to all Jews who lived in areas occupied by Germany. On 23 October 1941 the RSHA informed all units of the police and the SD of an order issued by Himmler which stopped any Jewish emigration whatsoever, without exception, for the duration of the war.” (Emph. added)

Christopher R. Browning took up the specific topic of the decision concerning the alleged genocide. He underlined above all the “major divergences” which divided the two Holocaust interpretations at the time:⁶⁴⁷

“The decision concerning the final solution has been the subject of a large number of historical interpretations. The essential diver-

⁶⁴⁵ W. Schellenberg’s letter dated 20 May 1941. Document NG-3104.

⁶⁴⁶ Eichmann’s order concerned actually the Jews “fit for military service” (*wehrfähig*) and was obviously meant to keep the enemy from obtaining potential soldiers. Joseph Walk (ed.), *Das Sonderrecht für die Juden im NS-Staat*, C.F. Müller Juristischer Verlag, Heidelberg-Karlsruhe 1981, n. 227, p. 347.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

gences appear in respect of two connected questions: on the one hand the nature of the process by which the decision was taken and more particularly the role of Hitler and his ideology, on the other hand the moment at which this decision was taken. As Martin Broszat has rightly stated, a diversity of interpretation advises us that any kind of theory on the origin of the 'final solution' belongs to the field of probability rather than to that of certainty." (Emph. added)

Browning then sketched out a summary of these "major divergences":⁶⁴⁸

"For Lucy Dawidowicz the conception of the final solution antedates its implementation by twenty years; for Martin Broszat the idea emerges from practice: the sporadic assassination of groups of Jews gave rise to the idea to assassinate all of the Jews systematically. Between these two extremes we have a great number of interpretations. Thus, Eberhard Jäckel believes that the idea to kill the Jews sprang up in Hitler's mind at the end of the 1930s. Karl Dietrich Bracher supposes that it already existed at that time. Andreas Hillgruber and Klaus Hildebrand maintain the supremacy of ideological factors but do not propose any precise date. Others, not all of them functionalists, place the decisive turn into the year of 1941; but as far as that year is concerned many dates have been suggested. Léon Poliakov believes that the most probable date is the beginning of 1941, whereas Robert Kempner and Helmut Krausnick sustain that Hitler took this decision in the spring in connection with the preparations of the invasion of Russia. Raul Hilberg thinks that the decision was taken in the summer when the massacres perpetrated in Russia led to the belief that this solution would also be possible in all of Europe for a victorious Germany. Uwe Dietrich Adam asserts that it was taken in autumn when the military offensive slowed down and it became apparent that a 'territorial solution' by way of a mass expulsion into Russia thus became impossible. Sebastian Haffner, finally, who is certainly not a functionalist, supports an even later thesis, early December, when the feeling of an eventual military defeat caused Hitler to seek an irrevocable victory over the Jews."

Here Browning wonders:

"How are we to explain such a diversity of interpretations as to the type and the date of the decision concerning the final solution?"

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

This diversity can be explained, according to Browning, by a subjective reason – the different viewpoints of the intentionalists and the functionalists – and an objective one, which is actually the true reason: “by the absence of documents.” He said, in fact:⁶⁴⁹

“There are no written records about what was discussed between Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich on the subject of the final solution, and none of the three survived to testify after the war. Hence the historian must himself reconstruct the decisional process from the top down, extrapolating from external events and testimonies. Like Plato’s man in the cave who sees only the reflections and the shadows, not the reality. This bold process of extrapolation and reconstruction invariably leads to a great variety of conclusions.” (Emph. added)

In fact, Browning insisted repeatedly on the almost total absence of documents concerning the origins of the decision on the subject of the alleged “final solution”:⁶⁵⁰

“And yet, in spite of all that is known about the preparations for a German invasion of Russia, there is no specific documentation on the subject of the Russian Jews. In order to obtain an answer to this question, it is necessary to turn to post war testimonies, to indirect proofs, and to references dispersed throughout more recent documents. [...]

If the decision to kill all the Jews in Russia was undoubtedly taken before the invasion, the circumstances and the exact moment, on the other hand, remain obscure. It is impossible to say whether the initiative came from Hitler or from somebody else, from Heydrich, for example. Moreover, we do not know whether Hitler had already made his choice in March, when he clearly announced to the military that the war in Russia would not be a conventional war, or if the servility of the military later pushed him into extending his search for victims beyond the Judeo-Bolshevik intelligentsia. An insufficient documentation does not allow us to reply definitively to these questions and permits only an educated guess.” (Emph. added)

*“We don’t know and, no doubt, we will never know precisely, when and how Heydrich and his direct superior, Himmler, learned of their new assignment.”*⁶⁵¹

In conclusion, Browning stated:⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 196f..

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

“There was no written order for the final solution, and we have no reference to an oral order except what Himmler told Heydrich when he said that he acted with the Führer’s approval.” (Emph. added)

Browning himself supports the following thesis:⁶⁴⁷

“The intention to massacre systematically all the European Jews was not clearly present in Hitler’s mind before the war; it crystallized only in 1941, after the solutions considered previously had turned out to be unrealizable and after the imminent offensive against Russia brought along the perspective of having to deal with an even greater number of Jews than in the expanding German empire. The final solution took shape starting with a certain number of decisions taken in that very year. In the spring Hitler ordered the preparation of the massacre of the Jews who would fall into German hands in the course of the impending invasion. During the summer of that same year Hitler, sure of his military victory, had a plan prepared aiming for the extension of the extermination process to the European Jews. In October, even though the hope for a victory had not been borne out, Hitler approved the general lines of this plan, which entailed the deportation to extermination centers and the use of a lethal gas.”

But even this theory is purely conjectural. In any case, Browning himself declared that this alleged decision did not fit into a general plan for the extermination of the Jews:⁶⁵³

“However, the Jewish policy of the Nazis in the rest of Europe was not changed immediately in this sense. One continued to talk about emigration, of expulsion, and of plans for a future resettlement. In the autumn of 1940 Jews were expelled to unoccupied France from the region of Baden and from the Palatinate in Germany as well as from Luxemburg; there were also expulsions from Vienna to Poland in early 1941. In February of 1941 Heydrich still spoke of ‘moving them to a country which will be determined later.’ And the Ministry of Foreign Affairs went on talking to the RSHA, the Reich agency of security, about blocking the emigration of Jews from other countries, thus monopolizing, for the German Jews, the possibilities of emigration, which were limited. This policy was even reconfirmed in a circular, dated 20 May 1941 and signed by Walter

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

Schellenberg, which prohibited the emigration of Jews from France and Belgium. The former policy of emigration, expulsion, and resettlement was abandoned only progressively. In July of 1941 the RSHA informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that no more expulsions to France were planned. In February of 1942 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially dropped the Madagascar plan. The preparations for the murder of the Russian Jews would thus not have any immediate repercussions on the Nazi Jewish policy in other countries." (Emph. added)

Still, Browning did not have any doubt that his conjecture concerning an order to massacre the Russian Jews was unfounded. He maintained on the contrary that the "idea of a final solution for the European Jews developed in a separate process and resulted from a decision of its own."⁶⁵³

But since not even this alleged decision was supported by documentary evidence, the field remained open to the most wildly diverging conjectures on this point as well, which Browning sums up in the following manner:⁶⁵³

"Hilberg dates the decision to July 1941 at the latest; Uwe Dietrich Adam opted for a date between September and November; Sebastian Haffner suggests December and Martin Broszat rejects even the idea of a global decision and a particular date and believes in a gradual and unconscious process of intensification."

On the subject of the alleged extermination order Browning's position was as follows:⁶⁵⁴

"In July of 1941, when the Nazi armies had shattered the defenses on the border of the Soviet Union, captured masses of Russian soldiers, and in the end covered two thirds of the distance to Moscow, Hitler approved the outline of a plan for the mass extermination of the Jewish population in Europe. In October of 1941, with the victorious encirclement of Viasma and Bryansk and with the brief glow of a hope for the final triumph before the onset of winter, he approved the final solution."

Yet this is just another conjecture unsupported by documents.

The problem of the origins of the decision to embark on the alleged extermination, which had remained unresolved at the Paris meeting, was again examined at the Stuttgart convention which took place from

⁶⁵⁴ C.R. Browning, *Verso il genocidio*, Il Saggiatore, Milano 1998, p. 36.

3 to 5 May 1984 under the general heading “The Murder of the European Jews in the Second World War. Genesis and Implementation.” The respective proceedings were published a year later under the same title.⁶⁵⁵

Eberhard Kolb formulated with great clarity the two fundamental questions which the meeting faced:⁶⁵⁶

“1. Was the ‘Final Solution’ the realization of a project which had been on the books for a long time and which aimed – in the last instance – at the physical annihilation of the European Jewry?

2. Was there a specific order – at least an oral one if not a written one – by Hitler to kill not only the Jews living in Eastern Europe but all Jews within the German sway, and when was this order given?”

From there, Kolb goes on to set out the replies furnished by the Holocaust historiography up to the date of the meeting:⁶⁵⁷

“If I am not mistaken, the majority of the researchers today tend to put a big question mark on the idea of a National Socialist policy towards the Jews based on a plan which unfolded and moved along on a straight line – from the anti-Semitic slogans of the ‘Kampfzeit,’ via the anti-Jewish measures of the 1933-1939 period towards the organized mass murder from 1941 on. The real question today is whether (and when) Hitler gave a specific extermination order. Into the 1970s there was almost unanimous agreement on this point. Certainly: a written extermination order emanating from Hitler had not come down to us and we could assume that there never was such a written order. However, an express ‘Führerbefehl’ in the form of an oral instruction given by Hitler to Himmler was regarded as the in-dispensable condition for the assassinations which were begun in 1941.

On the other hand, there was no general agreement on the moment at which this order had been given: Raul Hilberg (1961) believes that the general extermination order was issued by Hitler in ‘early summer’ of 1941, Helmut Krausnick (1965) dates such an order to ‘March of 1941 at the latest,’ Uwe Dietrich Adam has a span ‘between September and November of 1941’; if we follow Andreas

⁶⁵⁵ Eberhard Jäckel, Jürgen Rohwer (eds.), *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Entschlußbildung und Verwirklichung*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart 1985.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

Hillgruber (1972), Hitler's decision was taken in July of 1941 in connection with the expected triumph over the Soviet Union and with the planned expansion towards the East. As opposed to this, Martin Broszat (1977) questioned the thesis that there had been an express and specific extermination order issued by Hitler. The physical elimination of the Jews, according to Broszat, had not been planned a long time in advance and then carried out systematically, had not been set in motion by a single decision and a single secret order issued by Hitler; rather, the 'program' to annihilate the Jews had grown over time out of 'individual actions' until it became an institutionalized fact in the spring of 1942; it had assumed its defining characteristics, after the extermination camps in Poland had been set up (between December, 1941, and July, 1942). Such an interpretation, according to Broszat, could not be documented with absolute certainty, but could claim a greater degree of probability than the assumption of an all-embracing secret order to annihilate the Jews, issued in the summer of 1941 [...].

Broszat's explanatory model of the genesis of the assassination plan was more clearly stated by Hans Mommsen (1983). In agreement with Broszat, Mommsen expressly asserts that there was no 'formal order' [...].

Still, the majority of researchers cling to the idea that Hitler was the deciding factor in the murder of the European Jews and that there was an annihilation order issued orally.

Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm admits that there is no proof for an order to annihilate the Jews generally to have been issued prior to the start of the Russian campaign in 1941. He refuses, however, the thesis of an 'improvised radicalization' of the persecution of the Jews culminating in their systematic assassination and asserts that, without an overall directive from Hitler and without his approval, no partial activities eventually leading up to the program of a final solution would have been possible.

Christopher Browning (1981), explicitly targeting Broszat's explanation, comes to the conclusion that Hitler did order the elaboration of an annihilation plan in the summer of 1941; the foundations of the murder project are said to have been approved by Hitler 'in October or November of 1941.'

Gerald Fleming (1982) notes that the fateful change in the Jewish policy of the Third Reich occurred in the 'summer of 1941'; it

was then that Hitler ordered the annihilation of the European Jews and simultaneously decreed that these murder operations had to be executed in a most carefully hidden manner and in the greatest possible secrecy.

Wolfgang Scheffler (1982) insists that all essential decisions concerning the implementation of the mass annihilation were taken between March and November of 1941. [...]

Finally, we will briefly summarize the latest opinions. In view of the coincidence of several factors Shlomo Aronson (1984) comes to the conclusion that Hitler took the decision to kill the European Jews in 'late fall of 1941.' Also, if we follow Saul Friedländer, the existence of a general annihilation plan by the autumn of 1941 can no longer be doubted; we must assume that Hitler approved such a plan 'some time in the summer of 1941.'" (Emph. added)

As of 2005 the controversy around the *Führerbefehl* was not only unresolved but continued to rage to a greater degree to the point where Ian Kershaw felt the need to write an article on "Hitler's role in the final solution," in which he explained that with a few exceptions.⁶⁵⁸

"detailed research on the decisions and policies of genocide began as late as the 1970s, expanding greatly over subsequent decades, especially once the archival repositories in the former eastern bloc were opened. Only in the light of such research has it become possible to evaluate more precisely the role Hitler played in the emergence of the Final Solution. Yet even now, after exhaustive analysis, much remains obscure or contentious. The problems of interpretation arise from the complexities and deficiencies of the surviving fragmentary evidence, reflecting in good measure the obfuscatory language of the Nazi leadership as well as the extreme unbu-reaucratic leadership style of Hitler, who, especially once the war had begun, placed a high premium upon secrecy and concealment, with orders on sensitive issues usually passed on verbally and on a need-to-know basis. Until the 1970s it was generally taken for granted that a single, direct Hitler order launched the Final Solution. The presumption emanated from a Hitler-centric approach to the Third Reich, which placed heavy emphasis upon the will, intentions, and policy-directives of the dictator." (Emph. added)

⁶⁵⁸ Ian Kershaw, "Hitler's role in the final solution," at: www1.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/studies/vol34/Kershaw%20E.pdf, p. 12.

As opposed to this view, which was called intentionalist, a new interpretation sprang up during the 1970s, labeled functionalist or structuralist, which no longer placed Hitler in the center of the National Socialist regime, replacing him instead by an oligarchic government having chaotic and confused administrative limits and led by a “weak dictator” engaged primarily in propaganda.⁶⁵⁹

In the section “Interpreting the decision for the final solution,” Kershaw goes through the beginnings of the functionalist interpretation, starting with Martin Broszat’s views which we have already examined above (see p. 219). I will therefore begin with later interpretations from the 1980s onwards.

In 1989 Philippe Burrin, in marked contrast with almost all of his colleagues, asserted according to Kershaw that it

“would be mistaken to see in the Göring mandate of 31 July 1941 a reflection of a fundamental order by Hitler for the Final Solution, that is, to extend the genocide already taking place in the Soviet Union into a program for the physical extermination of the whole of European Jewry. Rather, according to Burrin, the Göring mandate still fell within the remit of attaining a territorial settlement in the east once the war was over.”

The alleged extermination order is considered to have been issued in September of 1941 and to have been confirmed by Hitler’s decision to deport the Jews to the East.⁶⁶⁰ Soon after the publication of Burrin’s study, Ian Kershaw informs us,⁶⁶⁰

“the archives of the former eastern bloc started to divulge their secrets. Predictably, a written order by Hitler for the Final Solution was not found. The presumption that a single, explicit written order had ever been given had long been dismissed by most historians. Nothing now changed that supposition. In fact, little was discovered in Moscow or other east-European archives that cast new light directly on Hitler’s role in the Final Solution. Indirectly, nevertheless, new perspectives on the emergence of a genocidal program did provide fresh insights into Hitler’s own role.” (Emph. added)

For a study that appeared in 1995 Götz Aly had made use of these archives, as Kershaw explains:⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

“Aly concluded that there was no single, specific decision to kill the Jews of Europe. Rather, analogous to Mommsen’s notion of a system of cumulative radicalization, he posited a long and complex process of decision-making, with notable spurts in March, July, and October 1941, but continuing still as a series of experiments down to May 1942. Hitler’s role, according to this interpretation, was confined to decisions as an arbiter between competing Nazi leaders whose own schemes to deal with the Jewish question had created insoluble problems.”

Other studies linked the alleged exterminations to decisions taken by local authorities, but “the role of Hitler, too, seemed scarcely to figure in the new explanations. Was it likely, or plausible, that the most radical of radical anti-Semites had played no direct part in shaping the policies aimed at destroying his perceived arch-enemy?”⁶⁶²

David Bankier (1988) and Saul Friedländer (1997) had shown that during the 1930s Hitler had been more active in anti-Jewish politics than was believed earlier and that it was therefore difficult to accept that he would later stay out of the decisional process leading to the alleged genocide.

In 1994 Browning maintained the importance of the *Führerbefehl*, which he dated to the summer of 1941, stressing that, in this way, he “was not positing a single decision, but envisaging the point at which Hitler inaugurated the decision-making process, the first move in developments that would stretch over the subsequent months.”⁶⁶²

In 1991 Richard Breitman “dated ‘a fundamental decision to exterminate the Jews’ by the dictator to as early as January 1941, adding, however, that ‘if the goal and basic policies were now clear, the specific plans were not,’ and followed only after some time with the first operational decisions in July,” something which Kershaw himself believes to be unsustainable.⁶⁶³

Against this Kershaw summarizes Tobias Jersak as stating in 1999 that “the declaration of the Atlantic Charter by Roosevelt and Churchill on August 14, 1941 (meaning that Germany would soon be at war with the USA) was the trigger for Hitler, suffering at that point from a nervous collapse and reeling from the recognition of the failure of his strategy to defeat the Soviet Union, to take the fundamental decision that the Jews of Europe should be physically destroyed.” But Kershaw states

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 21f.

that Jersak “probably exaggerates the impact of the Atlantic Charter on Hitler,” so that this interpretation, too, is unsustainable.⁶⁶⁴

Kershaw then goes on to examine Christian Gerlach’s interpretation of 1997, according to which “by the time the meeting [of Wannsee] eventually took place, on January 20, 1942, Hitler’s basic decision to kill all the Jews of Europe had been taken,” but Kershaw judges that such a perspective is difficult to imagine, hence, once again, unsustainable. Going on to a study by Florent Brayard published in 2004, Kershaw continues:⁶⁶⁵

“A recent, meticulous examination of the complex evidence of decision-making on anti-Jewish policy between 1939 and 1942 offers yet another variant. Florent Brayard places the date of Hitler’s order to commence the Final Solution as a comprehensive program later than any other historian had done, to June 1942, immediately following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague.”

But to Kershaw it is “perhaps a little more plausible” to see in this event the last and greatest phase of an expanding process which resulted in the extermination program being extended to all European Jews.⁶⁶⁶

In a “magisterial study of the ‘politics of annihilation’” that appeared in 1998, Peter Longerich had in fact established that “a comprehensive program of extermination of European Jewry developed as an incremental process, with a number of acceleratory spurts, between summer 1941 and summer 1942,”⁶⁶⁶ but in order to reach this somewhat trivial conclusion in respect of the Holocaust, a “magisterial study” was not really needed.

In the end, Kershaw strikes the balance of the studies concerning the *Führerbefehl*:⁶⁶⁷

“It seems certain, given the fragmentary and unsatisfactory evidence, that all attempts to establish a precise moment when Hitler decided to launch the Final Solution will meet with objections. And, of course, much depends upon what is envisaged as a Führer order. Was it a precise and clear directive, or merely a green light or nod of the head? Interpretation rests additionally upon whether decision-making on the Final Solution is regarded as a continuum, with adjustments and acceleratory phases over the period of a year or so, or

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25f.

whether a point is sought where one precise quantum leap can be distinguished as forming the decision. [...]

It seems impossible to isolate a single, specific Führer order for the Final Solution in an extermination policy that took full shape in a process of radicalization lasting over a period of about a year. At the same time, much indicates that the extermination program did not develop without a decisive role being played by Hitler himself. To reconcile these two statements, we should look both for a series of secret authorizations for particular radicalizing steps, which can only be deduced from indirect or secondary evidence, and for a number of public signals or 'green lights' for action. We should also recognize that Hitler was the supreme and radical spokesman of an ideological imperative that, by 1941, had become a priority for the entire regime leadership."

Within this scope, Kershaw's conclusion is that Hitler's "prophecy" of 30 January 1939 must be considered "as a key both to Hitler's mentality, and to the ways he provided 'directions for action.'" The prophecy supposedly shows.⁶⁶⁸

"how Nazi activists at different levels of the regime were adept in knowing how to 'work towards the Führer' without having to wait for a precise Führer order. It seems unlikely that Hitler ever gave one single, explicit order for the Final Solution. Within the unchanging framework of his prophecy, he needed do no more than provide requisite authorization at the appropriate time to Himmler and Heydrich to go ahead with the various escalatory stages that culminated in the murder of Europe's Jews." (Emph. added)

But was such an intangible "authorization" (a mere excuse for not saying "order") given by a simple nod of Hitler's head?

It is certain that functionalism, far from resolving the hermeneutical problems of earlier times, only added new and more serious ones, pushing a disintegrating historiographic process into the dissection of elementary terms like "decision" and "order" and their vaporization in the rarefied and volatile atmosphere of a Holocaust universe which serves as an ethereal basis for Hilberg's "telepathic" interpretation.

In such a universe, the very concept of *Führerbefehl* loses its concrete connotation, with the "decision" evaporating into an unstable "decisional process" with an uncertain beginning and no more certain "de-

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

velopments,” some of them possibly gradual, possibly discontinuous, or into “public signals” and “green lights” for Hitler, or into a vague “telepathic” intuition. This latter parapsychological conjecture was expounded by Raul Hilberg in 1983 at the Avery Fisher Hall:⁶⁶⁹

“But what began in 1941 was a process of destruction not planned in advance, not organized centrally by any agency. There was no blueprint and there was no budget for destructive measures. They were taken step by step, one step at a time. Thus came not so much a plan being carried out, but an incredible meeting of minds, a consensus-mind reading by a far-flung bureaucracy.”

Höb’s declaration on the subject of the *Führerbefehl*, which mainstream Holocaust historiography had tenaciously clung to for decades, had been thrown quietly overboard by the functionalists with the result we have just discussed. But one had to wait until 1999 for a drastic revision of “the older research literature” by Karin Orth’s article on Rudolf Höb.⁶⁷⁰ In it Orth pushed back the alleged order by Himmler calling Höb to Berlin by one year into June of 1942.

Another fundamental testimony which has disappeared from the mainstream debate about the Holocaust is the one by *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Dieter Wisliceny, who had been Eichmann’s representative in Slovakia. His deposition in Nuremberg (3 January 1946) was widely used by the early Holocaust historiography, especially with respect to the alleged confidential remark ascribed to Eichmann that “he would leap laughing into the grave because the feeling that he had 5 million people on his conscience would be for him a source of extraordinary satisfaction.”⁶⁷¹ Wisliceny is today remembered only for having supplied the fateful figure of 5-6 million Jewish victims, even though a little earlier he had declared that at least 4 million Jews had come within the scope of the “final solution,” but that he did not know how many had survived. Actually, the Jews able to work were not subjected to this “final solution,” e.g. the 25-30% of some 450,000 Hungarian Jews deported to Auschwitz,⁶⁷¹ hence the number of victims is less than 4 million. This brings us back to the *Führerbefehl*. During the same hearing

⁶⁶⁹ *Newsday*, Long Island, New York, 23 February 1983, p. II/3. Quoted by R. Faurisson, *Écrits Révisionnistes (1974-1998)*, Édition privée hors commerce, Vichy 1999, vol. III, pp. 958f.

⁶⁷⁰ Her own words, K. Orth, “Rudolf Höb und die ‘Endlösung der Judenfrage.’ Drei Argumente gegen deren Datierung auf den Sommer 1941,” in: *Werkstatt Geschichte*, 18. November 1999, pp. 45-57.

⁶⁷¹ *IMT*, vol. IV, p. 371.

Wisliceny declared that he met Eichmann in Berlin in late July or early August of 1942. On this occasion Eichmann is said to have shown him an order written by Himmler, which Wisliceny summarized as follows:⁶⁷²

“The Fuehrer had ordered the final solution of the Jewish question; the Chief of the Security Police and the SD and the Inspector of Concentration Camps were entrusted with carrying out this so-called final solution. All Jewish men and women who were able to work were to be temporarily exempted from the so-called final solution and used for work in the concentration camps. This letter was signed by Himmler himself. I could not possibly be mistaken since Himmler's signature was well known to me.”

During his interrogation by the prosecutor of the national Slovak tribunal, Wisliceny confirmed:⁶⁷³

“This order was dated April 1942 and showed Himmler's personal signature, which I knew well. The order mentioned that able-bodied Jews were to be exempted, for the time being, from extermination and were to be put to work in the factories attached to the KZs.”

Seeing that the alleged *Führerbefehl* transmitted by Himmler to Höß in June of 1941 concerned *all* of the Jews *without exception*,⁶⁷⁴ i.e. also those apt to work, mainstream Holocaust historiography must prove the existence of a triple *Führerbefehl* – the first one for the total extermination of the Russian Jews, the second one for the total extermination of the western Jews, and a third one of a later date of a partial extermination. But there is yet another twist. According to mainstream Holocaust literature Sobibór and Treblinka were opened in May and July of 1942, respectively, hence after the alleged *Führerbefehl* of April 1942, and were to be *pure* extermination camps, i.e. for the total and indiscriminate extermination of able-bodied and other Jews. This would have required yet a fourth *Führerbefehl*, revoking the third one, regarding the two camps mentioned and also regarding Chełmno and Bełżec, the oth-

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁶⁷³ Slovenský Národný Archív, 36/48, p. 142.

⁶⁷⁴ Himmler is alleged to have informed Höß of the following order by Hitler: “Alle für uns erreichbaren Juden sind jetzt während des Krieges ohne Ausnahme zu vernichten.” (All Jews whom we can seize are to be annihilated without exception now during the war.) Martin Broszat (ed.), *Kommandant in Auschwitz. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen des Rudolf Höß*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich 1981, p. 157.

er two camps where a total extermination is said to have been carried out.

The fundamental problem of mainstream Holocaust historiography – when, how, and why the National Socialist policy of emigration/evacuation was abandoned in favor of extermination – remains thus unresolved. Hence, the *Führerbefehl*, which would have to coincide with this epoch-making change and clarify it, dissolves into subjective conjectures which border on parapsychology.

This historical inconsistency is necessarily reflected by the genesis of the alleged extermination camps in the East as well.

8.2. Origins and Significance of “Aktion Reinhardt”

Whereas the origin of the term *Aktion Reinhardt*(t) is controversial even among mainstream historians – leading to two different ways of spelling it – they agree that it stood for the murder of Jews in the General Government and the Byalistok region, although the documents clearly prove them wrong.

8.2.1. The “Generalplan Ost”

On 24 June 1941 Himmler ordered SS-*Oberführer* Prof. Dr. Konrad Meyer-Hetling, his best specialist in this domain, to draw up plans for the German colonization of the eastern territories recently integrated into the Reich (primarily the *Reichsgaue* Danzig-West Prussia and Wartheland). On 15 July Meyer-Hetling terminated a study entitled “*Generalplan Ost*.”⁶⁷⁵ The general lines of the project had already been worked out for Poland by E. Wetzel and G. Hecht in the form of a secret memorandum. In it the objective of the *Ostpolitik* was defined in the following words:⁶⁷⁶

“The objective of the German policy in the new territories of the Reich must be the creation of a racially, spiritually, and mentally, as well as ethnically and politically homogeneous German population.

⁶⁷⁵ Jan Erik Schulte, “Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42,” in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 50(1), 2002, pp. 41-69, here p. 42.

⁶⁷⁶ “Die Frage der Behandlung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen polnischen Gebietes nach rassenpolitischen Gesichtspunkten,” PS-660, p. 16.

It follows that all elements which cannot be Germanized will have to be removed relentlessly.”

This removal consisted of a population transfer which included exceptions constituting a “*Sonderbehandlung*” (special treatment).⁶⁷⁷ Jews, however, were to be moved into the non-incorporated Polish territories (the General Government):⁶⁷⁸

“The remaining Polish territory which, at the moment, has a population of 12,7 million, would thus reach 19,3 million.^[679] In addition, there would be another 800,000 Jews from the Reich (Altreich area, Austria, Sudetenlands, and Protectorate). Finally, another 530,000 Jews from the former Polish territories now integrated into the Reich would have to be transferred as well.”

As far as the treatment of these populations was concerned, the guiding principle was to separate and oppose Poles and Jews. The Jews might even have enjoyed a somewhat more favorable treatment.⁶⁸⁰

“The treatment of the Jews in the remaining territory could, in certain respects, be different from that of the Poles. Regardless of the question raised initially, whether the Jews are to be treated differently, i.e. more leniently than the Poles or not, the German administration will have the task of setting up the Poles and the Jews against each other.

In order to make the Jew fit for emigration, it would be advisable, if need be, to provide him with a better educational training. Jewish political associations are to be prohibited in the same manner as Polish associations of this kind. On the other hand, cultural Jewish groups are more easily tolerable than their Polish counterparts. The Jews may probably be given more autonomy here in view of the fact that they do not possess real political power, as opposed to the Poles and their Greater Polish ideology. Obviously, an eye must be kept on Jewry and their well-known tendency to conduct political and economic intrigues.

Yiddish as a language may be acceptable in public affairs. The Hebrew script, however, would be impossible here.”

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18, “*Sonderbehandlung rassisch wertvoller Kinder*”; pp. 24f., “*Sonderbehandlung der nichtpolnischen Minderheiten.*”

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶⁷⁹ Following the planned evacuation of 6,636,000 Poles residing in the Polish territories annexed by Germany.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 35f.

There are other limitations concerning the press, the use of names, agricultural matters, as well as measures aiming at limiting population growth, such as abortions.

On 17 July 1941 Himmler, in his role as *Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums* (Reich commissar for the consolidation of German ethnicity)⁶⁸¹ named SS-*Brigadeführer* Odilo Globocnik, at the time head of SS and police in Lublin, to the post of *Beauftragter für die Errichtung der SS- und Polizeistützpunkte im neuen Ost-raum* (commissioner for the installation of SS and police agencies in the new eastern region). In a note written on 21 July 1941, item 13, Himmler ordered that the commissioner should “primarily issue orders, by autumn, for the installation of the SS and police agencies in the new eastern region.”⁶⁸² As Jan Erik Schulte tells us, “other orders issued by Himmler from Lublin indicate as well that he wanted to make use of detainees for projects arising in connection with the settling of the East.”⁶⁸³

Himmler’s high-flying projects transpire in his secret order of 5 December 1941 concerning the “use of detainees from concentration camps” transmitted to the head of RSHA, SS-*Gruppenführer* Reinhardt Heydrich, to the inspector of the concentration camps SS-*Brigadeführer* Richard Glücks, to all camp commanders, and to SS-*Gruppenführer* Oswald Pohl, head of SS-*Hauptamt Verwaltung und Wirtschaft* (Main Office for administration and economy). He ordered Pohl to train, “by the date of a peace agreement, for the projects to be undertaken from that moment on: 1) at least 5,000 stone masons, 2) at least 10,000 bricklayers.” The size of this endeavor can be judged from the fact that Germany had only 4,000 stone masons before the war. After the peace treaty the company *Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke GmbH* was to provide at least 10,000 cubic meters of granite annually “for the Führer’s major construction projects.”⁶⁸⁴

As Schulte states:⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸¹ To implement this task, which Hitler had given him with his decree of 7 October 1939, Himmler set up the “RKF office” (*Dienststelle RKF* [*Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*]) directed by SS-*Oberführer* Ulrich Greifelt, which changed into “RKF-Stabshauptamt” (Central staff agency RKF) in June of 1941.

⁶⁸² NO-3031.

⁶⁸³ J.E. Schulte, *op. cit.* (note 675), p. 44.

⁶⁸⁴ NO-385.

⁶⁸⁵ J.E. Schulte, *op. cit.* (note 675), p. 48.

“For the building projects within ‘Generalplan Ost’ Meyer estimated a need for at least 850,000 workers over the first five years, with 400,000 of them assigned to the settlement areas in the occupied Soviet Union. Over the following five years there was still a need for 580,000 men, with 130,000 of them being employed in the new ‘eastern region.’”

In order to furnish the required manpower, Himmler ordered the construction of a concentration camp at Lublin in July of 1941 for 25,000 to 50,000 unspecified detainees. When the initial military successes in the war against the Soviet Union supplied the Germans with a large number of prisoners, Himmler decided to use them for the projects and thus ordered a prisoner of war camp to be built at Lublin, the first plan of which dates from 7 October 1941.⁶⁸⁶

The man in charge of this task was *SS-Oberführer* Hans Kammler, head of *Amt II – Bauten* (Dept. II, Constructions) within *SS-Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* (SS Main Office for Budget and Constructions). On 1st February 1942, *SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt* was set up, absorbing *Hauptamt Verwaltung und Wirtschaft* and *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten*, *Amt II* of which became *Amtsgruppe C*, under Kammler’s leadership.

On 1st November 1941 Kammler sent a post-dated order for the construction of the Lublin camp to the Central Construction Office of the *Waffen-SS* and Police in Lublin (*Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei*):⁶⁸⁷

“Construction order for the installation of a PoW camp at Lublin, to house 125,000 prisoners of war, is hereby given.”

But the camp strength was soon raised to 150,000 prisoners. On 8 December 1941 Kammler issued the following order to the local *Zentralbauleitung*:⁶⁸⁸

“In addition to the construction order of 1.11.41, I hereby issue the enlarged construction order for the installation of a PoW camp at Lublin to house a total of 150,000 PoWs and/or detainees.”

A few weeks later, on 26 November, Globocnik, in his function as commissioner for the installation of SS and police agencies in the new

⁶⁸⁶ Cf. in this respect J. Graf, C. Mattoigno, *Concentration camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2003, pp. 20-24, and document 2 on p. 256.

⁶⁸⁷ *Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum na Majdanku* (Archive of the State Museum in Majdanek, subsequently quoted as APMM), *Zentralbauleitung*, 120, p. 8.

⁶⁸⁸ APMM, 120, p. 11.

eastern region, ordered the Central Construction Office at Lublin to provide for the “installation of a transit support camp for the superior head of SS and police of Russia-South (and Caucasia) at Lublin,” which comprised about 13 barracks, 11 of which were to be used for storage.⁶⁸⁹ The camp was completed and handed over on 11 September 1942.⁶⁹⁰ Its function was to supply the various agencies involved in construction projects in the eastern territories. A circular issued by the head of Office CV/Central Construction Inspection (*Amt CV/Zentrale Bauinspektion*), SS-*Sturmbannführer* Lenzer, dated 1st September 1942 and concerning “SS construction agencies and construction projects in the occupied territories, especially in the eastern region,” gave instructions to split all construction work into exterior (*A-Arbeiten*) and interior works (*B-Arbeiten*) and requested the various construction groups (*Baugruppen*) to report by 1st November which projects were completed in 1942 and which could be expected to be completed by 1st April 1943.⁶⁹¹

The origins of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp are part of this context and retrace faithfully the initial vagaries of the Lublin camp. Birkenau was conceived on 30 October 1941 for 125,000 prisoners to be housed in 174 barracks (*Gefangenenunterkunftsbaracken*) with a maximum capacity each of 744 persons,⁶⁹² but the respective construction order was also post-dated to 1st November:⁶⁹³

“Construction order for the erection of a PoW camp at Auschwitz with a capacity of 125,000 prisoners of war is hereby given.”

The first drawings for the camp, the lay-out plan for the PoW camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia (*Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers Auschwitz O.S.*) of 7 and 14 October 1941⁶⁹⁴ comprised 174 housing

⁶⁸⁹ Letter from the head of Zentralbauleitung at Lublin to Globocnik dated 27 January 1942. Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (State Archive of the Vojvodship in Lublin, subsequently quoted as WAPL), 168, p.3. Erläuterungsbericht mit Kostenaufstellung über den Bau eines Durchgangsnachschublagers für den Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer Rußland Süd in Lublin. WAPL, 168, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁹⁰ “Übergabe-Verhandlung für Hauptnachschublager.” WAPL, 168, p. 23.

⁶⁹¹ WAPL, 54, p. 13.

⁶⁹² Erläuterungsbericht zum Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S. and Kostenvoranschlag für den Vorentwurf des Neubaus des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS Auschwitz O.S. RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 14, 15 and 22.

⁶⁹³ RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 11.

⁶⁹⁴ Drawings published by Jean-Claude Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and operation of the gas chambers*, Beate-Klarsfeld-Foundation, New York 1989, pp. 185f.

barracks, but a plan dated 5 January 1942⁶⁹⁵ had 282 such barracks, the one dated 6 June 1942⁶⁹⁶ had 360, and the one dated 16 August⁶⁹⁷ had 513. Only the last one indicates a camp strength: 200,000 prisoners.

The enlargement of the PoW camp at Birkenau to a total of 200,000 persons was approved by Himmler during his visit to Auschwitz on 17 and 18 July 1942. In a letter dated 3 August 1942 and addressed to *Amt CV* of *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt*, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Karl Bischoff, then Head of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office, wrote:⁶⁹⁸

“The enlargement of the project was submitted to Amtsgruppenchef C, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr.-Ing. Kammler, on the occasion of the visit of Reichsführer on 17 and 18 July 1942; approval mark on one copy of the site plan enclosed and rapid return of the latter is requested.”

On 27 August, Bischoff told the same office:⁶⁹⁹

“The site plan enclosed comprises the recently requested enlargement of the PoW camp to a strength of 200,000 men.”

The enclosed drawing was the one dated 16 August 1942 mentioned above.

Initially the “*Generalplan Ost*” also comprised the camp at Stutthof. Himmler visited it on 23 November 1941 and wrote to *SS-Gruppenführer* Pohl on 19 December:⁷⁰⁰

“I have come to the conviction that Stutthof is of prime importance for the eventual settlement of the Danzig – West Prussia Gau. [...] Stutthof must furthermore be enlarged to the point of being able to accommodate eventually 200,000 Russians who will be used to carry out the settlement project of the Danzig – West Prussia Gau.”

Schulte asserts that “Himmler, Pohl, and Kammler therefore expected a total of 300,000 Soviet PoWs in mid-December of 1941 who were to be employed for the building of settlements in the East, later to be raised step-wise to at least 375,000 PoWs and/or detainees.”⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁶⁹⁸ GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 37.

⁶⁹⁹ GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 41.

⁷⁰⁰ Facsimile of the document in: Various authors, *Stutthof. Das Konzentrationslager*, Wydawnictwo “Marpress,” Gdańsk 1996, outside of text.

⁷⁰¹ J.E. Schulte, *op. cit.* (note 675), p. 53.

In reality, however, the number of prisoners of war actually moved to the camps was extremely low, and those who had been transferred died by the thousands because of the disastrous conditions under which they had to live and work. Schulte observes:⁷⁰²

“Himmler and Pohl thus again faced the question as to who should build the SS and police agencies and the large settlements ‘in the new eastern region’ and improve the local infrastructure. After the brutal treatment applied to the prisoners in the PoW camps run by the SS and in the Stalags of the Wehrmacht, Red Army personnel would no longer be available, at least not for the foreseeable future. A modification of the gigantic projects being out of the question, the SS chiefs had to focus on a new group of victims for the recruitment of their forced laborers.”

This new group would be the Jews who were to primarily carry out road works within the colonization of the East. In this context – which, as we shall see, clarifies the real meaning of Heydrich’s decisions as he explained them at the Wannsee meeting – Himmler instructed Glücks on 26 January 1942 as follows:⁷⁰³

“As Russian PoWs cannot be counted on in the near future, I shall dispatch to the camps a large number of the Jews and Jewesses who are being emigrated [sic] from Germany. You should take measures so as to be able to accept in the camps 100,000 male Jews and up to 50,000 Jewesses over the next 4 weeks. Major economic tasks and jobs will be entrusted to the concentration camps. SS Gruppenführer Pohl will supply you with details.”

Himmler viewed these 150,000 detainees “primarily as manpower for the *Generalplan Ost*.”⁷⁰⁴

In accordance with the above directives, the first transports sent to Auschwitz and Majdanek contained only able-bodied Jews.⁷⁰⁵ Schulte himself acknowledges that “according to the will of the *Reichsführer* SS, it was mainly the “able-bodied” Jews who would be deported to Auschwitz,”⁷⁰⁶ and that “Himmler and Pohl considered [Auschwitz] to be a forced-labor camp of Jews for the ‘settlement of the East’ as late as June of 1942.”⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 59. NO-500.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁷⁰⁵ Cf. chapter 9.3.

⁷⁰⁶ J.E. Schulte, *op. cit.* (note 675), pp. 65f.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

The construction of any camps for the alleged *total* extermination within “*Aktion Reinhardt*” where even able-bodied Jews are said to have been murdered contrasts starkly with Himmler’s and Pohl’s search for Jewish manpower to be employed for “*Generalplan Ost*.”

The crucial contradiction is Globocnik’s claimed second “appointment” by Himmler to be the head of “*Aktion Reinhardt*.” In this respect, J. Schelvis writes:⁷⁰⁸

“*Globocnik was personally appointed by Himmler to lead Aktion Reinhardt. It is certain that on 13 October 1941 Hitler ordered the Belżec extermination camp to [be] built, and probably the one at Sobibór as well.*”

Leaving aside the fact that “certainty” in this case stands for mere conjecture, how can we explain that Himmler made Globocnik commissioner for the installation of SS and police agencies in the new eastern region on 17 July 1941 and then, on 13 October of the same year, asked him to build an extermination camp while still retaining his former function?

With an unusual lack of consistency, the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* states:⁷⁰⁹

“*When he visited Lublin in July of 1942, Himmler charged Globocnik with the planning and erection of SS and police agencies on the territory of the Soviet Union to be occupied in the future, and soon thereafter with the erection of extermination camps.*”

Globocnik thus would have had to simultaneously carry out a task that needed a very large supply of Jewish manpower – within his tasks as commissioner for the installation of SS and police agencies in the new eastern region – and a task which required him, as head of the future “*Aktion Reinhardt*,” to arrange for the complete extermination of these very same Jews.

Such mutually contradictory functions would call for an order by Himmler, which is even more mysterious and ambiguous than the *Führerbefehl*.

8.2.2. “*Aktion Reinhardt*”

The *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* has this to say under the heading “*Aktion Reinhardt*”:⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), pp. 33f.

⁷⁰⁹ I. Gutman, E. Jäckel, P. Longerich, J. Schoeps (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 15), vol. I, p. 546.

⁷¹⁰ *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust*, *op. cit.* (note 15), vol. I, p. 14.

“Code name for the murder of most of the Jews in the General Government and the Byalistok region as part of the final solution. The name was coined a few months after the beginning of the Aktion in memory of Reinhard Heydrich, the chief planner of the ‘final solution’ in Europe, who had become the victim of an attack on his life by members of the Czech underground. According to the minutes of the Wannsee conference, the purpose of Aktion Reinhard was the killing of the 2,284,000 Jews who were then living in the five districts of the General Government – Warsaw, Lublin, Radom, Cracow and Lemberg (Lwów).”

This claim would require that “final solution” was another “code name” designating the biological extermination, but this assumption is not backed up by documents. It is even in direct disagreement with the existing documents, as we have shown in chapter 7.⁷¹¹ As far as the “Wannsee conference” is concerned, we have already explained its real significance, which had nothing to do with any alleged plan for an extermination of the Jews. Actually, the respective minutes do not mention any kind of program for the mass assassination of Jews in extermination camps, although one such camp (Chełmno) was allegedly in operation in January of 1942, with another one (Bełżec) under construction. As opposed to this, the minutes sketch out a project which was perfectly in tune with the National Socialist policy towards the Jews valid at the time:⁷¹²

“The evacuated Jews will first be taken, group after group, to so-called transit ghettos, from where they will be transported further to the East.”

This is in perfect agreement with Hitler’s remark noted by Governor Frank on 17 July 1941, which we have discussed in chapter 7 (p. 203) and which spoke of “the General Government, with the latter becoming, as it were, a mere transit camp.”

The following item on the agenda of the Wannsee meeting is also in blatant contrast with an alleged policy of extermination:⁷¹²

“The intention is not to evacuate Jews over the age of 65 but to send them to an old people’s ghetto. Theresienstadt has been earmarked for this purpose.”

⁷¹¹ For an in-depth study of this question we refer the reader to the study by C. Mattogno, *Raul Hilberg e i “centri di sterminio” nazionalsocialisti. Fonti e metodologia*. 2008, pp. 5-24. Accessible online at the following address: www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/livres8/CMhilberg.pdf

⁷¹² NG-2586-G, p. 8 (protocol text following the English translation on www.ghwk.de).

This latter category comprised some 30% of the 280,000 Jews still remaining in the *Altreich* and the *Ostmark*⁷¹² on 31 October 1941, i.e. 84,000 persons.

The *Protokoll* states that “emigration has now been replaced by evacuation to the East” as a possibility and as a provisional option in the process towards a final solution of the Jewish question. Hence, if “evacuation” were synonymous with extermination, the SS would have decided not to exterminate the 84,000 German Jews who were over 65 years old but to move them into an “old people’s ghetto”!

The only passage of the *Protokoll* which Holocaust historiography invariably brings up in its effort to demonstrate that the decisions announced at Wannsee aimed at the extermination of the Jews, actually demonstrates the contrary:⁷¹³

“In the course of the final solution and under appropriate direction, the Jews are to be utilized for work in the East in a suitable manner. In large labor columns and separated by sexes, Jews capable of working will be dispatched to these regions to build roads, and in the process a large number of them will undoubtedly drop out by way of natural attrition.

Those who ultimately should possibly get by will have to be given suitable treatment because they unquestionably represent the most resistant segments and therefore constitute a natural elite that, if allowed to go free, would turn into a germ cell of renewed Jewish revival. (Witness the experience of history.)” (Emph. added)

This paragraph refers to “Jews capable of working”; the *Protokoll* says nothing about the fate of those *incapable* of working, but one cannot believe that they were going to be exterminated if 84,000 of them were going to be moved into an “old people’s ghetto.”

In this context the term “suitable treatment” has nothing sinister about it: If these people, “if allowed to go free,” constituted “the germ cell of renewed Jewish revival,” they would simply not be allowed to go free.

The employment of the able-bodied Jews “to build roads” in the East was part of *Generalplan Ost*, as has been pointed out by J.E. Schulte:⁷¹⁴

“Rather, the Jews were to further the colonization of the East planned by the SS and build an enormous system of roads, not so much for military use but for the strategy of colonization. General-

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7f.

⁷¹⁴ J.E. Schulte, *op. cit.* (note 675), p. 59.

plan Ost did not needlessly stress the significance of a network of superhighways which were to link the individual settlements. This program of road-building was to be carried out by Soviet prisoners of war, as Adolf Hitler stressed in mid-October of 1941. In accordance with these ideas, Organisation Todt, too, had banked on the use of Red Army prisoners for the construction of Dg IV.^[715] When these men were no longer available, Jewish forced laborers replaced their murdered predecessors. Their utilization for road works in the Ukraine was envisaged in January of 1942.”

Hence, Heydrich referred to this project during the Wannsee conference.

The SS was also thinking of the improvement of the swampy regions of the Pripyet, which stretched out between eastern Poland and White Ruthenia, as can be seen for example from two studies which appeared in December 1941 and June 1942, respectively.⁷¹⁶ Furthermore, the idea of a system of canals to link the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea had already been raised by Alfred Rosenberg on 8 May 1941 in a directive to a Reich commissariat for the eastern territories.⁷¹⁷

On 14 August 1942 SS *Brigadeführer* Otto Rasch, head of *Ein-satzgruppe C*, proposed to Berlin the following solution of the Jewish question:⁷¹⁸

“The surplus of the Jewish masses could well be employed and used up in the cultivation of the vast Pripyet swamps as well as those of the northern Dnyeper and along the Volga.”

Drainage operations were also being carried out in the Sobibór region and employed Jewish manpower. Schelvis tells us:⁷¹⁹

“Dutch Jews are known to have been working on a drainage project alongside German and Slovakian Jews at Arbeitslager Ujazdów, fifteen kilometres to the southwest of Osowa, around 15 June 1942.”

⁷¹⁵ The *Durchgangstraße IV* or Dg IV was to go from Galicia to the eastern Ukraine.

⁷¹⁶ Richard Bergius, “Die Pripjetsümpfe als Entwässerungsproblem,” and Hansjulius Schepers, “Pripjet-Polesien, Land und Leute,” in: *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*; quoted by G. Aly, “*Endlösung. Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*,” S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/Main 1995, pp. 275f.

⁷¹⁷ PS-1029.

⁷¹⁸ Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD. Ereignismeldung UdSSR No. 52 of 14 August 1941. NO-4540.

⁷¹⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 125. See also *ibid.*, p. 209

He then mentions the presence of an engineer Holzheimer from the water company at Chełm, and drainage projects using Jewish labor in the area of Krychow.⁷²⁰

Let us return to *Aktion Reinhardt*. As far as the name is concerned, Peter Witte and Stephen Tyas affirm that “the well-known hypothesis of Robert L. Koehl, Uwe Dietrich Adam, Wolfgang Benz, the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich, *et al.* that Einsatz or Aktion Reinhardt was named after State Secretary of Finance Fritz Reinhardt is highly questionable.”⁷²¹ They underline that Heydrich’s given name was, in fact, “Reinhardt” (and not “Reinhard”) and that “the codename Reinhardt for the mass murder first appeared immediately after Heydrich’s death in June 1942.”⁷²² But this document – a letter from “Waffen-SS Standortverwaltung” of Lublin “an den SS- u. Polizeiführer – Reinhardt – Lublin” – is only a request for “50 empty suitcases stemming from the known action,”⁷²³ without the slightest reference to any “mass murder” of Jews.

Aside from this arbitrary interpretation, the hypothesis concerning the name of Heydrich appears plausible. Globocnik wrote in an undated report:⁷²⁴

“The whole of Aktion Reinhardt can be split up into 4 areas:

A) the deportation itself

B) the use of the manpower

C) the use of objects

D) the securing of hidden values and real estate.”

Here, the deportation was to be the major aspect, which brings us back to Heydrich.

All surviving documents about “*Aktion Reinhardt*” refer exclusively to the economic aspect. Even at Auschwitz was a “disinfestation and storage chamber Aktion Reinhardt” (*Entwesungs- u. Effektenkammer Aktion Reinhardt*), which was called “*Kanada I*,” i.e. *Bauwerk 28*, officially called “delousing and storage barracks” (*Entlausungs- und Effektenbaracken*), and a “*Station 2 der Aktion Reinhardt*.”⁷²⁵ As late as May-June of 1944, a “*Sonderkommando Reinhardt*” (special detail

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 211, 213.

⁷²¹ P. Witte, S. Tyas, *op. cit.* (note 18), note 34 on p. 483.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, p. 475.

⁷²³ Józef Kermisz (ed.), *Dokumenty i materiały do dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, vol. II, “*Akcje*” i “*Wysiedlenia*,” Warszawa/Łódź/Kraków 1946, p. 182.

⁷²⁴ NO-057.

⁷²⁵ “Besichtigung des SS-Obergruppenführers Pohl am 23.9.1942.” GARF, 502-1-19, p. 86.

Reinhardt) was operating at Birkenau, with 2,505 detainees assigned to it as of 19 June.⁷²⁶

In 1999 Bertrand Perz and Thomas Sandkühler tried to prove that even in the case of Auschwitz *Aktion Reinhardt* stood for an alleged extermination,⁷²⁷ but this thesis has no historical foundation.⁷²⁸

Summarizing what has been stated in chapter 7, Heydrich

- was appointed by Göring as head of the *Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung* in Berlin on 24 January 1939;
- requested Eichmann on 15 July 1939 to set up a *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung* in Prague ;
- wrote to Joachim von Ribbentrop, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 24 June 1940 saying that the Jewish problem could not be solved “by emigration” but required “a territorial final solution;”
- prohibited the Jewish emigration from France and Belgium on 20 May 1941 in an effort to render the emigration of “Jews from the Reich territory” easier;
- was entrusted by Göring on 31 July 1941 with the task of making preparations “for a comprehensive solution of the Jewish question within the German sphere of influence in Europe” in “addition” to the tasks Göring had given him on 21 January 1939, viz. to resolve “the Jewish question by means of emigration or evacuation;”
- was requested by Himmler on 18 September 1941 to implement the *Judenwanderung* (Jewish migration) via Łódź;
- declared in Prague on 10 October 1941 that it was being planned to deport 50,000 Jews from the Protectorate to Minsk and Riga between 15 October and 15 November, where they were to be housed “in the camps for communist detainees in the operational territory;”
- reported on 20 January 1942 during the Wannsee meeting on the policy of Jewish emigration directed by himself, thanks to which some 537,000 Jews had emigrated from the Reich territory by 31 October 1941, and stated that the *Reichsführer* SS had “forbidden any further emigration of Jews in view of the dangers posed by emigration in wartime and the looming possibilities in the East” and

⁷²⁶ “Übersicht über Anzahl und Einsatz der weiblichen Häftlinge des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz O/S,” 30 June 1944. GARF, 7021-108-33, p. 157.

⁷²⁷ Bertrand Perz, Thomas Sandkühler, “Auschwitz und die ‘Aktion Reinhardt’ 1942-1945. Judenmord und Raubpraxis in neuer Sicht,” in: *Zeitgeschichte*, No. 5, vol. 26, 1999, pp. 283-318.

⁷²⁸ Cf. in this respect C. Mattogno “*Azione Reinhardt*” e “*Azione 1005*,” Effepi, Genova, 2008.

that, “as a further possible solution and with the appropriate prior authorization by the Führer, emigration has now been replaced by evacuation to the East.”

Heydrich was therefore in actual fact “the chief planner of the final solution in Europe,” but this term, in actual fact, designated the evacuation of the Jews from Europe, i.e. from the area of the General Government.

The following order given by Himmler to the higher SS and police leader in the General Government Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger must be seen in this light:⁷²⁹

“I decree that the resettlement of the total Jewish population of the General Government must be implemented and terminated by 31 December 1942. On 31 December 1942 no persons of Jewish descent must any longer be present in the General Government unless they are held in the collection camps at Warsaw, Cracow, Chenstohova, Radom, Lublin. All other work projects employing Jewish labor must be terminated by that date, or, if their termination is impossible, must be assigned to one of the collection camps. These measures are required to assure the ethnic separation of races and peoples in Europe as well as in the interest of the security and purity of the German Reich and its region of interest.”

The well-known letter written by the engineer Albert Ganzenmüller to SS-*Obergruppenführer* Karl Wolff, Himmler’s assistant, is part of this framework:⁷³⁰

“Since 22 July there has been a daily train with 5,000 Jews from Warsaw via Malkinia to Treblinka, plus twice a week a train with 5,000 Jews from Przemysl to Bełżec. Gedob^[731] is in permanent contact with the Cracow security service. The latter has agreed to stop the trains from Warsaw via Lublin to Sobibór (near Lublin) as long as the revamping of this line renders these transports impossible (until about October of 1942).”

This was actually a “population movement” (*Bevölkerungsbewegung*), as Wolff wrote in his reply dated 13 August 1942.⁷³⁰ The choice of Heydrich’s first name “Reinhardt” in this context thus indicates the continuity of the task entrusted to him by Göring in 1939 and extended in 1941, viz. to resolve “the Jewish question by means of emigration or

⁷²⁹ NO-5574.

⁷³⁰ NO-2207. Facsimile in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 58.

⁷³¹ *Gesellschaft der Ostbahn*, the German railway agency.

evacuation.” It follows that *Aktion Reinhardt* in its main aspect, “resettlement” (*Aussiedlung*), was nothing but the implementation of this task. And the executor Globocnik acted in his quality of commissioner for the installation of SS and police agencies in the new eastern region.

This is borne out, moreover, by the fact that the resettlement entrusted to Globocnik was not limited to Jews, but comprised Poles and Ukrainians as well, as we can see from three documents relative to *Aktion Reinhardt*, assembled in the document file PS-4024: “measures for the conciliation of the foreign ethnicities in the case of resettlement,”⁷³² “measures for further resettlement,”⁷³³ and the “note” of 1st July 1943, which described the operation “Werwolf 1” targeting the evacuations from an area surrounding the German settlement area in the Lublin district and the creation of a protective belt of Ukrainian settlements.⁷³⁴ In this respect Himmler gave specific directives two days later, which also mentioned the operation *Werwolf*.⁷³⁵

The report written by *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Helmut Müller of the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (Main Office for Race and Settlement) on 15 October 1941 to the head of this office, *SS-Gruppenführer* Otto Hofmann, documents that Globocnik was entertaining grandiose plans of resettlement, which had brought him into trouble with the local authorities. He dreamed of cleansing the General Government of Jews and Poles and of creating a territory for German settlements in the Lublin district with Himmler’s approval.⁷³⁶ Even then Globocnik acted in his role as commissioner for the installation of SS and police agencies in the new eastern region, not as the man in charge of an extermination of the Jews.

⁷³² “Maßnahmen zur Beruhigung der Fremdvölkischen bei der Umsiedlung,” PS-4024, IMT, vol. XXXIV, pp. 63-65.

⁷³³ “Maßnahmen für die weitere Umsiedlung,” *ibid.*, pp. 65f.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-68.

⁷³⁵ Letter from Himmler to Frank dated 3 July 1943. NO-2444.

⁷³⁶ NO-5875.

8.3. Alleged Genesis and Organization of the Extermination Camps of *Aktion Reinhardt*

8.3.1. Administration and Financing

At the Stuttgart congress mentioned above, Hilberg presented a paper entitled *Die Aktion Reinhardt*, in which he stated:⁷³⁷

“The initial phase of Aktion Reinhardt raises three separate questions. Why were there three camps instead of only one? Why were they built in succession, Belżec first, then Sobibór, and finally Treblinka? Why did each camp have only three gas chambers when they turned out to be insufficient? One could argue that they were approaching the objective hesitatingly, without having a clear view of it. That is not really inconceivable, but is certainly not the complete explanation, and perhaps not even the most important one. It was, to sum it up, a difficult administrative problem. For the ‘Final solution of the Jewish question,’ the Third Reich had neither a central agency nor even a separate budget.”

As far as the alleged extermination camps of *Aktion Reinhardt* are concerned, this explanation is clearly wrong even from the Holocaust point of view, because “a central agency” did indeed exist, with its line of command Himmler→Globocnik→Höfle→Wirth,⁷³⁸ whereas the financing could be provided for by the economic proceeds from *Aktion Reinhardt*, i.e. the goods confiscated from the Jews.

The facts set out by Hilberg in the form of questions are thus inexplicable.

Hence, if we followed mainstream Holocaust historiography, we would have three chains of command regarding the gas chambers:

- Hitler → Führer Chancellery⁷³⁹ → KTI⁷⁴⁰ → Carbon monoxide in steel cylinders → euthanasia institutes → *Gaswagen* → Chełmno;
- Hitler → Himmler → Eichmann → Höß → Zyklon B → Auschwitz/Majdanek;
- Himmler → Globocnik → Höfle → Wirth → exhaust gases → Belżec/Sobibór/Treblinka.

⁷³⁷ R. Hilberg, “Die Aktion Reinhardt,” in: E. Jäckel, J. Rohwer (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 655), p. 129.

⁷³⁸ *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Christian Wirth, Inspector of *SS-Sonderkommando* “Einsatz Reinhardt.”

⁷³⁹ Karl Brandt and *Reichsleiter* Philipp Bouhler.

⁷⁴⁰ The Kriminaltechnische Institut (institute for forensic techniques) within Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA).

This creates obvious and serious problems, especially as far as the choice of the “weapon of the crime” is concerned, which mainstream Holocaust historiography has never been able to solve. We will return to this question in section 8.5. below.

8.3.2. Construction of the Camps

Schelvis tells us that the construction of the Belżec camp began on 1st November 1941 “under the leadership of the central construction agency at Zamość” and “under the supervision of Richard Thomalla.”⁷⁴¹ Blatt speaks of “engineers from the SS Zentralbauleitung (SS Central Construction Office) in Zamość.”⁷⁴² Rückerl affirms that SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Thomalla “came from the SS construction office at Zamość.”⁷⁴³ Schelvis adds:⁷⁴⁴

“When Belżec was almost finished, the Thomalla group, in March of 1942, went to Sobibór to continue the construction work there.”

In the General Government, construction work and the corresponding technical, financial, and administrative aspects were handled by *Bauinspektion* (construction inspection) *der Waffen-SS und Polizei Reich Generalgouvernement*, which ruled over 5 central construction offices with 9 (local) construction offices. The central offices were located at Warsaw, Lublin, Lemberg, Debica, and Cracow.⁷⁴⁵ This was the situation on 14 November 1941.

The *Bauwirtschaft* (construction industry), on the other hand, was directed by an SS-*Wirtschaftler* (economist) attached to the *Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer im Generalgouvernement*. Both *Bauinspektion* as well as SS-*Wirtschaftler* were at that time attached to *Amt II (Bauten)* (Dept. II, constructions) of *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* (Central office of Budget and Constructions), run by SS-*Oberführer* Hans Kammler.

Thus, if the Belżec camp and subsequently the camp at Sobibór were built by the *Bauleitung* at Zamość, the construction order came from Kammler and the construction work was governed by the complicated bureaucratic procedure applying to all other camps, including the one at

⁷⁴¹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 113.

⁷⁴² T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 13.

⁷⁴³ A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 72, note 65.

⁷⁴⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 38.

⁷⁴⁵ WAPL, ZBL, 12, pp. 11f, 47-49. Cf. also C. Mattogno, *The Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2005.

Majdanek.⁷⁴⁶ This procedure was so complicated that, on 14 May 1943, Kammler sent out three pages of instructions for the “simplification of administrative procedures” concerning the rules then in force.⁷⁴⁷

The camp was therefore planned and built within the framework of responsibility and authority of *Amtsgruppe C* of *SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt* (WVHA, Economic-Administrative Main Office), just in the same way as Auschwitz-Birkenau was. This makes Hilberg’s thesis even more nonsensical that the alleged extermination camps of *Aktion Reinhardt* were built in the absence of a competent central authority and without a specific budgetary reference.

This also means that the camp had to be equipped with all elementary hygienic systems for the benefit of the SS supervisory force. Among other things, there had to be at least a water supply, a sewage disposal system, one or several washing barracks, toilet facilities, a sick bay, delousing or disinfestation facilities with bath, all the more so if Sobibór really was an extermination camp. The daily arrival of victims in precarious hygienic conditions and the presence of an enormous number of corpses in a very limited area would otherwise have increased the risk of spreading infectious diseases enormously.

Jan Piwonski, who worked at the Sobibór railway station, declared on several occasions to Claude Lanzmann that in late March and early April of 1942 barrack elements arrived at Sobibór by rail:⁷⁴⁸

“And a little bit later, train cars came from time to time with parts for the barracks. [...] And the Jews unloaded the cars and brought the material for the barracks over there by the camp.”

Sobibór was therefore probably equipped with standard types of barracks found in all concentration camps, for example the “*Pferdestallbaracke*” type 260/9 (which measured 40,76m×9,36m), type IV/3 (19,95m×8,14m), type 501/34 (42,30m×12,50m), the “*Schweizerbaracke*” (28,20m×6,20m), the *Baracke* type VII/5 (33,15m×8,14m), type RAD IV/3 (59,55m×8,14m) etc. This also suggests that the construction of Sobibór was, first of all, Kammler’s responsibility.

⁷⁴⁶ The respective documentation is kept at WAPL, file ZBL. As far as Auschwitz is concerned, cf. the source given in the preceding footnote.

⁷⁴⁷ Addressed to all construction groups of *SS-Wirtschaftler* attached to the *Höheren SS und Polizeiführern in den besetzten Gebieten, Bauinspektionen, Zentralbauleitungen und Bauleitungen der Waffen-SS und Polizei* (hence including the *SS-Wirtschaftler* attached to *Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer im Generalgouvernement*, as well as to the *Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei Reich Generalgouvernement* and to the *Bauleitung* at Zamość); WAPL, ZBL, 268, pp. 94-97.

⁷⁴⁸ J. Piwonski *op. cit.* (note 221), pp. S3 and S5.

In the following chapter we will examine the conclusions which may be drawn from this state of affairs.

8.3.3. Construction of the Alleged Gas Chambers: General Problems

According to the official theses the alleged gas chambers at Sobibór were built on the model of those at Bełżec, and the latter were modelled on those of the euthanasia institutions. This alleged sequence has no backing in reality, though.

First of all there is no *documentary* evidence that the euthanasia institutions were equipped with *gas chambers operating with carbon monoxide* nor that *carbon monoxide cylinders* were ever used for homicidal purposes in the euthanasia centers.

There is furthermore no solid proof that the first alleged gassing building at Bełżec contained three gas chambers. In the course of his archeological investigations of that camp between 1997 and 1999, Prof. Andrzej Kola found traces neither of the first nor of the second alleged gassing building.⁷⁴⁹

In his statements made on 14 October 1945 mentioned above, the witness Stanisław Kozak expressed himself as follows on the subject of the alleged first extermination site of Bełżec:⁷⁵⁰

“In each of the three sections of this barrack there were water pipes at a level 10 cm above the floor. In addition, on the western side of each part of this barrack, water pipes branched off to a level of 1 m above the floor, ending in an opening directed towards the center of the barrack. The elbow pipes were connected to those running along the walls of the barrack beneath the floor. In each of the three parts of the barrack we mounted ovens each one weighing some 250 kg. It is to be assumed that the elbowed pipes were later connected to the ovens. The ovens had a height of 1 m 10 cm, a width of 55 cm, and a length of 55 cm. Out of curiosity I looked into the inside of one of the ovens. I could not detect any hearths. The inside – as far as I could make out – was lined with refractory bricks. I could not detect any other openings. The oven door was oval, with a

⁷⁴⁹ C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), pp. 93-96.

⁷⁵⁰ ZStL, 252/59, vol. I, pp. 1129f. (Translation from Polish text); published in: Y. Arad, “Die ‘Aktion Reinhard,’” in: E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl *et al.* (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 45), pp. 152f.

diameter of some 25 cm at a height of some 50 cm from the floor." (Emph. added)

Mainstream historiography asserts that "the stoves described were used to heat the shed's rooms, thus allowing the bottled gas and Zyklon B used in the early stage of the camp's killing activities to work more efficiently in cold weather."⁷⁵¹ The source for this claim is the following passage from an article by Michael Tregenza:⁷⁵²

"The first attempts at mass murder by gas were conducted by Wirth in the small gassing barrack in February of 1942. This test gassing liquidated the 150 Jewish workers who had been deported to Belżec for the construction of the camp. They were gassed by means of Zyklon B."

Tregenza refers to the interrogation of Josef Oberhauser of 12 December 1960,⁷⁵³ a reference which would later be taken up by Robin O'Neil with a corrected date (13 Dec.):⁷⁵⁴

"The first experimental killing with Zyklon B was carried out by Wirth on a group of about 150 Jews who had been brought to the camp from the nearby town of Lubycza-Królewska to complete construction of the camp and fell trees."

However, Oberhauser's interrogation of 12 December 1960, a transcript of 5 pages, does not deal with alleged gassings in Belżec at all, whereas the one dated 13 December, a transcript of 11 pages, does not even mention Zyklon B. The defendant had in fact declared:⁷⁵⁵

"While bottled gas [Flaschengas] was used in the first test series and for the first transports of the second series of tests, the Jews from the later transports were killed with the exhaust gas from a tank engine or a truck engine which Hackenholt operated."

In this deposition, "bottled" gas obviously refers to carbon monoxide and not to Zyklon B, which was packaged in cans. In the passage following the one just quoted Tregenza himself actually asserts that "for the ensuing experiments" the gassings were carried out "with carbon monoxide gas from steel cylinders." The expression "bottled gas and

⁷⁵¹ *Belżec Camp History*, in: www.deathcamps.org/Belzec/Belzec.html

⁷⁵² M. Tregenza, "Belżec – Das vergessene Lager des Holocaust," in: I. Wojak, P. Hayes (ed.), *"Arisierung" im Nationalsozialismus, Volksgemeinschaft, Raub und Gedächtnis*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt/New York 2000, pp. 248f.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, note 34 on p. 263.

⁷⁵⁴ R. O'Neil, *Belżec: Stepping Stone to Genocide; Hitler's answer to the Jewish Question*, chapter 8, in: www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Belzec1/bel081.html#33

⁷⁵⁵ Interrogation of Josef Oberhauser on 12 December 1962. ZStL, 208 AR-Z 252/59, vol. IX, p. 1685.

Zyklon B” is therefore erroneous on two counts, because Oberhauser never mentioned Zyklon B at all and because he referred no doubt to carbon monoxide in cylinders.⁷⁵⁶

Jules Schelvis proposes a different explanation:⁷⁵⁷

“The intention was thus evidently not to use engine exhaust fumes to cause death, but carbon monoxide gas produced when coal is not completely burnt. Whether the first victims in fact died from carbon monoxide poisoning has not been conclusively established. Possibly the gas Zyklon-B was used earlier, but it is more likely to have been carbon monoxide stored in steel canisters, as used in the Euthanasieanstalten.”

This hypothesis is nonsensical because the ovens were inside the rooms and so the control of the combustion⁷⁵⁸ would have had to be done by the victims themselves!⁷⁵⁹ The idea of passing the gases produced by the ovens through narrow *water* pipes is no less absurd, as such a thing could only have been accomplished by means of powerful blowers. Moreover, if the ovens for the generation of carbon monoxide were already in the chambers, what was the use of the water pipes?

Kozak’s ovens are also incompatible with an alleged gassing by means of “carbon monoxide gas from steel cylinders.”

The Holocaust axiom that the alleged gas chambers at Belžec and those of Sobibór were identical in number and dimensions is in contradiction with an important witness: If we are to believe Gitta Sereny, Franz Stangl, first commander of Sobibór, is said to have declared:⁷⁶⁰

“It was about ten or even fifteen minutes’ walk away from the railway station where we were building the main camp. It was a new brick building with three rooms, three metres by four. The moment I saw it I knew what Michel meant: it looked exactly like the gas chamber at Schloss Hartheim.”

We would thus have three gas chambers, each 3 by 4 meters or 12 square meters for a total of 36 square meters. However, the alleged gas

⁷⁵⁶ For an in-depth treatment of the question, cf. C. Mattogno, “Postilla sull’articolo di Thomas Kues ‘Le presunte gasazioni sperimentali di Belžec,’” in: <http://andreacarancini.blogspot.com/search?q=postilla>, 30 March 2009.

⁷⁵⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 98.

⁷⁵⁸ The reaction of incomplete combustion of carbon is: $C + \frac{1}{2} O_2 = CO + \text{heat}$.

⁷⁵⁹ An incomplete combustion is basically a normal combustion run in such a way that the whole mass of the coal on the grate catches fire. When this has taken place, an incomplete combustion with generation of CO (carbon monoxide) can occur when the amount of combustion air is suitably reduced.

⁷⁶⁰ G. Sereny, *op. cit.* (note 357), p. 109.

chambers at Bełżec measured 8 by 4 meters or 32 square meters each for a total of 96 square meters.

Stangl's reference to Hartheim castle is worth a closer look. Hans Maršálek writes the following about the layout of the alleged Hartheim gas chambers:⁷⁶¹

"Then the victims were led into the gas chamber. It consisted of a room measuring 6.60 by 4.20 meters. The floor originally consisted of wooden boards, was then given a layer of concrete, and finally lined with red tiles. There were tiles as well up the walls to a level of 1.70 meters. In the center of the ceiling there was a water pipe with three shower heads. Alongside three of the walls there was a tube (15 mm in diameter) with many perforations. This is where the poison gas came from; a physician in the room next door always supervised its feed from a steel bottle."

The number of victims put to death in this alleged gas chamber of 6.60m×4.20m = 27.72 square meters is said to have been 18,269.⁷⁶² At Sobibór, on the other hand, for the gassing of hundreds of thousands of Jews, three gas chambers of a total of 36 square meters are alleged to have been planned!

As far as the gassing technology is concerned, the descendance of those at Bełżec and at Sobibór from the gas chambers of the euthanasia institutions is furthermore inconsistent, because for the latter carbon monoxide gas in cylinders is reported to have been used, whereas for the former there allegedly was a switch to exhaust gas from an engine, Diesel at Bełżec, gasoline at Sobibór. Who decreed when, where, and why such an essential departure from the original way of operation?

For the first gas chambers at Bełżec this new gassing technology is not documented; to be more precise, no kind of technology is documented here at all. As far as Sobibór is concerned, mainstream Holocaust historiography suddenly brings in an engine for the gassings, based more on an act of faith that the local gas chambers were identical to those of Bełżec than on anything else. The defendant Erich Fuchs declared in this regard:⁷⁶³

"Some time in the spring of 1942, on orders from Wirth, I drove a truck to Lemberg to pick up a 'gasoline engine,' which I then

⁷⁶¹ Hans Maršálek, *Die Vergasungsaktionen im Konzentrationslager Mauthausen. Dokumentation*, Wien 1988, p. 26.

⁷⁶² Willi Dressen, "Euthanasie," in: E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl *et al.* (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 45), p. 62.

⁷⁶³ Interrogation of 2 April 1963, in: J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), pp. 118-119.

transported to Sobibór. [...] It was a heavy Russian gasoline engine (probably a tank or tractor engine) of at least 200 HP (8-cyl. V-engine, watercooled). We set the engine up on a concrete base and connected the exhaust to the pipe. Then I tested the engine. At first it did not work. I repaired the ignition and the valves successfully, and the engine finally started up. The chemist whom I knew from Bełżec went into the gas chamber with his measuring device to test the gas concentration. Then a trial gassing was conducted.” (Emph. added)

According to the Holocaust historiography, at Bełżec “during the first ‘trial,’⁷⁶⁴ a Diesel engine of 250 HP was mounted outside in order to produce the carbon monoxide and feed it into the pipes,”⁷⁶⁵ and a Diesel engine was later ascribed also to the alleged gas chambers of Treblinka.⁷⁶⁶

In his study “The Diesel Gas Chambers: Ideal for Torture – Absurd for Murder”⁷⁶⁷ Friedrich Paul Berg has established that a Diesel engine produces at most 0.4% of CO, whereas a gasoline engine with a suitable setting of the carburetor can produce up to 12% of the lethal gas. The “chemist” who allegedly had already carried out experiments and measurements at Bełżec cannot have been unaware of this. It is therefore incomprehensible why a Diesel engine should have been left in place at Bełżec and a similar engine was allegedly also set up in Treblinka after this purported Sobibór experiments. We must not forget that the gas generators using wood or coal which were widely installed and used during the war in all kinds of vehicles of the Axis powers (*Generatorgaswagen*) produced a gas that was extremely rich in CO, between 18 and 35%,⁷⁶⁸ but for some strange reason there is no mention in the testimonies that the SS ever thought of using this widely available source for the generation of carbon monoxide, in spite of the fact that the toxicity of the gas produced by these generators was clearly indicated for safety reasons on all such generators.

What is even more mysterious is the alleged use of CO in the camps in the east and of HCN (hydrocyanic acid)⁷⁶⁹ at Auschwitz. Kurt Gers-

⁷⁶⁴ But according to J. Oberhauser, as we have seen above, the first series of experiments was done by means of *Flaschengas* (bottled gas).

⁷⁶⁵ *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust*, *op. cit.* (note 15), vol. I, entry “Bełżec,” p. 176.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. III, entry “Treblinka,” p. 1428.

⁷⁶⁷ In: G. Rudolf (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 34), pp. 435-469; this is an updated version of the article “The Diesel Gas Chambers – Myth Within a Myth,” *The Journal of Historical Review*, 5(1) (1984), pp. 15-46.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 459f.

⁷⁶⁹ The active ingredient of Zyklon B.

tein's reports on his "mission" are at the heart of this dichotomy. Here Yitzak Arad has this to say:⁷⁷⁰

"The gassing system that had been developed and introduced by Wirth in the Operation Reinhard death camps proved only partially satisfactory. The frequent engine breakdowns caused disturbances and delays in the entire extermination process. Globocnik was aware of these shortcomings and, in coordination with the higher authorities of the SS, decided to look into the possibility of introducing an alternative gassing system. The prevailing opinion among the higher SS authorities in charge of the extermination of Jews was that Zyklon B was more suitable for this task.

Obersturmführer Kurt Gerstein, the chief disinfection officer in the Main Hygienic Office of the Waffen SS, and SS Obersturmbannführer Wilhelm Pfannenstiel, professor and director of the Hygienic Institute at the University of Marburg/Lahn, who had also served as hygienic adviser of the Waffen SS, were sent to Lublin in the middle of August 1942. Gerstein's main mission was to check the possibility of introducing the gas Zyklon B into the gas chambers. Zyklon B had already been successfully used in Auschwitz instead of the engines that were still supplying the monoxide gas in the death camps of Operation Reinhard."

As we have seen elsewhere,⁷⁷¹ Gerstein's "mission" is a chain of absurdities which ends with an even greater absurdity: although he had been ordered by the RSHA to change the alleged gas chambers running on Diesel engine exhaust gases into chambers operating with hydrocyanic acid and having gone to Bełżec for this purpose with 45 *bottles* of HCN (which is nonsense, as there never was such a thing as bottled HCN), he then went back to Berlin without having done anything, without having caused any changes, without reporting to anyone, and without being asked anything by anyone about his trip!

This absurdity was noticed by the French investigating judge Mattei in his interrogation of Gerstein:⁷⁷²

"Q: To whom did you report about the results of your mission?"

⁷⁷⁰ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 100.

⁷⁷¹ C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), "The 'Mission' of Kurt Gerstein," pp. 126-133.

⁷⁷² G. Wellers, "Encore sur le Témoignage Gerstein," in: *Le Monde Juif*, Jan.-Mar. 1980, No. 97, p. 29, 32.

A: When I returned to Berlin after a trip which took about two weeks, I did not talk to anyone about the outcome of my mission. Nobody asked me anything. [...]

Q: As you said so yourself, you were given an important task by Berlin in your technical function; this mission was so secret which you had to execute as a state secret; you went to three camps, you were received there by a general who, in view of your mission, believed that he should tell you what two top Nazi leaders had said.^[773] How can you expect us to believe:

- 1) that you did not accomplish your mission,*
- 2) that you did not report about it to anyone,*
- 3) that no one has questioned you about it in any way.”*

Schelvis devotes more than five pages to Gerstein;⁷⁷⁴ he tries to avoid one of the grossest absurdities of his witness – the presence of “700-800 [Jews] on an area of 25m² and in a volume of 45m³,” and writes:⁷⁷⁵

“Gerstein was mistaken. The 700 to 800 he mentions must have been the total number of victims in the six chambers combined.”

Gerstein, however, did mean 700-800 persons in a single gas chamber and underlined it explicitly.⁷⁷⁶

“up to that moment all the people in the four rooms, already filled, they are alive; four times 750 people in a space of four times 45 cubic metres, still alive!”

The development of the alleged extermination camps of *Aktion Reinhardt* inevitably collides with the unanswered questions raised by Hilberg.

Wolfgang Scheffler asserts that “Sobibór, on the other hand, was considerably less convenient as far as rail transport is concerned. It was constructed when it became apparent that Bełżec could not cope with the assassination program,”⁷⁷⁷ and the same reasoning should obviously be applied to the construction of Treblinka as well.

As we have seen above, the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* wants to make us believe that the SS had to envisage “the killing of the

⁷⁷³ Hitler and Himmler are said by Gerstein to have visited the eastern camps on 16 August 1942. This is historically false.

⁷⁷⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 106-110.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115, note 45.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁷⁷⁷ Wolfgang Scheffler, “Chelmno, Sobibór, Bełżec und Majdanek,” in: E. Jäckel, J. Rohwer (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 655), p. 149.

2,284,000 Jews then living in the five districts of the General Government” as part of *Aktion Reinhardt*. To realize this objective, the SS planners are said to have built a single extermination camp – Bełżec – with a gassing installation absolutely ridiculous in view of its task: three gas chambers having a total of 96 square meters, which, according to Uwe Dietrich Adam, could accommodate at most 600 persons (or, if we follow the Bełżec trial sentence, 100 to 150 persons).⁷⁷⁸ This means that the SS expected to conduct $(2,284,000 \div 600 =)$ 3,806 gassing operations!

At Sobibór, which was built to overcome the deficiencies of Bełżec, the SS likewise set up three gas chambers, but they were even smaller, 36 square meters altogether, or, if we follow the sentence of the Sobibór trial at Hagen,⁷⁷⁹ three chambers each 4 by 4 meters, or 48 square meters altogether!

Only slowly and painfully the SS is said to have realized that “the gas chambers turned out to be too small, the ‘output’ of the Sobibór camp was too low,”⁷⁸⁰ and hence they ostensibly decided to build another three chambers of the same size, 4 by 4 meters,⁷⁸¹ to reach a total of 96 square meters.

At Bełżec the old gas chambers are alleged to have been torn down and substituted by six new ones, each 4 by 5 m⁷⁸² for a total of 120 square meters.

At Treblinka, the last of the claimed eastern extermination camps to be set up and said to have been built on the experience gained at Bełżec and Sobibór, the same mistake was made again: once again three small gas chambers are claimed, 4 by 4 meters⁷⁸³ = 16 square meters each, with altogether 48 square meters, exactly like those at Sobibór, which had turned out to be too small! And, as at Bełżec, the first gas chambers were replaced by 6 or 10 (!) new chambers, 8 by 4 meters each.⁷⁸⁴ Furthermore, to make things even more absurd, the old gas chambers at Bełżec were torn down instead of being left intact or repaired in order to ensure a higher extermination capacity.

⁷⁷⁸ Cf. chapter 9.2.

⁷⁷⁹ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 163.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

In one of his(?) reports written at Rottweil on 4 May 1945, Gerstein alleged that Globocnik had given the “maximum output per day” for the eastern extermination camps as follows on 17 August 1942:

- Belżec: 15,000 persons
- Sobibór: 20,000 persons
- Treblinka: 25,000 persons.⁷⁸⁵

If this had been so, 38 days would have sufficed to gas the alleged 2,284,000 victims.

Uwe Dietrich Adam summarizes in a table the respective data on the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps, see Table 4.⁷⁸⁶ One can immediately see the madness in the planning of these camps (we have up-dated this table on the basis of the data available today).

Table 4: Alleged Operation Data of *Aktion Reinhardt* Camps

CAMP:	BELŻEC	SOBIBÓR	TREBLINKA
1 st period from	17 March 1942	3 May 1942	23 July 1942
# of gas chambers	3	3	3
chamber size [m]	8×4 or 3×4	4×4	4×4
2 nd period from	mid-July 1942	September 1942	September 1942
# of gas chambers	6	6	6 or 10
chamber size [m]	4×5	4×4	8×4

Hence SS *Obersturmführer* Richard Thomalla who is said to have built all three alleged extermination camps of *Aktion Reinhardt* one after another⁷⁸⁷ would have been a perfect fool, if one were to follow mainstream Holocaust historiography, and even more so Wirth and Globocnik, who had ordered him to do the work. Actually, it is mainstream Holocaust history which is wearing the fool’s cap.

8.4. The Alleged First Gas Chamber Building at Sobibór

The findings of the Hagen trial verdict regarding the first gas chamber building at Sobibór are summarized as follows by Rückerl:⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁵ A. Chelain, *op. cit.* (note 143), p. 299.

⁷⁸⁶ Uwe Dietrich Adam, “Les chambres à gaz,” in: *Colloque de l’École...*, *op. cit.* (note 635), pp. 248f.

⁷⁸⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), pp. 35f., 48f.

⁷⁸⁸ A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 163.

“About 500 m to the west of this chapel [near the main railroad] the pioneering commando erected the gas chamber building: a small solid building with a concrete foundation. The inside of this building was divided into three adjoining gas-proof cells measuring 4 × 4 m. Each cell was equipped with an air-raid shelter door in each of the opposite external walls, one for entrance to the cell, one for pulling out the corpses.”

Rückerl adds that the gassing engine was placed in a special annex (*Anbau*) according to the Holocaust historiography to this building.

According to Yitzhak Arad:⁷⁸⁹

“The first gas chambers erected in Sobibór were in a solid brick building with a concrete foundation. They were located in the northwest part of the camp, more isolated and distant from the other parts of the camp than in Belžec. There were three gas chambers in the building, each 4 × 4 meters. The capacity of each chamber was about two hundred people. Each gas chamber was entered through its own separate door leading from a veranda that ran along the building. On the opposite side of the building, there was a second set of doors for removing the corpses. Outside was a shed in which the engine that supplied the carbon monoxide gas was installed. Pipes conducted the gas from the engine exhaust to the gas chambers.”

The reader of this unambiguous description may get the impression that the eye witness testimonies concur on the characteristics of this building. Let us therefore take a look at the actual statements left by those who in their work as members of the camp staff supposedly observed it on repeated occasions or on a daily basis.

As the first commandant of Sobibór, Franz Stangl was present during the camp's construction and the beginning of the alleged gassings. Since he was transferred to Treblinka in early September 1942, he would not have been able to observe the second phase gas chambers, thus excluding the possibility of confusion between the two buildings. When interviewed by Gitta Sereny in a Düsseldorf prison in 1971, Stangl, as we have already said, recalled that the first gas chamber building “was a new brick building with three rooms, three meters by four.”⁷⁹⁰ This is also consistent with a statement made by Stangl two

⁷⁸⁹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 31. Arad's description is apparently based on that of Adalbert Rückerl, who in turn is reiterating and quoting the 1966 verdict from the Hagen-Sobibór trial; cf. A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), 163

⁷⁹⁰ G. Sereny, *op. cit.* (note 357), pp. 109f.

years earlier, which describes the same building as a “stone construction.”⁷⁹¹

The former SS-*Unterscharführer* Erich Fuchs, who supposedly installed the gassing engine, testified:⁷⁹²

“Upon my arrival at Sobibór I found near the station an area with a concrete structure and several permanent houses.”

It is apparent from the context that the “concrete structure” is identical with the alleged gas chamber building. One notes that, while Stangl places the gas chamber building a considerable distance from the railway station and isolated “back in the woods,”⁷⁶⁰ Fuchs claims the same installation to have been located in an area “near the station” together with other buildings. This contradiction, however, is small compared to that revealed by the testimony of alleged “Gasmeister” Erich Bauer:⁷⁹³

“The gas chamber was already there, a wooden building on a concrete base about the same size as this courtroom, though much lower, as low as a normal house. There were two or three chambers, in front of which there was a corridor that, from the outside, you accessed via a bridge.”

Thus the witnesses disagree on the very construction material of the first gas chamber building!

How do mainstream Holocaust historians handle this glaring contradiction? As seen above, Arad simply ignores the statement of the key witness Bauer, while combining the descriptions of Stangl and Fuchs into “a solid brick building with a concrete foundation.” Schelvis, on the other hand, finds it necessary to confront Bauer’s testimony. In the German edition of his Sobibór book, published in 1998, we read:⁷⁹⁴

“Bauer was mistaken about the wooden building. It was a solid brick house.”

For some reason, however, Schelvis had completely changed his mind about this issue by the time the English language edition of the same book appeared in 2006. In this we read:⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹¹ Statement made by Stangl in Duisburg on 29 April, 1969, ZStL-230/59-12-4464; quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 33.

⁷⁹² Statement made by Erich Fuchs in Düsseldorf on 2 April 1963, ZStL-251/59-9-1785; quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 100.

⁷⁹³ Erich Bauer in Hagen on 6 October 1965; StA.Do-X’65-176, quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 101.

⁷⁹⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 119 and p. 120, note 285.

⁷⁹⁵ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 114, note 17.

“Because he [Fuchs] had put into place so many installations over the course of time, he did not remember that the first gas chambers at Sobibór had been constructed of wood.”

Consequently, the Bauer who erred in his recollections was turned into Bauer the reliable eye witness:⁷⁹⁶

“From his account it can be deduced that the gas chambers were indeed identical to those at Belżec [i.e. constructed of wood].”

Schelvis suddenly also discovered that the fact of the first gas chamber building having been constructed of wood was a key factor behind its replacement with the second phase gas chambers:⁷⁹⁷

“After a few months it became apparent that the gas chambers at both Belżec and Sobibór needed to be replaced. The timber walls had become tainted with the sweat, urine, blood and excrement of the victims. The new gas chambers were to be brick-built, more durable, and support a larger capacity.”

Such is the arbitrary nature of mainstream Holocaust historiography! As could be expected, the reader of the English edition is not made aware of this 180 degree change, and no explanation is given of the reason behind it. Likewise, Schelvis never addresses the most crucial question raised by the eye witness accounts: how could it be that Stangl and Bauer, two men who both should have been intimately familiar with the gas chamber building, produced such divergent testimony?

A most revealing insight into the artificial nature of the “gas chamber” observations is provided by the already mentioned Ukrainian auxiliary Mikhail Razgonayev. In his interrogation of 20-21 September 1948 Razgonayev related how he was detached from the Trawniki training camp to Sobibór in May 1942, where he served as a guard until July 1943. Thus, he was present during the first as well as the second phase of the alleged extermination activity. His description of the killing installation is unusually detailed:²⁸³

“The gas chamber, or as it was termed for camouflage: ‘bath-house,’ was a stone building punctiliously isolated by a system of barbed wire fences from other parts of the camp and hidden by young trees, saplings in particular, from the view of the huts, ‘dressing rooms,’ so that the people who were in the ‘dressing rooms’ would not be able to see what was happening at the ‘bath-house.’ The ‘bath-house’ was distant from the ‘dressing rooms’ so that the

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

cries emerging from the gas chambers, when the people realized that they had been tricked and were persuaded that they had been brought there not to bathe but for their destruction, could not be heard.

In the building with gas chambers there was a wide corridor, on one side of which were 4 chambers. In the four chambers the floor, ceiling, and walls were of concrete; they had 4 special shower-heads that were intended not to supply water, but for the entry of exhaust gases, through which the people in the chambers were killed.

Each chamber had two doors: internal on the corridor side through which the people would enter the chamber and external that opened outwards and through which the bodies would be removed.

The doors – the internal and the external – were closed hermetically and fitted with rubber strips that did not allow the gas to escape from the chamber.

Behind the rear wall of the building was located on a base, under an awning, a strong motor that would begin to work the moment the chambers were full and the doors were closed hermetically.

From the motor led a pipe that went through the ceiling of the building corridor with the gas chambers. From the pipe would emerge into each chamber a metal pipe, ending with a shower head that was used in bath-houses for the supply of water. Through this system the exhaust gases from the motor would be led into the chamber.”

Razgonayev’s layout of the building – a small number of chambers placed in a row – corresponds to that commonly alleged for the first gas chamber building, although the number of chambers, four, is not mentioned by any other witness, either in connection with the first or the second building.⁷⁹⁸ In the long interrogation protocol there is no mention whatsoever of the gas chamber building being replaced or enlarged, yet the witness states that the Ukrainian guards were posted along the way to the gas chambers, and he even affirms:²⁸³

“During the time of my service as a guard and afterwards as an chief guard at the Sobibór camp, I saw the process of extermination of people with my own eyes.”

⁷⁹⁸ There can be no doubt that Razgonayev is speaking of four chambers in total, as later in the interrogation he mentions that the funneling of victims into the gas chamber building “would continue until all 4 chambers were full.”

As we later learn that Razgonayev was promoted to chief guard (*Oberwachmann*) in December 1942, this statement implies that he performed guard duties in camp III before as well as after the supposed reconstruction of the gas chambers. How it was possible for him to forget about this crucial event becomes even more inexplicable by the fact that Razgonayev mentions other construction work carried out in June-July 1942, in which he himself participated as a carpenter.

The eye witnesses' claims regarding the first (trial) gassing are even more fraught with contradictions. Stangl describes the ostensible event as follows:⁷⁹⁹

"[...] one afternoon Wirth's aide, Oberhauser, came to get me. I was to come to the gas chamber. When I got there, Wirth stood in front of the building wiping the sweat off his cap and fuming. Michel told me later that he'd suddenly appeared, looked around the gas chambers on which they were still working and said, 'Right, we'll try it out right now with those twenty-five work-Jews: get them up here.' They marched our twenty-five Jews up there and just pushed them in, and gassed them. Michel said Wirth behaved like a lunatic, hit out at his own staff with his whip to drive them on. And then he was livid because the doors hadn't worked properly."

In a statement from April 1969, Stangl further mentioned what allegedly had happened to the victims of this first gassing.⁸⁰⁰

"I think the bodies were buried near the brick building [i.e. the gas chambers]. No grave had been dug. I am certain that the bodies were not naked, but were buried with their clothes still on."

Fuchs, however, had quite a different story to tell of the first gassing in his testimony.⁸⁰¹

"Following this [the installation of the gassing engine], a gassing experiment was carried out. If my memory serves me right, about thirty to forty women were gassed in one gas chamber. The Jewish women were forced to undress in an open place close to the gas chamber, and were driven into the gas chamber by the above-mentioned SS members and by Ukrainian auxiliaries. [...] About ten minutes later the thirty to forty women were dead. [...] I packed my tools and saw how the corpses were removed. The transportation

⁷⁹⁹ G. Sereny, *op. cit.* (note 357), pp. 113f.

⁸⁰⁰ Statement made by Stangl in Duisburg on 29 April 1969, ZStL 230/59-12-4464/65; quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 101.

⁸⁰¹ Quoted in Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 32.

was done with a lorry trail [sic] that led from the gas chambers to a remote plot."

Thus, while Stangl has it that the victims numbered 25, were almost certainly male (since they constituted a construction commando), and were buried with their clothes still on near the gas chamber building, Fuchs maintains that they were between 30 and 40, female, undressed before the gassing, and subsequently interred in a "remote plot." Moreover, Fuchs lists a number of SS men as being present,⁸⁰² but mentions neither Wirth nor Oberhauser, despite the fact that SS-*Sturmbannführer* Wirth was the responsible inspector of the Reinhardt camps. This omission becomes even more glaring when Wirth's alleged display of anger is considered. The testimonies of Stangl and Fuchs are therefore completely at odds with each other regarding this singular event.

Another Sobibór SS man, Heinrich Barbl, further adds to the confusion surrounding the trial gassing:⁸⁰³

"Red Cross nurses accompanied the selected women, who were transported by bus. They assisted with the undressing."

It seems more than a little strange that the SS would make the Red Cross privy to a top secret extermination process, especially since, according to Stangl, Wirth feared that the victims "might have been spotted by someone outside the camp."⁸⁰³

A further small but nonetheless important contradiction concerns the exterior doors of the alleged gas chambers. According to Schelvis, at the time the second phase gas chamber building was constructed, Wirth ordered new gas chamber doors that were hinged, so that the corpses of the victims would no longer block the exterior doors.⁸⁰⁴ The witness Hödl spoke of the new gas chamber doors as "trapdoors" (*Klapptüren*) "which would be raised after the gassing."⁸⁰⁵ This implies that the doors to the first gas chamber building opened to the sides, as, needless to say, one would not have constructed doors that opened inwards.

As already mentioned, mainstream Holocaust historians assert that the second chamber building at Sobibór used the second phase building at Bełżec as a model and that the two buildings in fact were constructed by the same people (Hackenholt and Lambert). According to the witness Stanisław Kozak, all doors in the *first* gas chamber building at

⁸⁰² Thomalla, Stangl, Schwartz and Bolender; *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸⁰³ Court testimony of Heinrich Barbl in Linz on 16 October 1965 at the Austrian Ministry of Internal Affairs; quoted in J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 101.

⁸⁰⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 103.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Bełżec “opened toward the outside.”⁸⁰⁶ When it comes to Bełżec’s *second* gas chamber building, however, key witness Rudolf Reder has it that the corpses were pulled out through doors that “were slid open with wooden handles.”⁸⁰⁷

The alleged second phase gas chamber building at Bełżec was supposedly erected between mid-June and mid-July 1942.⁸⁰⁸ By then the alleged first gas chamber building at Sobibór had already been in operation for two months. Are we to believe that Wirth, the inspector and chief designer of the alleged *Aktion Reinhardt* “death camps,” had the gas chamber doors at Bełżec changed from hinged to sliding ones,⁸⁰⁹ while aware that doors of the latter type were impeding the extermination process at Sobibór?

Sereny comments that Franz Stangl’s “different versions of events are not too important from the point of view of facts.”⁸¹⁰ But what should one say about the fact that the former Sobibór SS men are contradicting themselves as well as each other when it comes to important details of the alleged mass gassings? Contrary to what mainstream Holocaust historians and propagandists may believe, such contradictions are fatal to the Sobibór gas chamber allegation, as this rests *exclusively* on such flawed eye witness evidence.

8.5. Euthanasia and *Aktion Reinhardt*

Yitzhak Arad summarizes the Holocaust story of euthanasia in the following words:⁸¹¹

“At the beginning of World War II, Hitler signed the following order: ‘Reichsleiter Bouhler and Dr. [Karl] Brandt [Hitler’s personal physician] are charged with the responsibility for expanding the authority of individual physicians, with a view to enable them, after the most critical examination in the realm of human knowledge, to administer to incurably sick persons a mercy death.’”

⁸⁰⁶ E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl *et al.* (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 46), p. 108.

⁸⁰⁷ Rudolf Reder, *Bełżec*, Fundacja Judaica Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, Kraków 1999, p. 124.

⁸⁰⁸ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 73.

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73, 183.

⁸¹⁰ G. Sereny, *op. cit.* (note 357), p. 111.

⁸¹¹ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 9, quoting PS-630.

The man directly in charge of the euthanasia operations was Viktor Brack, a high official in the Chancellery of the Führer and subordinate to Bouhler. The T4^[812] organisation established several institutions throughout Germany. The mentally ill destined for elimination were placed in hermetically sealed rooms, into which carbon monoxide was introduced; they died within a short time. Some victims were killed by injections of poison. All bodily remains were cremated.

A request from Himmler to Bouhler in the summer of 1940 enlarged the euthanasia program to encompass sick concentration camp detainees from the camps inside Germany under SS supervision. Some of the detainees were Jews. They were removed from their camps to the euthanasia centers and were murdered there. The code name for this operation was 14F13. As a result of internal pressure within Nazi Germany, Hitler ordered the termination of the euthanasia program at the end of August 1941. However, sporadic killings of small groups of ‘incurable victims’ continued in some euthanasia institutions after this date.”

A short while later Arad notes:⁸¹³

“The most important group of Operation Reinhard came from the euthanasia program. They brought with them knowledge and experience in setting up and operating gassing institutions for mass murder. They filled the key posts involved with the extermination methods, the planning and construction of three death camps – Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka – and the command over these camps. Viktor Brack gave evidence in his trial after the war about the transfer of the euthanasia personnel to Operation Reinhard: ‘In 1941, I received an oral order to discontinue the euthanasia program. In order to retain the personnel that had been relieved of these duties and in order to be able to start a new euthanasia program after the war, Bouhler asked me – I think after a conference with Himmler – to send this personnel to Lublin and place it at the disposal of SS Brigadeführer Globocnik.’

The first group of euthanasia personnel, numbering a few dozen men, arrived at Lublin between the end of October and the end of December 1941. Among them was Kriminalkommissar of Police

⁸¹² Acronym deriving from Berlin address – Tiergartenstraße 4 – of the headquarters of this program.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Christian Wirth, the highest-ranking officer from the euthanasia program assigned to Operation Reinhard, and Oberscharführer Josef Oberhauser. Additional people from the euthanasia program arrived in Lublin during the first months of 1942. Viktor Brack visited Lublin at the beginning of May 1942 and discussed with Globocnik the contribution of the euthanasia organization to the task of exterminating Jews.”

As for the deployment of euthanasia personnel at the “*Aktion Reinhardt*” camps, the following documentary evidence may be brought fourth. On 23 June 1942 the organizer of the euthanasia program, SS-Oberführer Viktor Brack, sent a letter to Himmler in which he stated:⁸¹⁴

“In accordance with my orders from Reichsleiter Bouhler I have long ago put at Brigadeführer Globocnik’s disposal part of my manpower to aid him in carrying out his special mission. Upon his renewed request I have now transferred to him additional personnel.”

Later in the same letter Globocnik’s “special mission” is identified as “the action against the Jews”. This can only mean that Brack had part of his euthanasia staff transferred to “*Aktion Reinhardt*.” We furthermore have documentary proof that two individual members of the euthanasia staff were present in the Reinhardt camps. The physician Dr. Irmfried Eberl served as the medical director of the euthanasia institutes in Brandenburg and Bernburg. In the summer of 1942 he was transferred to Treblinka II, where he served as the first commandant of the camp.

Both the involvement in the euthanasia program and the transfer to Treblinka is confirmed by Eberl’s preserved personal correspondence, part of which has been published by his biographer Michael Grabher.⁸¹⁵ Secondly, Christian Wirth is mentioned as belonging to the *Dienststelle* of Brack in a letter of recommendation dated 21 August 1941.⁸¹⁶ In another letter addressed to Kuno Ther and dated 13 April 1943, *Polizeimajor* Christian Wirth is identified as the “responsible inspector” (*verantwortlicher Inspektor*) of the Reinhardt camps.⁸¹⁷ He is again mentioned prominently in the letter sent by Globocnik to von Herff on

⁸¹⁴ *IMT* Document NO-205; quoted in Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 17.

⁸¹⁵ Michael Grabher, *Irmfried Eberl. ‘Euthanasie’-Arzt und Kommandant von Treblinka*, Peter Lang / Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaft, Frankfurt am Main 2006. None of the letters sent by Eberl from Treblinka contains any mention of gassings of Jews.

⁸¹⁶ Henry Friedlander, Sybil Milton, *Archives of the Holocaust*, Vol. 11, Berlin Document Center, part 2, Garland Publishing, New York/London 1992, Document 426 on p. 331.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Document 429 on p. 334.

13 April 1943 concerning Himmler's visit to "installations of 'Aktion Reinhard.'"⁸¹⁸

Thus there is no doubt that euthanasia staff members were indeed transferred to the Reinhardt camps. This fact is supposed to prove that these camps were extermination camps for Jews. These men are said to have built homicidal gas chambers there, similar in design to those allegedly used under the T4 program, and to have merely replaced the carbon monoxide cylinders by the exhaust gases from a Diesel engine.

From this point of view one cannot understand the fact that these men, whose specialty and training were to kill innocent people, were sent to the Russian front in the winter of 1942 in order to save the lives of wounded German soldiers. On 12 January 1942 the physician Dr. Fritz Mennecke wrote to his wife:⁸¹⁹

"Since the day before yesterday a large delegation from our organisation, headed by Herr Brack, is on the battlefields of the East to help in saving our wounded in the ice and snow. They include doctors, clerks, nurses, and male nurses from Hadamar and Sonnenstein, a whole detachment of 20-30 persons. This is a top secret. Only those persons who could not be spared were excluded."

Heinrich Gley, for example, was transferred from Sonnenstein to Minsk⁸²⁰ in January of 1942 together with male and female nurses from other institutions. They were employed up to March and April 1942 "for the transportation of the wounded and of soldiers who were suffering from chillblains," after which they were all sent back to their original stations.⁸²¹ Karl Schluch, too, was sent to the eastern front in the winter of 1941 and stayed there until some time in February or March of 1942. He had to "help bring wounded soldiers back."⁸²² The same applies to Werner Karl Dubois, who stayed at this job until April of 1942.⁸²³

From the Holocaust perspective it cannot be explained why the euthanasia personnel were sent out to build gas chambers for *Aktion Rein-*

⁸¹⁸ See Chapter 2.5.

⁸¹⁹ G. Reitlinger, *op. cit.* (note 560), 1968, p. 135.

⁸²⁰ As part of "*Osteinsatz*" (Assignment East), the search for wounded German soldiers and their transfer to Minsk army hospital for treatment.

⁸²¹ Interrogation of Heinrich Gley on 8 May 1961. ZStL, 208 AR-Z 252/59, vol. IX, pp. 1281-1282.

⁸²² Interrogation of Karl Schluch on 10 November 1961. ZStL, 208 AR-Z 252/59, vol. VIII, p. 1504.

⁸²³ Interrogation of Werner Karl Dubois on 16 September 1961. ZStL, 208 AR-Z 252/59, vol. VIII, p. 1382.

hardt but not at Auschwitz. After all, the so-called “*Sonderbehandlung 14f13*,” i.e. the extension of the euthanasia program to the concentration camps, should have entailed such a move, all the more so as Reitlinger tells us that the Jewish detainees were included “merely for being Jews.”⁸²⁴ According to Danuta Czech’s *Kalendarium*, Dr. Horst Schumann, the head of the Hadamar euthanasia institution, arrived at Auschwitz on 28 July 1941, leading a *Sonderkommission* which had the task of selecting “all invalids, cripples, and chronically ill” who were then sent to Sonnenstein to be gassed. This happened on Himmler’s orders.⁸²⁵

Brack, however, declared that the order to transfer the euthanasia personnel to Lublin and to put it at Globocnik’s disposition could have come “only from Himmler.”⁸²⁶ Yet if Himmler was indeed running all at once *Aktion Reinhardt*, *Sonderbehandlung 14f13*, and the alleged extermination program at Auschwitz, which he is said to have explained to Rudolf Höß in June of 1941,⁸²⁷ then it is all the more inconceivable that the road leading to homicidal gas chambers at this camp should have been an entirely different one, without the euthanasia program being the least bit involved. The same reasoning applies to Chełmno.

Still, this point is not the only questionable one in the Holocaust thesis. Along the chain of events tying the euthanasia program to the alleged extermination of the Jews in the camps of *Aktion Reinhardt* exists a fundamental link: the plan to exterminate the Jews apt to work in the East. During the trial of the physicians in Nuremberg after the war this argument was set out in the following words:⁸²⁸

“In October 1941, Brack, the administrative head of the Euthanasia Program, forwarded plans whereby Jews who were unable to work should be exterminated by gas. He declared his readiness to send some of his assistants and especially his chemist, Kallmeyer, to the East, where the necessary gassing apparatus could be easily manufactured.”

⁸²⁴ G. Reitlinger, *op. cit.* (note 560), 1968, p. 133.

⁸²⁵ Danuta Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1989, pp. 105f.

⁸²⁶ NO-426.

⁸²⁷ Affidavit of R. Höß on 5 April 1946, PS-3868.

⁸²⁸ Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10, “The Medical Case,” vol. I, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 1950, p. 804.

*Eichmann, whom Hitler had charged with the extermination of the Jews, was in agreement with these plans. Consequently, there were 'no objections to doing away with those Jews who are unable to work, by means of the Brack remedy.'*⁸²⁹ *Kallmeyer, who was charged with the manufacture of the gassing apparatus and equipment, had been trained for this task in the Euthanasia Program. Previously he had been responsible for the proper operation of the gas chambers of the different euthanasia institutions."*

The foregoing is a summary of the draft of a letter, allegedly drawn up by *Amtsgerichtsrat E. Wetzel, Sonderdezernent für Rassenpolitik* (special secretary for racial policy) in the Ministry of the East, addressed to *Hinrich Lohse, Reichskommissar für das Ostland*. The letter dated 25 October 1941 deals with the "solution of the Jewish question." The policy of deportation to the East is clearly confirmed:

"According to Sturmbannführer Eichmann, camps for Jews are to be set up at Riga and Minsk, with Jews from the Altreich possibly being sent there as well. At the moment Jews from the Altreich are being evacuated to Litzmannstadt, but they may also be moved to other camps, later on to be employed for work in the East to the extent that they are physically apt."

The novelty consisted in the plan to kill the unfit Jews in camps yet to be set up at Riga and at Minsk. The killing was to be carried out by means of "gassing equipment" (the "Brack remedy" mentioned above). However, "as Brack thinks that the manufacture of the equipment in the Reich is much more difficult than on site, Brack suggests to detach his staff, in particular his chemist Dr. Kallmeyer, to Riga to take care of the necessary arrangements."⁸³⁰

But what kind of "gassing equipment" are we dealing with? At the trial of the physicians, Brack described it as follows:⁸³¹

"Then the patients were led to a gas chamber and were there killed by the doctors with carbon monoxide gas (CO).

Q. Where was that carbon monoxide obtained, by what process?

A. It was in a compressed gas container, like a steel oxygen container, such as is used for welding – a hollow steel container.

⁸²⁹ "keine Bedenken, wenn diejenigen Juden, die nicht arbeitsfähig sind, mit den Brack-schen Hilfsmitteln beseitigt werden"

⁸³⁰ NO-365.

⁸³¹ "The Medical Case," *op. cit.* (note 828), pp. 876, 881.

Q. And these people were placed in this chamber in groups, I suppose, and then the monoxide was turned into the chambers? [...].

A. 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 a pressure gauge, etc.”

Hence we are essentially dealing with carbon monoxide cylinders. But why would it have been easier to find them in Riga or Minsk rather than at home in the Reich? It would rather seem to be the other way around.

In this document, the date – 25 October 1941 – is crucial, because it has devastating consequences for the Holocaust theory. First of all, as we have seen above, the alleged *Führerbefehl*, which Himmler allegedly transmitted to Höß in June of 1941, concerned “*all Jews whom we can seize... without exception,*” i.e. also those *fit for work*. We must therefore ask: Who ruled that those fit for work should be spared, and why and when was this done?

Secondly, the execution of the alleged extermination plan for the East, sketched out in Wetzel’s letter, was not carried out. On this point Y. Arad says:⁸³²

“But the proposal of Dr. Wetzel and of Brack was not implemented in Ostland. The unemployed ‘euthanasia’ personnel were assigned to another and bigger task – the erection of camps with gassing facilities, where the annihilation of the Jews in the Nazi-occupied territories of Poland would be carried out.”

Schelvis, on the other hand, tells us that “it is certain that on 13 October 1941 Hitler ordered the Bełżec extermination camp to be built...,” i.e. just before the date of Wetzel’s letter, and anyway the construction of this camp began “with certainty” on 1st November. Therefore, within the span of six days (i.e. between 25 October and 1st November, 1941) it was decided to abandon the idea of killing only the Jews *unfit for work* and to implement the general extermination of all Jews, including

⁸³² Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 11.

those *fit for work*, in the General Government – who took the decision, when, and why?

On the other hand, the western Jews quietly continued to be deported to Riga and Minsk⁸³³ without those unfit for work being assassinated. The “Summary report for 16 October 1941 to 31 January 1942” of *Einsatzgruppe A* states that, as far as Riga and Minsk were concerned, by the final date of the report 20,000 Jews had been taken to Riga and 7,000 to Minsk and housed in reception camps. Some 70-80% were women, children, and old people, but still there were no mass executions; only “in individual cases Jews having a contagious disease were [...] selected and executed.”⁸³⁴

But the Holocaust thesis contains further complications: The chemist Helmut Kallmeyer mentioned by Wetzel in his letter was described at the trial of the physicians as “the technical expert on operation of the gas chambers in the euthanasia station.”⁸³⁵ Nevertheless, he took no part in the planning or the construction of the alleged gas chambers of *Aktion Reinhardt*, although all the prerequisites for such a participation apparently existed. On 6 September 1941 he was transferred to the euthanasia headquarters at Tiergartenstrasse in Berlin and remained there “unemployed” through January of 1942. In January or February of 1942 he was ordered to go to Lublin, where he presented himself to an office of the police or the SS, but was not given any specific assignment. After a week he was sent back to Berlin to do analytical work on drinking water.⁸³⁶

The task of planning and building the alleged gas chambers is claimed to have instead been entrusted to SS-*Scharführer* (staff sergeant) Lorenz Hackenholt for Bełżec, to him and SS-*Unterscharführer* (sergeant) Erwin Lambert for Treblinka, and to the same pair for the enlargement of the “gassing station” at Sobibór.⁸³⁷ They are reported to have been helped by a mysterious chemist named Blaurock or Blaubacke.⁸³⁸

⁸³³ Cf. chapter 9.

⁸³⁴ “Gesamtbericht vom 16. Oktober 1941 bis 31. Januar 1942,” RGVA, 500-4-92, p. 64. Cf. C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 229-231.

⁸³⁵ “The Medical Case,” *op. cit.* (note 828), p. 813.

⁸³⁶ Interrogation of H. Kallmeyer at Kiel on 20 July 1961. ZStL 439 AR-Z 340/59 Ord. Euthanasie.

⁸³⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 123; T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 19.

⁸³⁸ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 116; A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 165.

And Brack's "gassing equipment"? How, when, why, and on whose orders was it replaced by an engine? Nobody seems to know...

Let us make a final remark on these alleged experts in gas chambers. In his annotated book on euthanasia Henry Friedländer dedicates only a couple of lines to Hackenholt:⁸³⁹

"In the fall of 1939, Dubois was recruited by T4, together with his friend Lorenz Hackenholt, who would later operate the diesel engine at the Belzec gas chambers."

However, his involvement in the alleged gas chambers at Belzec is mentioned only in the "Gerstein report"! About Lambert, on the other hand, Friedländer has more to tell. He makes him "master mason and building trades foreman"⁸⁴⁰ and asserts that "he served as T4 'expert for the construction of gas chambers,'"⁸⁴¹ and that therefore "Lambert's testimony that he only erected room dividers and installed doors is simply not believable."⁸⁴¹

Within the Holocaust debate, though, it is Friedländer's assertion which is not believable.

Brack declared during his interrogation:⁸⁴²

Q. How large were these gas chambers?

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

Q. Were they as large as this courtroom?

A. No. They were just normal rooms.

Q. 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.

A. 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 × 5 meters, or 5 × 6 meters, or 3½ × 4½, but I really don't know. I didn't pay much attention to it."

We have already underlined above his statement to the effect that in the euthanasia institutions "no special gas chamber was built" and that

⁸³⁹ Henry Friedländer, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: from Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill/London 1995, p. 241.

⁸⁴⁰ "Maurerpolier," *ibid.*, p. 214.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

⁸⁴² "The Medical Case," *op. cit.* (note 828), p. 882.

the patients were “killed by the doctors with carbon monoxide gas,” which means that the latter were operating the “gassing devices.” In this context Lambert’s job could have merely been that of a simple bricklayer, someone setting up partitions and putting in doors, as he had always maintained. It thus makes no sense to say that this bricklayer was an “expert for the construction of gas chambers.”

We must also consider the fact that, if the order to build Bełżec was given on 13 October 1941 as Schelvis asserts, the only extermination system available at the time were the “gassing devices.” Wetzel’s letter (cf. above) says in this regard:⁸⁴³

“Head of department Brack indicates that the process in question is not without risk and that special protective measures are required.”

For that very reason Kallmeyer’s trip to Riga had been requested. How can it be, then, that the construction of the alleged gas chambers at Bełżec was entrusted to two simpletons, Hackenholt and Lambert?

Any transformation or adaptation of those “gassing devices” supposedly used in the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps should instead have been the task of the two alleged experts in homicidal gas chambers: Kallmeyer and Widmann.

But Kallmeyer has declared that he had never had anything to do with gas chambers while working on the T4 project, never to have travelled to Riga nor to any other alleged extermination camp,⁸⁴⁴ and no one has ever disputed this. Not even Albert Widmann who headed the section V D 2 (Chemistry and Biology) at *Kriminaltechnisches Institut* (KTI, institute for forensic techniques) within the RSHA played a role in this project, although he said that he had discussed with Brack “the technical details of the implementation” of the gassing of mental patients with carbon monoxide.⁸⁴⁵ But then, who was in charge? Two nincompoops promoted by mainstream Holocaust historiography to the rank of “experts” just because there was nobody else around?

Actually, as we have already mentioned, there is no *documentary* proof that the euthanasia institutions were equipped with homicidal gas chambers.⁸⁴⁶ Therefore there is no basis for the official thesis that the

⁸⁴³ NO-365.

⁸⁴⁴ Interrogation of H. Kallmeyer at Kiel on 20 July 1961, cit. pp. 97-99.

⁸⁴⁵ Interrogation of A. Widmann at Düsseldorf on 11 January 1960. ZStL 202 AR-Z 152/59, vol.1, p. 51.

⁸⁴⁶ This was asserted only by witnesses after the war. One of the most important of these witnesses, Viktor Hermann Brack, in his sworn statement of 14 October 1946 (NO-426),

alleged gas chambers of the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps were built by T4 staff along the lines of those of the euthanasia institutions.

What is even less valid is the alleged proof of the secrecy surrounding all this. In this respect M. Novitch wrote:⁸⁴⁷

“Euthanasia was treated as a state secret, and all its participants were sworn to silence. Operation Reinhard was also a state secret; he who had not taken a vow of silence in Berlin had to do so in Trawniki. They signed the following proclamation: ‘Any member belonging to the team of the death camps swears that he has been instructed by Sturmbannführer Hoefle, commander of the head office of Operation Reinhard, not to reveal any information, oral or written, on the resettlement of Jews.’ It was stressed that anyone divulging a secret would be severely punished; it was also forbidden to take photographs of the camp.”

Leaving aside the straightforward lie regarding the “death camps,”⁸⁴⁸ the obligation to secrecy concerned everybody, including the firms working in the concentration camps. These companies had to sign a “*Verpflichtungserklärung zur Geheimhaltung*” (declaration of commitment to secrecy) which covered leakage of information and the taking of photographs and threatened any such acts with the punishments for high treason.⁸⁴⁹

On the other hand, the Holocaust thesis discussed above is neither the only one nor even the one most compatible with the circumstances. As it is certain that the National-Socialist policy in respect of the Jews did not aim at their extermination but at their deportation to the East, as there is no documentary evidence which would indicate that this deportation policy was ever reversed or interrupted in a manner which might

cited by Y. Arad in the passage quoted above, declared that in 1941 it was an “open secret” that the German authorities wanted to exterminate all Jews. Holding this to be “unwürdig” (below their dignity), he and his collaborators looked for “a different solution of the Jewish problem” and found one: the deportation of the Jews to the island of Madagascar, which they had thought out and proposed as an alternative to the extermination project already on the books! This will give the reader an idea concerning the trustworthiness of such testimonies.

⁸⁴⁷ M. Novitch, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 24.

⁸⁴⁸ The document cited by M. Novitch states: “Minutes of the engagement of [...] as a person specifically entrusted with the execution of work in connection with the implementation of Jewish resettlement within “Einsatz Reinhard” by the Chief of SS and Police in the Lublin district. [...] declares: I have been thoroughly instructed and advised by SS-Hauptsturmführer Höfle in his quality as head of the Division “Einsatz Reinhard” under the Chief of SS and Police in the Lublin district: [...]” *Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau* (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 300.

⁸⁴⁹ WAPL, ZBL, 7, p. 5.

correspond to the elusive *Führerbefehl*, the only reasonable conclusion which mainstream historiography could draw from the transfer of a portion of the T4 staff to the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps would be the extension of the euthanasia program to the Jews who were to be moved to the East.⁸⁵⁰

In such a case, however, the deportees in the camps would not all have been assassinated (except for a handful selected for work), but only a small fraction of them. One could thus no longer speak of pure extermination camps. Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka would thus have had a double function: a principal function as a transit camp for the resettlement to the East, and a secondary function as a euthanasia center for the mentally ill or the incurably sick.

This conclusion would also explain the double chain of command applying to those camps:

Führer chancellery → Wirth: for euthanasia

Himmler → Globocnik: for the deportation.

It would also be in agreement with the (low) quantitative material findings at Bełżec and Sobibór (mass graves and ash) which cannot be integrated in any way into the thesis of extermination.

The official thesis discussed above contains, moreover, a fundamental incongruity. The reasoning of the verdict for the Sobibór trial states:⁸⁵¹

“This command had the task of helping the sick and the disabled as well as the children which were not accompanying the women on the normal path to extermination to climb into vehicles. German guards, in an effort to make them or keep them unsuspecting as to the killing plan, explained to these arrivals that they would be taken to the camp ‘sick-bay.’ They were taken to the stretch of woods east of camp III and were then shot and interred by members of the Ger-

⁸⁵⁰ According to mainstream Holocaust historiography, the Poles were subjected to euthanasia from autumn of 1939 onwards, but on a very limited scale (a few thousand persons). Stanisław Batavia, “Zagłada chorych psychicznie,” in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*, III, Poznań 1947, pp. 91-106; Willi Dressen, *op. cit.* (note 762), pp. 62-65. However, the case of the 25,000-30,000 Poles suffering from incurable tuberculosis in the Warthegau raises doubts on this point. On 1st May 1942 (NO-246) Gauleiter Greiser proposed to Himmler to kill them, but on 18 November this problem was still being discussed (NO-249), and in the end these patients were not killed. (“The Medical Case,” *op. cit.* (note 828), pp. 759-794, “Project To Kill Tubercular Polish Nationals”), although it would have been easy to send them to Chelmno.

⁸⁵¹ A. Ruckerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 168.

man and Ukrainian camp personnel near a hollow not far from the camp road.”

This would mean that the people who would have corresponded best to the category of euthanasia victims were not led to the gas chambers in the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps but taken to a fake “sick-bay” and shot. There is no sensible motive for such a procedure. From all traditional points of view, these people would have constituted a group of victims whose fate would not even have had to be discussed in any way. The only open question could have possibly been whether they should be given a gas chamber of their own, all the more so as Himmler, who had been disgusted by the shooting of the Jews, is said to have ordered Artur Nebe, the head of *Einsatzgruppe C*, in August of 1941 to devise a more humane system of killing. Eventually, this effort is said to have resulted in the invention of the “gas wagons,”⁸⁵² alleged gas chambers like those at Sobibór but mobile rather than stationary.

In conclusion we can say that, even if Brack’s “gassing devices” were perfectly documented, the detachment of the staff of the euthanasia program to the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps would not necessarily demonstrate that these camps were sites of mass exterminations.

8.6. Himmler’s Cremation Order

Mainstream Holocaust historiography postulates another basic order which is, however, no less elusive than the *Führerbefehl*: Himmler’s order to disinter and cremate the corpses in the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps. As we have seen in chapter 2.5., it is certain that Himmler paid a brief visit to Sobibór on 19 July 1942. He arrived there after a visit to Auschwitz (17 and 18 July), about which Franciszek Piper asserts:⁸⁵³

“It cannot be ruled out that his observations resulted in the decision to cremate the bodies instead of burying them. In fact, shortly after Himmler’s visit, Standartenführer Paul Blobel of Eichmann’s office arrived at Auschwitz with orders to exhume all the buried bo-

⁸⁵² M. Beer, “Die Entwicklung der Gaswagen beim Mord an den Juden,” in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 35(3), 1987, p. 407.

⁸⁵³ F. Piper, “Gas Chambers and Crematoria,” in: Yisrael Gutman, Michael Berenbaum (eds.), *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 1994, p. 163.

dies, burn them, and scatter the ashes to prevent the possible reconstruction of the number of victims.”

At Auschwitz this activity is said to have begun on 21 September 1942,⁸⁵⁴ at Sobibór in October 1942, at Bełżec in December 1942, and at Treblinka in March of 1943.⁸⁵⁵

These dates do not prove any general cremation order by Himmler, though – who was, after all, the head of *Aktion Reinhardt*. On the contrary: they disprove such an order, since it is incomprehensible why a specific cremation order would have been issued for each camp separately. It follows that in these camps the cremations were not carried out to hide “the traces of the crime,” but probably for specific local reasons.

⁸⁵⁴ D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 825), p. 305.

⁸⁵⁵ On this point Y. Arad has introduced further contradictions by asserting that Himmler issued the cremation order at Treblinka on the occasion of his visit in February-March 1943, which, however, has been shown never to have taken place, cf. C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 141-143.

9. Sobibór: Propaganda and Reality

9.1. Fake “Baths” or Real Baths? Sobibór as a Transit Camp

As we have seen in chapter 4, the witnesses have described the alleged gas chambers of Sobibór as fake baths, but faked in such a way that they could have been real: “At first glance, everything looks as a bath should look – faucets for hot and cold water, basins to wash in” (Pechersky, see p. 70); “The bath was arranged as if it were really a place to wash (faucets for the shower, a pleasant environment)” (Feldhender, see p. 71) and “everyone would be given a piece of soap.” (Razgonayev, see note 283).

At the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem there was the following exchange of arguments between the presiding judge and the witness Dov Freiberg during the 64th session (5 June 1961):⁸⁵⁶

Presiding Judge: One moment. When did you become aware, when did it become clear to you for the first time, that these were not shower rooms, but gas chambers?

Witness Freiberg: In the first days. There were some doubts, but it was known.” (Emph. added)

But on this point, Y. Arad writes:⁸⁵⁷

“The unawareness of what happened to the Jews who were taken to Camp III weighed heavily on the daily life of those selected to work. Days and even weeks passed until the Jewish prisoners who worked in Camp I and Camp II found out that those who had been taken there were gassed. In Sobibór, unlike Belżec, the extermination area with gas chambers was more isolated from the other parts of the camp, and nothing could be seen.”

He then quotes another statement by Freiberg – in blatant disagreement to the one above – according to which “for two weeks he and

⁸⁵⁶ State of Israel, *op. cit.* (note 137), vol. III, p. 1176; the witness is the same person as Ber Moiseyevich Freiberg mentioned earlier.

⁸⁵⁷ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 79.

those with him hoped that the people had not been murdered, but had been sent to Ukraine. This in spite of the fact that they worked only a few hundred meters away from the gas chambers.”⁸⁵⁷ (Emph. added)

What matters here is not so much the contradictions of the witness Freiberg, but the contradiction with the official thesis of mass exterminations – as we can read in the article from the *Polish Fortnightly Review* of 1st July 1942 mentioned earlier (p. 65) that “the fetor of the decomposing bodies in Sobibór is said to be so great that the people of the district, and even cattle, avoid the place.”

As the alleged extermination activity at Sobibór began for Arad “toward the end of April 1942” and as Freiberg arrived at the camp on 15 May,⁸⁵⁸ the stench of the decomposing corpses should have been even more unbearable in camps I and II and should have immediately revealed the “truth,” i.e. the alleged extermination on the spot.

The detainees, however, did not know anything about this “truth.”⁸⁵⁹ Ada Lichtman tells us about the pep talk *Oberscharführer* Hermann Michel would give, in which he promised to the victims that, once they had taken their bath, they “would be going to the Ukraine to live and work.”⁸⁶⁰ On this point J. Schelvis writes:⁸⁶¹

“Michel was so full of conviction when he delivered his speech, even as he was pulling the wool over the victims’ eyes, that the Arbeitshäftlinge [inmate workers] also dubbed him ‘the preacher.’ Sometimes he would make out that the camp was a transit camp, that the journey to Ukraine was only a matter of time, and that the Jews would even be granted autonomy there. Other times he would tell them they would all be going to Riga. On a number of occasions his speech so roused the audience’s enthusiasm – even among the Polish Jews – that they burst out in spontaneous clapping and cheering, completely oblivious of the fact that they would be dead within half an hour”

A few pages on he asserts that even “the Arbeitshäftlinge of Lager 1 were not exactly sure of what went on in Lager 3,” yet on the other hand “the stench of decomposing bodies, and later still the tall flames of the fires [...] pointed to the fact that people were being murdered there”⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁸⁵⁹ Cf. chapter 4.

⁸⁶⁰ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 76.

⁸⁶¹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), pp. 70f.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

But how then could Michel's talk be so convincing as to get the alleged victims to applaud?

The same contradiction also appears in Thomas Blatt's tale:⁸⁶³

"Deception and camouflage permeated the system, from the physical plan of the camp to the precise procedures followed upon the arrival of the trains. [...] The first view of Sobibór was innocuous: the paved road from the main gate was lined by nicely painted buildings adorned with well-kept lawns and flowers. [...] The condition of the transports often revealed the method by which Jews were deceived. Thus, Jews from western European countries (and especially from Holland) sometimes arrived in normal passenger trains with proper medical personnel and with food and condensed milk for the children. Their suspicion was not aroused when they arrived at Sobibór. The personnel continued to treat them carefully up to the moment of their deaths."

Yet then again it could allegedly not be prevented that the deportees became aware right away of the alleged "truth":⁸⁶⁴

"After all, it was not difficult for the prisoners in other compounds to guess what was happening in Lager III. In summer, the high temperatures caused the gasses and body fluids from decomposing bodies to seep from the mass graves. The stench was unbearable, and it spread for many miles. [...] Later, when the crematorium was built, fire and smoke were clearly visible for many miles, and the camp was often wreathed in foul-smelling smoke."

On the other had Freiberg himself said about the camp:⁸⁶⁵

"There was a sign at the entrance to the camp – actually I did not glance at it then, but subsequently, when I went out to work outside the camp, I saw it – SS Sonderkommando Umsiedlungslager – Camp for Resettlement."

Franz Stangl spoke of an *Umsiedlungslager* as well.⁸⁶⁶

It is a fact that the first descriptions of the alleged extermination facilities given by the witnesses resemble more closely actual sanitary installations (showers and disinfestation) than homicidal gas chambers.

⁸⁶³ T. Blatt, *op. cit.* (note 17), pp. 22, 27.

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸⁶⁵ State of Israel, *op. cit.* (note 137), vol. III, p. 1167.

⁸⁶⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 45, nota 108.

This goes, above all, for the barrack at Bełżec with its “Öfen” (ovens) and “Wasserleitungsrohre” (water pipes) described by S. Kozak, as we have shown in the preceding chapter.

In the same way the report of 15 November 1942 about an installation wherein people were killed by steam can be brought down to this, once its propagandistic embroideries are removed:⁸⁶⁷

“It consists of only three chambers and a steam room. Along the northern wall of this house runs a corridor from which there are doors to the chambers. The outer wall of the chambers have valves [sic...] The steam room [...] is adjacent to the building. Inside the steam room there is a large vat which produces the steam. The hot steam comes into the chambers through pipes installed there, each having a prescribed number of vents. While the machinery of death is in action, the doors and valves are hermetically closed.”

Such a description agrees perfectly with a disinfection plant using steam. On precisely this basis Jean-Claude Pressac suggested that, “instead of starting with the assumption of a facility for killing people, the hypothesis will have to be accepted that from the end of 1941 until mid-1942 three delousing facilities were established in Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka,” the aim of which was prophylactic hygiene and the fight against typhoid fever,⁸⁶⁸ something which would have made much sense for a *Durchgangslager* (transit camp) within the *Generalplan Ost*.

As far as Sobibór is concerned, Andrzej Kola identified a furnace located in a small building with a basement 2.5 meters deep within the confines of camp III. Near it he also discovered a larger coal storage of some 300 to 400 kilograms (see p. 154).

This furnace, which reminds us of those at Bełżec⁸⁶⁹ and makes one think – in connection with real baths – of a hot air disinfection furnace set up in the basement like those built by Topf in the Auschwitz *Zentralsauna* or of the furnace of a hot-water boiler. At Chełmno a disinfection oven with chimney was supplied to the Sonderkommando as well.⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁷ A translation of this document is found in C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 52-57.

⁸⁶⁸ J.-C. Pressac, “Enquête sur les camps de la mort,” in: *Historama-Histoire*, special edition No. 34, 1995, p. 121.

⁸⁶⁹ We remind the reader that, according to J. Schelvis, the first alleged gassing installation at Sobibór was built under the command of Richard Thomalla on the basis of the installation at Bełżec.

⁸⁷⁰ T-1298.

In the preceding chapter we have noted that the Sobibór camp could not have lacked an delousing facility with baths, if only to protect the health of the German and Ukrainian personnel. Such a sanitary installation, however, is not found on any map drawn by former detainees or SS men. It was probably located in the hut labeled *Object E* by Kola, in which toilet articles were found.⁸⁷¹

Jan Piwonski relates that an SS man addressed the crowd at the camp stating that “now you have arrived at Sobibór, this is a transit station; so now, you are going to pass through a series of high pressure sanitary systems, you will then be directed to areas where you will set yourselves up permanently and work,”⁸⁷² which reminds us of an installation for the production of steam used for disinfection and/or disinfestation.

In any case, it is a known fact that real showers and disinfestation facilities were claimed by Holocaust propaganda immediately after the war to have been merely fictitious installations designed to fool the victims. It is hard to believe that Richard David Breitman would write as late as 1991:⁸⁷³

“At Majdanek, Globocnik’s realm, a large quantity of installations have been saved from destruction. The building which housed the gas chambers still exists – with its outside inscription Entrance to baths, and one can see the showers and pipes which were not put in to supply water but to fool the victims.”

If a famous historian could have gone as far as that, what can we expect from ordinary deportees?

A similar account of the function of Sobibór was given by Judith Eliazer in her testimony at Rotterdam on 5 February 1946, in which she said:⁸⁷⁴

“On 10 March 1943 we went directly from Westerbork to Sobibór, where we arrived on 13 or 15 March. There we were selected. Thirty girls and 44 men were taken out. The remainder were gassed and burned. (We have seen that the others were moved away in tilting trolleys. They may have been dumped into pits.) Sobibór was not a camp. It was a transit camp.” (Emph. added)

⁸⁷¹ Cf. chapter 5.4.2.5., p. 157.

⁸⁷² Emph. added. J. Piwonski, *op. cit.* (note 221).

⁸⁷³ R.D. Breitman, *Himmler. Il burocrate dello sterminio*, Mondadori, Milano 1991, p. 318.

⁸⁷⁴ ROD [Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam], 200AR-Z251/59 0V, p. 904.

The witness was subsequently transferred to Lublin (Majdanek), Mi-leow, Trawniki, Lublin, Auschwitz, Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Lippstadt bei Hannover, Kaunitz, before finally returning to Holland. At Sobibór she saw neither gas chambers nor cremations, hence only the function of a transit camp agrees with her actual experience.

We know that the extremely few German documents to have survived on the subject of Sobibór designate it precisely as a transit camp. On 5 July 1943 Himmler sent the following letter to SS-WVHA and seven other SS offices:⁸⁷⁵

“1. The Sobibór transit camp in the Lublin district is to be converted into a concentration camp. In the concentration camp a workshop for the defusing of enemy munitions is to be set up.

2. All Higher SS and Police Chiefs are requested to deliver there any enemy munitions to the extent that they are not needed for seized enemy ordnance.

3. Any metals, but most of all the explosive powder, are to be carefully reclaimed.

4. Simultaneously, a production site for our own multiple launchers and/or for other munitions is to be built.”

On 15 July Oswald Pohl, head of SS-WVHA, replied with the following letter having the subject heading “Transit Camp Sobibór.”⁸⁷⁶

“Reichsführer!

According to your above instructions, the Sobibór transit camp in the Lublin district is to be converted into a concentration camp.

I have discussed this with SS-Gruppenführer Globocnik. Both of us propose to abandon this conversion, as the purpose intended, viz. to set up at Sobibór an installation for the defusing of enemy munitions, can be realized without such a conversion.

All other points of the above instructions can stay unchanged. I request your approval which is only of importance for Gruppenführer Globocnik [sic] and myself.”

Himmler’s personal assistant, Rudolf Brandt, replied on 24 July:⁸⁷⁷

“The Reichsführer SS agrees to the proposal [made] by you and SS-Gruppenführer Globocnik concerning the maintenance of the Sobibór transit camp in the Lublin district in its present state, as the desired objective can be attained in this manner.”

⁸⁷⁵ Der Reichsführer SS. Feld-Kommandostelle, den 5. Juli 1943. NO-482.

⁸⁷⁶ SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt, Berlin, 15. Juli 1943. NO-482.

⁸⁷⁷ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 174.

The importance of this document can be judged by the fact that Christopher R. Browning suppresses it completely, even where he tries to refute the revisionist thesis of a transit camp Sobibór in a text which claims to furnish “Documentary Evidence concerning the Camps of Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka.” He states:⁸⁷⁸

“If the documents concerning the Einsatzgruppen and the ‘special trucks’ speak openly about the methods of killing, i.e. shooting and gassing, such is not the case with the documents concerning the camps located in the three tiny villages of Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka, to which most Polish Jews were deported. Nonetheless, the quite scant surviving documentation makes clear that these were neither labor camps nor transit camps, and Jews were sent there simply to be killed. [...]

The scant surviving documentary evidence concerning the purpose of Sobibór indicates that the Germans considered it in the same category as Treblinka and Bełżec, but that it was inaccessible due to rail-line repairs during the peak months of the killing campaign of July-October 1942.”

In the absence of *any* documentary proof regarding Treblinka and Bełżec Browning actually declares that these camps therefore were not transit camps but extermination camps and then, by analogy, goes on to say that Sobibór as well was an extermination camp, disregarding the three documents which speak of it explicitly as a transit camp!

Other “holocaust” historians use the subterfuge of camouflage measures instead. Raul Hilberg for example writes:⁸⁷⁹

“A standard concealment measure was verbal camouflage. The most important and possibly most misleading term used for the killing centers collectively was the ‘East.’ This phrase was employed again and again during the deportations. For camps, there were a variety of headings [...]. Sobibór was appropriately called a Durchgangslager (transit camp). Since it was located near the Bug, on the border of the occupied eastern territories, the designation fitted the myth of the ‘eastern migration.’ When Himmler proposed one day that the camp be designated a Konzentrationslager, Pohl opposed the change.”

⁸⁷⁸ Christopher R. Browning, “Evidence for the Implementation of the Final Solution: Electronic Edition,” at: www.holocaustdenialontrial.com/en/trial/defense/browning/530.

⁸⁷⁹ R. Hilberg, *op. cit.* (note 33), p. 1028.

In fact, Himmler did not propose “to *designate* this camp a concentration camp” but ordered the camp to be “*converted* into a concentration camp” – the difference is not irrelevant. Furthermore, it is wrong to say that “Pohl *rejected* this *change of name*,” because Pohl replied merely that setting up “at Sobibór an installation for the defusing of enemy munitions, can be realized without such a conversion.”

Hence, it was not a question of *designation* or of *name*, but one of organization, as Hilberg himself explained in a different context:⁸⁸⁰

“A special enterprise was ordered by Himmler for Sobibór. This camp was set aside for the disassembly of captured ammunition in order to salvage the metals and explosives. The enterprise was not going to be incorporated into the WVHA industry network, inasmuch as it was designated to work for the SS-Führungshauptamt exclusively.” (Emph. added)

These manipulations show Hilberg’s obvious embarrassment. How can anyone believe that Himmler and Pohl would have used an alleged “coded language” even in top secret documents? The most reasonable explanation, therefore, continues to be that the “myth of Ostwanderung” was, in fact, not a “myth” at all.

The very document used by Hilberg when he speaks of “eastern migration” (*Ostwanderung*) bears this out irrefutably.

9.2. The *Ostwanderung*

On 15 September 1942 a meeting took place between Reichsminister Albert Speer and SS-*Obergruppenführer* Oswald Pohl, head of SS-WVHA. The following day Pohl wrote a detailed report for Himmler. The discussion had involved four main topics, the first of which was “Enlargement of barrack camp Auschwitz as a consequence of eastern migration.” On this point, Pohl wrote:⁸⁸¹

“In this manner Reichsminister Prof. Speer wants to guarantee the deployment at short notice of approximately 50,000 Jews fit for work in existing enclosed factories which have existing possibilities

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 986; but, as we have explained in the preceding chapter, the camp was built as part of the chain of command linking *Amtsgruppe C-Bauwesen* of WVHA and the *Bauleitung* at Zamość.

⁸⁸¹ Pohl Report to Himmler of 16 September 1942 on the subject: a) Armament work. b) Bomb damage. BAK, NS 19/14, pp. 131-133.

for lodging. We will skim off the labor force necessary for this purpose mainly in Auschwitz from the migration to the east, so that our existing production facilities are not disturbed in their output and their structure. The Jews [skimmed off for labor but eventually also] destined for migration to the east will therefore have to interrupt their journey and perform armament work.”

The *Ostwanderung* (eastern migration) was the deportation of Jews to the East. In this context the last sentence signifies that the physically unfit Jews within *Ostwanderung* would not interrupt their journey – and would thus not stop at Auschwitz – but continue their “journey” to the East.⁸⁸²

This move corresponded to the initial purpose of the deportations of western Jews to Auschwitz, which was essentially to provide slave labor; the problem of the unfit Jews was, therefore, still marginal. The first documented Jewish transports to arrive at Auschwitz came from Slovakia and France.

Slovakia carried out the deportation of the country’s Jews in response to a proposal by the Reich. On 16 February 1942 Martin Luther, head of the *Germany Department* of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, sent a telex to the German embassy at Bratislava (Pressburg), in which he stated that the Reich government, “as part of the measures for the final solution of the Jewish question in Europe,” stood ready to transfer “20,000 young and healthy Jews” to the East where there was a “demand for work assignment.”⁸⁸³

Referring to this telex, Luther wrote in his report to the Foreign minister dated August 1942:⁸⁸⁴

“The number of the Jews deported to the east in this manner was not sufficient to cover the need for labor. For this reason, the Reich Security Main Office, at the instruction of the Reichsführer SS, approached the Foreign Office to ask the Slovakian government to make available 20,000 young, sturdy Slovakian Jews from Slovakia for deportation to the east. The legation in Bratislava reported to D III 1002 that the Slovakian government took up the proposal with zeal, the preliminary tasks could be initiated.”

⁸⁸² For a more detailed treatment of this question cf. Carlo Mattogno, *Special Treatment in Auschwitz. Origin and Meaning of a Term*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2004, pp. 52-56.

⁸⁸³ T-1078.

⁸⁸⁴ NG-2586-J, pp. 5f.

The initial concept for the Jewish transports was drawn up on 13 March 1942 and specified the dispatch of 10 trains to Auschwitz and another 10 to Lublin between 25 March and 21 April 1942. Each transport was to be made up of 1,000 persons.⁸⁸⁵

On 24 March SS-*Obersturmbannführer* Arthur Liebehenschel, head of *Amt D I (Zentralamt)* of SS-WVHA, sent a telex to the commander of the PoW camp at Lublin, SS-*Standartenführer* Koch, on the subject "Jews from Slovakia" in which he said:⁸⁸⁶

"As already stated, the 10,000 (ten thousand) Jews from Slovakia destined for the camp there [Lublin] will be moved in with special trains as of 27 March 27 1942. Every special train carries 1,000 (one thousand) inmates. All trains will be routed via the border train station of Zwardon (Upper Silesia), where they will each arrive at 6:09 a.m. and, over a two-hour break, will be channeled on to their destination by Security Police escorts and under supervision by the Kattowitz division of the State Police."

On 27 March a certain Woltersdorf, an employee of state police office Kattowitz, addressed to *Amtsgruppe D* of SS-WVHA and two other offices a report concerning the first transport of Jews to Lublin headed "labor deployment of 20000 Jews from Slovakia," in which he wrote:⁸⁸⁷

"Arrival on 27 March 1942 at 6:52 of the 2nd train in Zwardon with 1,000 Jews from Slovakia fit for labor. A Jewish doctor was with the transport, so that the total number is 1,001 men."

On 29 April the German embassy at Bratislava sent a *note verbale* to the Slovak government, in which we can read:⁸⁸⁸

"The Jews from the territory of Slovakia who have been transported and are still to be transported into the territory of the Reich will be arriving, after preparation and retraining, for labor deployment in the General Government and in the occupied eastern territories. The accommodation, boarding, clothing, and retraining of the Jews, including their relatives, will cause expenses, which for the time being cannot be covered out of the initially only small labor

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 38f.

⁸⁸⁶ *Fernschreiben* from Liebehenschel No. 903 dated 24 March 1942 to the commander of K.G.L. Lublin. Photocopy of the document in: Zofia Leszczyńska, "Transporty więźnów do obozu na Majdanku," in: *Zeszyty Majdanka*, IV, Lublin 1969, p. 182.

⁸⁸⁷ Photocopy of the document in: Stanisław Duszak (ed.), *Majdanek*, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Lublin 1985, photograph No. 38.

⁸⁸⁸ *Riešenie židovskej otázky na Slovensku (1939-1945)*. Dokumenty, 2. Časť, Edícia Judaica Slovaca, Bratislava 1994, p. 105.

output of the Jews, since the retraining have [sic] an effect only after some time and since only a portion of the Jews deported and still to be deported is fit for labor."

To cover these expenses, the Reich asked the Slovak government for the reimbursement of 500 Reichsmark per person.

On 11 May SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Wisliceny, Eichmann's representative in Slovakia, wrote the following letter to the Slovak ministry of the Interior:⁸⁸⁹

"As the Berlin Reich Security Main Office informed me by telegram on 9 May 1942, the possibility exists of accelerating the deportation of the Jews from Slovakia, in that still additional transports can be sent to Auschwitz. However, these transports are permitted to contain only Jews and Jewesses fit for labor, no children. It would then be possible to increase the transport rate by 5 trains per month. For the practical execution I venture to make the following proposal: during evacuation from the cities, Jews who can be pronounced fit to work will be selected out and passed into the two camps Sillein and Poprad."

The proposal was not accepted, because the 19 transports of Jews that left Slovakia in May were all sent to the Lublin district with destinations Lubartów, Luków, Międzyrzec Podlaski, Chełm, Dęblin, Puławy, Nałęczów, Rejowiec, and Izbica.

In its edition of 25 April 1942 the newspaper *Lemberger Zeitung* wrote in this respect:⁸⁹⁰

"First, single and physically fit Jews and Jewesses are deported. The immediate consequence of this measure was that a large part of the able-bodied Jews suddenly became 'unfit for work,' for a variety of reasons, and inundated the hospitals, so that soon enough the really sick Aryans could not be treated."

The transports from France also enter into this context. On 10 March 1942 Theodor Dannecker, SS-*Hauptsturmführer* and co-ordinator of Jewish affairs in France, reporting on a meeting held in the offices of department IV B 4 of RSHA, stated that negotiations could now be initiated with the French authorities "concerning the removal of some 5,000 Jews to the East." The document specifies that "initially, it is only

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 108f.

⁸⁹⁰ "Die slowakischen Juden arbeiten," in: *Lemberger Zeitung*, 25 April 1942.

a matter concerning male Jews fit for labor, not over 55 years of age.”⁸⁹¹

On 15 June 1942 Dannecker wrote a note concerning the future deportation of Jews from France in which he stated that military reasons stood in the way of a deportation of Jews from the Reich into the eastern operational zone, because the Führer had ordered to move to the Auschwitz camp “for the purpose of productive labor” a large number of Jews from southeastern Europe (Romania) or the occupied territories in the West. For this the deportees of both sexes had to be between 16 and 40 years old; together with them it was possible to deport 10% of Jews unfit for work.⁸⁹² However, in a secret memo dated 26 June 1942 which dealt with the Jewish deportation Dannecker stressed that this concerned only physically fit Jews of both sexes aged between 16 and 45.⁸⁹³

The mass deportation of Jews residing in France, but also of the Dutch and Belgian Jews, was decided on a week later. On 22 June 1942 Eichmann penned a letter addressed to embassy councillor Fritz Rademacher of the Foreign Ministry on the subject of “Work assignment for Jews from France, Belgium, and the Low countries,” specifying:⁸⁹⁴

“For the time being it is planned to initially deport to the Auschwitz camp approximately 40,000 Jews from the occupied French regions, 40,000 Jews from the Netherlands, and 10,000 Jews from Belgium in special trains running daily with 1,000 persons each from mid-July or the beginning of August of this year,” but the deportees were to be only “Jews fit for work.”

The problem of the deportation of children and physically unfit adults was discussed in July and August. In a memo dated 21 July 1942, referring to a telephone conversation of the previous day, Dannecker wrote:⁸⁹⁵

“The question of the deportation of children was discussed with SS-Sturmbannführer Eichmann. He decided that, as soon as transportation into the General Government is again possible, transports of children can get moving. SS-Obersturmführer Nowak promised to make about 6 transports possible to the General Government at the

⁸⁹¹ RF-1216.

⁸⁹² RF-1217.

⁸⁹³ RF-1221.

⁸⁹⁴ NG-183.

⁸⁹⁵ RF-1233.

end of August/beginning of September, which can contain Jews of every kind (also Jews unfit for work and old Jews)."

We must remember that, according to the official German position at that time, Auschwitz was not located in the General Government but was part of the Reich. On the other hand, during these weeks deportations to Auschwitz were continuing without interruption: in fact, 14 transports of Jews reached this camp between 17 and 31 July, with 4 coming from Holland, 2 from Slovakia, 7 from France, and one of unknown origin.⁸⁹⁶ Hence, the 6 transports mentioned above, which should have contained children and physically unfit adults, did not have Auschwitz as their destination.

Later on the RSHA decided on a different course. On 13 August 1942, SS-*Sturmbannführer* Rolf Günther sent a cable to the SS authorities in Paris concerning "Deportation of Jews to Auschwitz. Here: removal of Jewish children," in which he advised that the Jewish children held in the camps at Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande could be deported to Auschwitz a few at a time as part of the scheduled transports, but that there were to be no transports involving only children.⁸⁹⁷ This had been decreed by the RSHA, obviously for reasons of propaganda. It was therefore decided to mix the Jewish children from the camps at Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande with adults in such a way that "300 to 500 Jewish children will be assigned to 700, but at least 500, adult Jews."⁸⁹⁸

A first transport comprising a certain percentage of children (about 10% of the total)⁸⁹⁹ arrived at Auschwitz on 14 August 1942, even though the plan agreed upon on 28 July 1942 had specified 19 August for the departure of the first train with Jewish children on board (these children had been arrested in Paris on 16 and 17 July), with another three for 21, 24, and 26 August.⁹⁰⁰

These documents demonstrate clearly the initial intention of the SS to move children and old people to the General Government, at first directly to and later via Auschwitz as a transit camp.

⁸⁹⁶ D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 825), pp. 250-262.

⁸⁹⁷ CDJC, XXVb-126.

⁸⁹⁸ RF-1234.

⁸⁹⁹ S. Klarsfeld, *op. cit.* (note 75), table showing the transports as a function of the age of the deportees.

⁹⁰⁰ S. Klarsfeld, *Vichy-Auschwitz. Le rôle de Vichy dans la solution finale de la question juive en France, 1942*, Fayard, Paris 1983, pp. 292-294. Facsimile of part of the original document in: S. Klarsfeld, *op. cit.* (note 75), page concerning convoy No. 11.

Even mainstream Holocaust historians Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt admit that Auschwitz “was to serve as a transit point between Germany, Bohemia, and the projected reservation in the East” within the framework of a “policy to deport the German Jews to Russia.”⁹⁰¹

9.3. Jewish Transports into the Lublin District in 1942

In early 1942 the Germans began to concentrate the Jews in the Lublin district and later to move them further east in order to make room for the Jews from the *Altreich*, Austria, Slovakia, and the Protectorate. These resettlements were entrusted to an office attached to the administration of the General Government called Main Department Internal Administration, Department of Population Matters and Welfare,⁹⁰² which received reports from *Unterabteilungsleiter SS-Hauptsturmführer* Richard Türk and from the local agencies.

On 17 March 1942 Fritz Reuter, an employee in the department of population matters and welfare within the office of the general governor for the Lublin district, wrote a memo on the subject of a discussion, which he had had with *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Hermann Höfle the previous day:⁹⁰³

“I had arranged a meeting with Hstuf. Höfle for Monday, 16 March 1942, at 17:30 hours. During the discussion Hstuf. Höfle declared:

It would be advisable to separate, at the stations of departure, the Jews coming to the district of Lublin into persons fit for work and those unfit. If such a separation is impossible on departure, one may want to adopt a solution whereby the separation would be carried out in Lublin on the basis of the above.

Jews unfit for work would all be taken to Belżec, the outermost border station in Zamosc county. Hstuf. Höfle is about to build a large camp in which the Jews fit for work can be classified according to their professions and delegated as necessary.

⁹⁰¹ D. Dwork, R. J. van Pelt, *Auschwitz 1270 to the present*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York/London 1996, p. 291 and 295.

⁹⁰² *Hauptabteilung innere Verwaltung, Abteilung Bevölkerungswesen und Fürsorge*

⁹⁰³ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), pp. 269f.

Piaski will be freed from Polish Jews and will be the collection point for the Jews coming from the Reich. Trawniki will not be used for Jews for the time being.

H. asked at which point of the Dęblin–Trawniki line it would be possible to unload 60,000 Jews. When our present transports had been explained, H. declared that, from the 500 Jews arriving at Susiec, those unfit for work could be separated and taken to Bełżec. According to a government teletype dated 4 March 1942, a Jewish transport from the Protectorate with destination Trawniki is being run. These Jews have not been unloaded at Trawniki, but have been taken to Izbica. An inquiry from the Zamosc county chief for the use of 200 Jews from there for work was approved by H.

Finally, he declared that he could receive 4 to 5 transports per day of 1,000 each with destination Bełżec. These Jews would be taken across the border and would never return to the General Government.”

This document is of critical importance for two reasons: First of all, Höfle in his quality of commissioner for the resettlement of Jews in the district of Lublin,⁹⁰⁴ was the deputy of *SS- und Polizeiführer* for the district of Lublin, i.e. of Globocnik, who was also commissioner for the installation of SS and police agencies in the new eastern region, which means that he, too, operated within the dispositions of the *Generalplan Ost*. The task of the labor camp for able-bodied Jews was probably the supply of manpower for the construction of *Durchgangsstrasse IV* (transit road IV) in nearby Galicia.

Secondly, Bełżec is said to have started its murderous activity on 17 March 1942, immediately after the meeting just mentioned. According to mainstream historiography it was (like Treblinka, Sobibór, and Chełmno) a straightforward extermination camp with no separation between Jews fit and unfit for work taking place there. However, the quoted document states:

1. A separation between Jews fit and those unfit for work was scheduled.
2. Jews fit for work were to be used for work projects.
3. The Jews fit for work would be assembled in a camp where they would be “classified according to their professions and delegated as necessary.”

⁹⁰⁴ *Beauftragter für die Judenumsiedlung im Lubliner Distrikt*

4. Piaski was to become the “collection point for the Jews coming from the Reich.” By road Piaski is located 24 km to the southeast of Lublin and 104 km to the northeast of Bełżec. By rail the distance to Bełżec is even greater, some 155 km (from Trawniki to Bełżec via Rejowiec, including the road section Piaski-Trawniki). These data speak against the thesis that Bełżec was a pure extermination camp, for in that case it would have itself constituted the collection point.
5. It was planned to unload 60,000 Jews at a suitable point along the line Dęblin-Trawniki, which was part of the trunk line from Warsaw to Lublin, Rejowiec and Chełm. Dęblin station was located some 70 km to the northwest of Lublin in the direction of Warsaw. Trawniki was 13 km to the east of Piaski, for which it served as a railway station. Just west of Rejowiec a southward line branched off to Bełżec, Rawa Ruska, and Lemberg/Lvov. Again, all this speaks against the assertion that Bełżec was nothing but an extermination camp.

The most important point of the document is the fact that “Jews unfit for work would all be taken to Bełżec.” The camp “could receive 4 – 5 transports per day with destination Bełżec,” Jews unfit for work, apparently, who would be “taken across the border and would never return to the General Government.” That is why Bełżec was referred to as “the outermost border station in Zamosc county.” This sentence makes sense only in connection with a deportation of these Jews to the other side of the border, i.e. to the East. In any case, “4 – 5 transports per day of 1,000 Jews each” could not have been taken to Bełżec for reasons of their extermination, because the alleged three gas chambers of 32 square meters each could not have gassed 4,000-5,000 persons in a single day.

This is how Tatiana Berenstein describes one of the first Jewish transports to arrive at Bełżec.⁹⁰⁵

“In the afternoon of 16 March, i.e. a couple of hours after the start of the operation, [the SS] rounded up men in the ghetto of Lublin to be sent to work. Actually, the transfer operation began only half an hour after midnight. [...] In the early morning, after checking of the documents, people with a valid work card were released. Out of the people arrested that night, 1,600 were sent by rail to the death camp at Bełżec, the others were temporarily let go, but were not allowed to return home. Actually, at that time, the gas chambers

⁹⁰⁵ T. Berenstein, “Martyrologia, opór i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie lubelskim,” in: *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Polsce*, vol. 21, 1957, p. 35.

of Belżec could not yet annihilate more than 1,600 persons in 24 hours.”

The decisions noted in Reuter’s above memo are fully corroborated by a report written by SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Türk on 7 April 1942. The report covers the month of March and contains a paragraph entitled “Jewish Resettlement Operation of the SS and Police Chief,” in which Türk says:⁹⁰⁶

“The possibilities of accommodation, limited to places along the Deblin-Rejowiec-Belżec railway line, were and are currently being discussed with the representative of the SS and Police Chief. Alternative possibilities were determined.

On the basis of my proposal, there is a fundamental understanding that, as Jews from the west are being settled here, local Jews are to be evacuated in like numbers, if possible. The current status of the settlement process is that approximately 6,000 were settled here from the Reich, approximately 7,500 have been evacuated from the district, and 18,000 from the city of Lublin.

Individually, 3,400 have been evacuated from Piaski, district of Lublin, and 2,000 Reich Jews have come in so far; 2,000 from Izbica, Krasnystaw district, and 4,000 Reich Jews arriving in it; from Opole and Wawolbnica, Pulawy district, 1,950 have been evacuated. [...]

Jewish resettlement from Mielic, Cracow county:

On 13 March 42 Cholm county received about 1,000 Jews; 200 were housed at Sosnowice and 800 at Włodawa.

On 14 March 42 Miedsyrzecz in Radzyn county received 750 Jews. Hrubieszów county received 1,343 Jews, with 843 being housed at Dubienka and 500 at Belz. Most of them were women and children, with able-bodied men a minority. On 16 March 42 Zamosc county received some 500 Jews who were all housed at Cieszanow.

Jewish resettlement Bilgoraj:

On 22 March 42 57 Jewish families, a total of 221 persons, were transferred from Bilgoraj to Tarnograd.”

Another report describes the transfer of Jews from Bilgoraj to Tarnogród, a village 20 km to the south, in the following words:⁹⁰⁷

“An evacuation of 57 Jewish families with a total of 221 persons from Bilgoraj to Tarnogród took place on 22 March 42. Each family

⁹⁰⁶ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 271.

⁹⁰⁷ Józef Kermisz (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 723), p. 46.

was given a vehicle to enable them to take along the necessary furniture and bedding. Special command and Polish police were used for the arrangements and the surveillance. The operation was carried out as planned without incidents. The evacuees were housed in Tarnogród the same day."

The arrival of western Jews in the Lublin district began in mid-March. The first transports taken there left the Protectorate on 11 March, the *Altreich* on 13 March, Slovakia on 27 March and Austria on 9 April 1942. The transports comprised mostly persons unfit who were housed together with the able-bodied in the villages of the district.

On 12 April 1942 the Chairman of the Jewish Council in Lublin posted a letter to the Jewish Social Self-Assistance in Krakow, in which the "numbers of those resettled in the individual towns" were named in regard to Mielec:

Bełz	460 persons
Cieszanów	465 persons
Dubienka	787 persons
Sosnowica	210 persons
Międzyrzec	740 persons
Włodawa	770 persons

The letter continues:⁹⁰⁸

"In Izbica two transports arrived from the Protectorate with 1,000 persons.

In Izbica 1,871 arrived from the Rhineland.

In Piaski, Lu., 1,008 persons arrived from the Protectorate.

Moreover, in the last few days further transports arrived whose number varies between 2,500 and 3,000 persons. Yesterday, he^[909] received an unofficial – at any rate so far unconfirmed – piece of news that a passenger train of 19 cars, which allegedly was traveling to Izbica and contained evacuees from Vienna, was supposed to go past Lublin. Officially nothing could be determined yet.

With regard to Lublin itself, an insignificant number of Jews has remained in the city up to now, who are supposed to be resettled from the city into its environs according to unofficial information."

On 16 April 1942 the *Landkommissar* at Lubartów addressed the following letter to the county chief for *Lublin-Land*:⁹¹⁰

⁹⁰⁸ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 275f.

⁹⁰⁹ Dr. Marek Alten, adviser on Jewish matters to the governor of the Lublin district.

⁹¹⁰ Józef Kermisz (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 723), p. 48.

“Yesterday afternoon at 18:00 hours, without any prior announcement, another transport of approximately 800 Jews arrived. About half were women and children under 14 years of age. There were no men at all in the transport. The Jews were from Slovakia as well. On Monday and Wednesday altogether over 1,600 Jews have arrived, among them hardly any fit for work. 200 Jews were transported onward to Kamionka, 300 to Ostrow, 80 to Firlej.”

On 9 May 1942 the *Landkommissar* informed the county chief as follows:⁹¹¹

“Re: Evacuation of Jews from Slovakia.

As I already reported by telephone, the Governor of the district, Population and Welfare, informed me last Wednesday that on Thursday 1,000 Jews would be arriving from Slovakia; they would be transported farther in about 14 days. On Thursday the 7th of May the transport arrived here in the late evening; there were 841 persons, older men and women with children, 199 men were kept behind in Lublin. This transport was better equipped with baggage and food than the earlier ones. The direction of the evacuation from Lublin was under the control of SS-Obstf. Pohl, who was also present here on the occasion of the evacuation of the local Jews on April 9. The Jews are at first lodged in the former high school. Whether and when the transport onward is to take place is not yet clear.”

Another letter, dated 13 May 1942, states:⁹¹²

“Herr County Chief of Cholm was present here personally yesterday and requested that those of the next transport, who are fit for labor, also be sent to him, since he is in urgent need of a work force. Furthermore, he complained about the fact that food, which is added to the transport trains, is always taken off in Lublin. I am asking that the food be passed on to Cholm as well with the next transports.”

A similar complaint was voiced also by the Rejowiec delegation:⁹¹²

“The delegation informed me that on 17 April 42 two transports of evacuees from Slovakia and the Protectorate arrived. The baggage of the evacuees has remained in Lublin, and the delegation requests that the baggage, which for the most part contains bed linens, be released.”

In order to create room for the new arrivals, Polish Jews residing in the Lublin district were gradually deported farther east. These evacua-

⁹¹¹ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 276.

⁹¹² Józef Kermisz (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 723), p. 49.

tions were initiated by the SS- and Police Chief of Lublin in collaboration with the “Sub-Department of Population and Welfare” of the Governor of the district of Lublin, specifically on the proposal of the local authorities. For example, a certain Lenk, a subordinate of the District Chief of Janów-Lubelsk, wrote to the SS- and Police Chief of Lublin:⁹¹³

“I ask you to evacuate Jews from the following locations:

<i>Radomysl</i>	500
<i>Zaklikow</i>	1,500
<i>Annopol</i>	500
<i>Ulanow I</i>	500
<i>Modliborzyce</i>	1,000
<i>Janów-Lubelski</i>	400
<i>Krasnik</i>	1,000

Only old people, those unfit for labor, women, and children should be included in these evacuation operations, plus such men who are not employed at German agencies. Craftsmen, however, should still remain here for the time being.”

On 13 May the county chief at Puławy sent a letter to the governor of the Lublin district, which reads under item 1:⁹¹⁴

“In the period between 6 and 12 May, both inclusive, 16,822 Jews from Puławy county have been expelled across the Bug river on the instructions of the chief of SS and police.”

These Jews are alleged to have been deported to Sobibór and killed there.⁹¹⁵

The railway line⁹¹⁶ Chełm-Sobibór-Włodawa, called 584h by the German *Ostbahn*, was a spur of the line 584h, which went from Chełm to Kowel in Ukraine.⁹¹⁷ The line 584h left the territory of the General Government near Włodawa (the border in that area followed the Bug river) and continued into Ukraine towards Brest-Litowsk. Hence, the expression “expelled across the Bug river” must be interpreted literally; it designated an expulsion from the General Government into Ukraine.

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁹¹⁴ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 438.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, note 1.

⁹¹⁶ The lines and place names used here are slightly different from those used in *Kursbuch Polen 1942 (Generalgouvernement)*, Josef Otto Slezak Verlag, Vienna 1984, a re-edition of *Amtlicher Taschenfahrplan für das Generalgouvernement* published by Generaldirektion der Ostbahn in Krakau and valid from 2 November 1943 onwards.

⁹¹⁷ R. Hilberg, *op. cit.* (note 629), pp. 252-254, railway maps *Gouvernement General*.

On 19 May the county chief of Lublin reported to the department of population matters and welfare:⁹¹⁸

“Concerning the inquiry circular of the 12th of this month, I recommend, when opportunity arises, that the following Jews be deported, whose evacuation is required first:

Lubartow 2,737

Ostrow-Stadt 3,062

Piaski 6,166

Belzyce 3,639

Bychawa 2,733

Chodel 1,398

19,735.”

The county chief of Hrubieszów noted in a memo on 22 May:⁹¹⁹

“The number and place of residence of those Jews whose evacuation appears to be necessary first, is as follows:

1) in Hrubieszów 5,690 Jews

2) " Uchanie 2,025 Jews

3) " Grabowiec 2,026 Jews

4) " Dubienka 2,907 Jews

5) " Belz 1,540 Jews.”

There is no doubt at all that these transfers were serving the purpose of creating room for the western Jews deported into the Lublin district. The latter would then also be evacuated later on, again in stages. A report of 5 October 1942 by the county chief in Lublin to the Governor of the Lublin district sets out the following information regarding this:⁹²⁰

“Subject: Dispositions of 15 August 1942 and 28 September 1942

With regard to the above dispositions I am reporting that 8,009 Jews from the Reich have been resettled into my district since the 1st of January 1942. 3,692 of these have already been resettled again. Expenditures or cash outlays have not been incurred due to these evacuations; the Piaski community merely put 400 vehicles at their disposal without cost for the transportation of the sick, children, and baggage.”

According to this report, the 8,009 Jews mentioned were housed in the following communities:

⁹¹⁸ Józef Kermisz (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 723), p. 53.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁹²⁰ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 336.

1,200 Jews from Germany in Belżyce
 5,466 Jews from Germany in Piaski
 54 Jews from Germany in Luszawa
 652 Jews from Germany in Kamionka
 125 Jews from Slovakia in Firlej
 512 Jews from Slovakia in Ostrow Lub.

The last transport of Jews from the Reich had left on 15 July 1942, and by 5 October, out of the 8,009 Jews who had arrived only 3,692 had been moved on across the Bug; the remaining 4,317 were still in the Lublin district. This is not really in line with a policy of total extermination, just like the “400 vehicles at their disposal without cost for the transportation of the *sick, children, and baggage.*”

The Polish historian Janina Kielboń presented a fairly complete picture of the deportations of Jews into the Lublin district between 1939 and 1942 in an article published in 1992.⁹²¹ In 1942 there were 72 transports with a total of 69,084 Jews having the following origins:⁹²²

- 14 transports from Theresienstadt and Prague (2 to Izbica, 4 to Lublino, 1 to Majdanek, 1 to Piaski, 1 to Rejowiec, 1 to Sobibór/Osowa, 1 to Trawniki, 1 to Ujazdów, 2 to Zamość) between 11 March and 13 June: 14,001 deportees;
- 14 transports from *Altreich* (1 to Bełżyce, 10 to Izbica, 1 to Kraśniczyn, 2 to Trawniki) between 12 March and 15 July 1942: 9,194 deportees;
- 38 transports from Slovakia (2 to Chełm, 2 to Dęblin, 2 to Izbica, 3 to Lubartów, 4 to Lublin, 2 to Łuków, 1 to Międzyrzec Podlaski, 5 to Nałęczów, 2 to Puławy, 5 to Rejowiec, 10 to Sobibór) between 27 March and 14 June 1942: 39,889 deportees;
- 6 transports from Vienna (4 to Izbica, 1 to Włodawa, 1 to Sobibór) between 9 April and 14 June 1942: 6,000 deportees.

The transports went to:

Bełżyce: 1; Chełm: 2; Dęblin: 2; Izbica: 17; Kraśniczyn: 1; Lubartów: 3; Lublino-Majdanek: 9; Łuków: 2; Międzyrzec Podlaski: 1; Nałęczów: 5; Piaski: 1; Puławy: 2; Rejowiec: 6; Sobibór: 11; Sobibór/Osowa: 1; Trawniki: 3; Ujazdów: 1; Włodawa: 1; Zamość: 2.

⁹²¹ Janina Kielboń, “Deportacja Żydów do dystryktu lubelskiego (1939-1945),” in: *Zeszyty Majdanka*, XIV, 1992, p. 61-91.

⁹²² For a list of the transports see: C. Mattocono, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 242-244.

Between 17 March 1942, the day the Bełżec camp was opened,⁹²³ and 2 May the Lublin district received 29 transports with 26,927 Jews, none of which went to this alleged extermination camp.

In the period between 3 May, the day Sobibór was opened,⁹²⁴ and 15 July out of the 41 transports with 40,153 Jews on board which reached the Lublin district only 12 went to Sobibór, carrying 12,021 persons, and none went to Bełżec.

In summarizing we determine that a mere 12 of the total of 70 transports which reached the Lublin district went into the alleged extermination camps, with a load of 12,021 persons out of of 69,084 passengers altogether.

One of the 12 transports going to Sobibór, the one which had left Vienna on 14 June 1942, was originally not supposed to go there at all, but to Izbica, as we know from *Transportführer* Josef Frischmann. When the train left Vienna, SS-*Hauptscharführer* Girzig of the Central Agency for Jewish Emigration was present. After a lay-over at Lublin where SS-*Obersturmführer* Pohl removed “51 able-bodied Jews between 15 and 50 years of age” and ordered “the remainder of 949 Jews to be taken to the labor camp at Sobibór,” the train went into “the labor camp next to the station.”⁹²⁵

Furthermore, the first of the 12 transports (the one with 1,000 Jews on board which reached Sobibór-Osawa⁹²⁶ on 9 May 1942, coming from Theresienstadt) can obviously not have been gassed in its entirety, as mainstream historiography will have it: at least 101 Jews from this convoy died at Majdanek, and the personal data are known for 90 persons from this latter group,⁹²⁷ which means that hundreds of these Jews – if not the entire transport – were moved to this camp.

But not even those Jews who had initially been deported into the various communities of the district of Lublin were later “gassed” in the alleged extermination camps at Bełżec and Sobibór. Mirosław Kryl found that at least 858 Jews who had been moved to the Lublin district from the Theresienstadt ghetto and from Prague died at the Majdanek

⁹²³ Y. Arad, *op. cit.* (note 49), p. 68

⁹²⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 49.

⁹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71, facsimile of “Bericht des Transportführers J. Frischmann,” dated “Wien, 20. Juni 1942.”

⁹²⁶ Osowa is a small community located a few kilometers to the southwest of Sobibór.

⁹²⁷ Cf. the list in: C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), pp. 112-114.

camp between May and September 1942.⁹²⁸ 525 of these had come directly from Lublin and 333 from other communities.⁹²⁹

In a study of the death registry of Majdanek Janina Kielboń published very detailed indications: a total of 4,687 western Jews died in this camp between May and September of 1942, of whom 1,066 were Czech, 2,849 Slovak, and 772 German and Austrian.⁹³⁰ Among them 735 were between 11 and 20 years of age and 163 over the age of 60; among the latter were 3 Slovak Jews in the 81 to 90 age group.⁹³¹

The number of western Jews who died at Majdanek was still larger, however, as one can deduce from the series of documents “*Totenmeldung für die Effektenkammer*” (death notifications for the chamber of personal effects), which are partially extant. These documents list the deaths of at least 183 western Jews within a period of eight days (20 October, and 29 November through 5 December 1942): 41 Czech, 108 Slovak, and 34 German and Austrian.⁹³² The deportees from Theresienstadt went primarily to Izbica (11 and 17 March), Trawniki (12 June), and Zamość (20 and 30 June).

Hence, the number of certified deaths of western Jews at Majdanek amounts to 4,870. According to Zofia Leszczyńska, Majdanek received five direct transports of Czech and Slovak Jews (4,813 persons) between April and June of 1942, plus another 16 transport (with some 13,500 persons) who moved there after having resided in the Lublin district,⁹³³ yielding a total of about 18,300 persons. Not included in this figure are Jews from Germany and Austria who must have numbered around 3,600 persons.⁹³⁴

From this we may conclude that at least 21,900 western Jews were registered at Majdanek, almost one third of the total number deported into the Lublin district. There were also French, Belgian, and Dutch

⁹²⁸ M. Kryl, “Deportacja więźniów żydowskich z Terezina i Pragi na Lubelszczyznę” (The deportation of the Jewish detainees from Theresienstadt and Prague to the Lublin territory), in: *Zeszyty Majdanka*, vol. XI, 1983, pp. 33-35.

⁹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35. Cf. C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 11, Engl. ed.), p. 114.

⁹³⁰ J. Kielboń, “Księga więźniów zmarłych na Majdanek w 1942 r. Analiza dokumentu” (The list of detainees who died at Majdanek in 1942. Analysis of a document), in: *Zeszyty Majdanka*, XV, 1993, p. 114.

⁹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁹³² GARF, 7021-107-3, pp. 226-235.

⁹³³ Z. Leszczyńska, *op. cit.* (note 886), p. 184

⁹³⁴ This figure has been inferred from the mortality of the Czech and Slovak Jews of $[(4,064 \div 18,300) \times 100 =] 22,2\%$ applied to the 806 certified deaths of German and Austrian Jews: $[(802 \times (100 \div 22,2))] =$ circa 3,600.

Jews who arrived at Majdanek,⁹³⁵ they were probably moved elsewhere later on. Only one Dutch name appears in the *Totenmeldung* (death record) series: Lewy Trompetter, born in Amsterdam on 27 April 1873 and registered, at age 69 with the ID number 7593; he died on 1st December 1942.⁹³⁶

Besides the transports to the Lublin district, between 5 May and 28 November 1942 a full 36 transports of western Jews (over 35,000 persons) were deported into the localities in the eastern territories mentioned previously, bypassing completely the three alleged extermination camps of Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka. The 124 transports which went from Vienna to Minsk between 16 May and 28 November 1942 followed the line Vienna-Lundenburg-Prerau, skirting Auschwitz to the west via Oppeln (Opole) and Tschenschow (Czestochowa) towards Warsaw, with some of them going on to Wolskowysk-Minsk via Białystok. To do that, they passed through Malkinia, some 4 km from the “extermination camp” at Treblinka. Some other transports proceeded via Siedlce-Czeremcha-Wolkowysk and thus came as close as 80 km to Treblinka and 140 km to Sobibór.

In the “train schedule order No. 40” of the German railway administration located at Minsk we can read:⁹³⁷

“According to an announcement by RBD [Reichsbahndirektion, Imperial Rail Administration] Königsberg, there will be a weekly special train (Zugg [sic] 30,9) on Friday/Saturday with about 1,000 persons from Vienna via Bialystok-Baranowitsche to Minsk Gbf [freight station] having the following schedule...”

Schedule order No. 517 of RBD Vienna, dated 18 May 1942, mentions the following routing for the transports from Vienna to Minsk:⁹³⁸

“Wien Aspangbahnhof – Wien Nordbf – Lundenburg – Prerau – Olmütz – Groß Wisternitz – Jägerndorf – Neisse – Oppeln – Tschenschow – Warschau West Gbf – Siedlce – Platerow – Czeremcha – Wolkowysk – Minsk.”

Why would one want to make a detour of some 300 km around three “extermination camps” with trainloads of Jews destined to be killed?

⁹³⁵ Z. Leszczyńska, *op. cit.* (note 933) p. 189.

⁹³⁶ GARF, 7021-107-3, p. 234.

⁹³⁷ *Haupt-eisenbahndirektion Mitte, Fahrplanordnung Nr. 40* of 13 May 1942. NARB, 378-1-784.

⁹³⁸ Deutsche Reichsbahn. Reichsbahndirektion Wien, *Fahrplanordnung Nr 517* of 18 May 1942. NARB, 378-1-784.

Another event which is inexplicable from the mainstream Holocaust point of view has been noted by Jules Schelvis:⁹³⁹

“The intriguing question is why, in the spring and summer of 1943, the transports from Western Europe headed for Sobibór rather than Auschwitz/Birkenau, which was in fact closer.”

Schelvis acknowledges both the argument that the German war industry near Auschwitz at the time needed Jewish manpower and that the alleged extermination facilities at Auschwitz-Birkenau would have had sufficient capacity to handle these Dutch Jews.⁹⁴⁰ Hence, the reason for the deportations of these people to Sobibór remains mysterious.

The transports from Westerbork ran along the line Breslau (Wrocław) – Oppeln – Czestochowa – Kielce– Radom – Dębin – Lublino – Cholm (Chełm). Going south from Czestochowa, along the line Zawiercie – Szczakowa – Mysłowice, the Auschwitz camp is only some 100 km away – instead, the transports went east, another 400 km, to reach Sobibór. Schelvis himself then gives us a solid indication for the answer to this apparent riddle:⁹⁴¹

“Mirjam Penha-Blits was on the same train.^[942] She explained that the transport was apparently supposed to go to Auschwitz; after two days’ travelling in passenger wagons that is where it arrived. For unknown reasons it stood stationary there; nothing else happened. No one was allowed to leave the wagons. After a few hours the train departed, and two days later we arrived at Sobibór.”

In the summary of this account, supplied by the Dutch Red Cross, one can read:⁹⁴³

“Deported by train from Westerbork on 10 March 1943, arrival at Sobibór around 13 March 1943 (via Birkenau – without lay-over – to Sobibór).”

The train thus passed through the alleged extermination camp at Birkenau only to continue east for hundreds of kilometers – but why? The answer is found in a general memorandum dated 5 May 1943 and written by SS-*Gruppenführer* Wilhelm Harster, head of security police and SD in Holland:⁹⁴⁴

“1) General policy:

⁹³⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 14.

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 14f.

⁹⁴¹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 73.

⁹⁴² The train from The Hague which reached Sobibór on 13 March 1943.

⁹⁴³ Het Nederlandsche Roode Kruis, *op. cit.* (note 124), p. 16.

⁹⁴⁴ T-544.

The RFSS [i.e. Himmler] wishes that throughout this year as many Jews as possible are moved to the East.

2) *Forthcoming trains to the east:*

As a new Buna-plant is to be built at Auschwitz, the one in the west having been destroyed in air-raids, a maximum number of Jews from the west will be required primarily in the months of May and June. It was agreed to move the Jews already assembled for transport if possible during the first half of the month by combining several trains, i.e. that the Westerbork camp [in Holland] will be emptied rapidly. The aim is a figure of 8,000 during the month of May. Arrangement will be made by the Bds,^[945] Den Haag, in conjunction with the RSHA.

3) *The Hertogenbosch camp:*

As the RSHA requests another 15,000 Jews, the point must be reached as soon as possible when the detainees of the camp at Hertogenbosch [in Holland] can also be made operative."

In May of 1943 a total of 8,011 Dutch Jews were actually deported, but the respective transports were directed to Sobibór.⁹⁴⁶ The most logical explanation of this riddle, which is also in keeping with the documents, is that these convoys were part of the *Ostwanderung* referred to above. The able-bodied were kept at Auschwitz,⁹⁴⁷ with the remainder of the deportees moving on to Sobibór.

This, however, is also true for the two Jewish transports which left the camp at Drancy (in France) on 23 and 25 March 1943 (with 994 and 1,008 persons on board, respectively) and went directly to Sobibór instead of Auschwitz.⁹⁴⁸

Such a procedure would also explain the extremely low number of able-bodied detainees at Sobibór, which the witnesses mention in connection with the transports from the west, only a few dozen in each convoy. Schelvis relates in fact that some 700 Dutch Jews were moved to the Dorohuczka labor camp of the SS as soon as they came to Sobibór.⁹⁴⁹ He adds that on 15 June 1942 Dutch, German, and Slovak

⁹⁴⁵ Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD

⁹⁴⁶ In the month of June, there were 8,429 deportees, likewise moved to Sobibór. Overall 16,440 Jews were deported in May and June, among them 3,474 male and female children, which means that among the remaining 12,996 adults, the 8,000 able-bodied detainees requested by Auschwitz could be found.

⁹⁴⁷ In the case in question, the selected detainees were no doubt moved directly to the Mönowitz camp without being registered at Birkenau.

⁹⁴⁸ S. Klarsfeld, *op. cit.* (note 75), chronological table of the deportation trains.

⁹⁴⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 119.

Jews were working “on a drainage project” at the Ujazdów labor camp.⁹⁵⁰

Altogether 117 Jewish work camps of various categories were in operation in the district of Lublin between 1939 and 1944.⁹⁵¹

Table 5: Jewish Labor Camps in Lublin District 1939–1944

TYPE OF LABOR		NO. OF CAMPS
Military	border fortifications	9
	airports	6
Road Works	construction	18
	quarries	4
Soil Improvement	general	51
	agricultural	12
SS Enterprises		7
Railroads		5
Other		5

The camps located between Sobibór and Chełm were handling soil improvement tasks (drainage), as was the case for Luta (400 detainees), Osowa (400), Krychów (1,500), Ujazdów (400), Sawin (500), Sajczyce (600), Ruda (1,500), Nowosiółki (400), Dorohusk (300), in the same way as two camps in the west and southwest, Sosnovica (300) and Siedliszcze (2,000).⁹⁵²

Schelvis, however, reports also the testimony of an engineer from *Organisation Todt*, Otto Weissbecker, who accompanied a transport of 1,400 Jews from the Lida ghetto to Sobibór presumably on 10 September 1943. On his arrival at the camp he went to see Gomerski:⁹⁵³

“He said, I might as well send back half of them, as he needed only saddlers, shoemakers, sewers and tailors. [...] The Jews had to line up in two groups without luggage. Although I had been promised specialists, I received 630 workers without any experience, among them women. The children remained at Sobibór. [...] I was ordered to take the Jews at my disposal to Trawniki, where half of them, in fact, remained. The others I took back to Lublin into a camp that was located next to a [railway?] stop (Old Airport).”

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁹⁵¹ Edward Dziadosz, Józef Marszałek, “Więzienia i obozy w dystrykcie lubelskim w latach 1939-1944,” in: *Zeszyty Majdanka*, vol. III, 1969, p. 122.

⁹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 109-121.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 274f.

Dina Czapnik's story about the way "she was deported from Minsk to Sobibór in mid-September 1943 and then moved to Trawniki with about 225 specialists"⁹⁵⁴ is likewise in disagreement with the thesis of nearly total extermination of the deportees taken to Sobibór and lends credit to the hypothesis that the Polish Jews selected for work were far more numerous than mainstream historiography asserts.

9.4. Evacuations to the East: Höfle Telegram and Korherr Report

In 2001 Peter Witte and Stephen Tyas published the text of a German radio message dated 11 January 1943, which had been decoded by the British during the war.⁹⁵⁵ It is a telegram by SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Hermann Höfle addressed to SS-*Obersturmbannführer* Heim, chief of security police at Cracow, and to SS-*Obersturmbannführer* Eichmann of RSHA on the subject of "arrivals" of Jews in the camps of *Einsatz Reinhardt* up to 31 December 1942. The figures are as follows:

Lublin:	24,733
Bełżec:	434,508
Sobibór:	101,370
Treblinka:	713,555 (indicated by mistake to be 71355)
<hr/>	
Total:	1,274,166

The report also mentions a "fortnightly report *Einsatz Reinhardt*" for the period of 18-31 December 1942 which show the following deportations:

Lublin:	12,761
Bełżec:	0
Sobibór:	515
Treblinka:	10,335
<hr/>	
Total:	23,611.

The authors state that the total figure of the Höfle report is identical to the one which appears under item 4, section V ("The Evacuation of Jews") of the Korherr report of 28 April 1943, which we present here in the general context of the evacuations:⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁹⁵⁵ P. Witte, S. Tyas, *op. cit.* (note 18), pp. 469f.

⁹⁵⁶ NO-5194, pp. 9f.

“The evacuation, at least as far as the Reich territory is concerned, replaced the emigration of the Jews. It was prepared on a large scale after the prohibition of Jewish emigration in the autumn of 1941 and largely implemented in the total Reich territory in 1942. In the balance of the Jewish presence it appears as ‘migration.’

According to the figures of RSHA, the migrations were as follows up to 1 Jan. 1943:

<i>From the Altreich including Sudetenland:</i>	<i>100,516 Jews</i>
<i>from Ostmark</i>	<i>47,555 Jews</i>
<i>from the Protectorate</i>	<i>69,677 Jews</i>
<hr/>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>217,748 Jews</i>

These figures comprise also the Jews evacuated to the old-age ghetto at Theresienstadt.

All moves combined, the following figures apply to the Reich territory including the eastern territories, as well as the German sphere of power and influence in Europe for the period between October 1939 and 31 Dec. 1942:

- 1. Evacuation of Jews from Baden and Palatinate [regions] to France: 6,504 Jews*
 - 2. Evacuation of Jews from the Reich territory including the Protectorate and Bialystok district to the east: 170,642 Jews*
 - 3. Evacuation of Jews from the Reich territory and the Protectorate to Theresienstadt: 87,193 Jews*
 - 4. Transport of Jews from the Eastern provinces to the Russian East: 1,449,692 Jews*
 - Processed through the camps in the General Government area: 1,274,166 Jews*
 - Through the camps in the Warthegau: 145,302 Jews.*
 - 5. Evacuations of Jews from other countries, viz.:*
 - France (occupied before 10. Nov. 1942) 41,911 Jews*
 - Netherlands 38,571 Jews*
 - Belgium 16,886 Jews*
 - Norway 532 Jews*
 - Slovakia 56,691 Jews*
 - Croatia 4,927 Jews*
-
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Evacuation, total (incl. Theresienstadt and incl. special treatment)</i> | <i>1,873,549 Jews</i> |
| <i>without Theresienstadt</i> | <i>1,786,356 Jews</i> |

6. *According to information from RSHA, the evacuation of 633,300 Jews from the Russian territories including the former Baltic states since the beginning of the eastern campaign must be taken into account. Not included in the above figures are the detainees in the ghettos and the concentration camps.”*

Concerning item 4 Witte and Tyas write:⁹⁵⁷

“It should be noted that the seemingly harmless euphemism ‘passed through the camps in the General Gouvernement’ already carried a sinister meaning for insiders in 1942/43. The phrase derives from the common term ‘transit camp.’ For example Theresienstadt and Westerbork were officially termed transit camps, whence transportation to the East meant in fact dispatch to death. But there are other examples of transit camps that served exclusively as killing sites. The extermination camps Sobibór and Chelmno were also designated by this term. But the euphemism used by Himmler and Korherr was calculated to make outsiders believe that there really were transports ‘to the East.’”

This interpretation ranks with those of R. Hilberg and C. Browning examined above and is just as nonsensical: As the term transit camp appears in Himmler’s letter of 5 July 1943 on the specific subject of Sobibór and as the letter is labeled “top secret,” why should any *outsiders* be kept in the dark?⁹⁵⁸

Witte and Tyas then discuss the alleged “euphemisms” of the Korherr report:⁹⁵⁷

“To fully understand Höfle’s telegram we have to take into account Himmler’s criticism of the first, March 23, Korherr report. The Reichsführer-SS rejected several phrases in the sixteen-page paper and had Dr. Brandt, the head of his Personal Office, write Korherr on 14 April [recte: on 10 April] 1943:

The Reichsführer-SS has received your statistical report on the ‘Final Solution of the European Jewish Problem.’ He does not wish the words ‘special treatment of Jews’ to be used at all. On page 9, point 4, the text must read as follows:

‘Transportation of Jews from Eastern Provinces to the Russian East: Number of those passed through the camps in the General

⁹⁵⁷ P. Witte, S. Tyas, *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 477.

⁹⁵⁸ All members of the SS who had access to this “geheime Reichssache” knew the truth and did not need any euphemisms.

Gouvernement, through the camps in Warthegau...’ A different formulation must not appear.^[959]

[...] *Korherr’s original wording of page 9 point 4 to which Himmler objected is not fully known. Only the corrected version is extant. Korherr must have been too explicit, leaving little doubt that he meant the killing; otherwise Himmler’s objections to the widely familiar term Sonderbehandlung in a ‘State Secret’ document could not be explained. Korherr changed page 9 of the report as requested. When he sent the corrected version back to Himmler’s office on 28 April, it apparently escaped the Reichsführer’s notice that the objectionable term Sonderbehandlung remained on page 10.”*

The supposition proffered by Witte and Tyas does not make sense: If Korherr, on p. 9 item 4 of his report, had really been “too explicit” in his hint at an alleged killing of the Jews, Himmler would have ordered him to modify this wording; instead, he ordered him not to use the words “special treatment of Jews,” which means that in connection with the letter of 10 April 1943 mentioned above the expression “special treatment of Jews” did in fact appear on p. 9 item 4 of the report. This is confirmed by the sum total which appears at the end of item 5 of Korherr’s report where it is said:⁹⁶⁰

*“Evacuation, total (incl. Theresienstadt
and incl. special treatment) 1,873,549 Jews”*

This figure actually includes the evacuations listed under items 1 (6,504), 2 (170,642), 3 (Theresienstadt: 87,193), 4 (special treatment: 1,449,692) and 5 (159,518), which we will discuss in greater detail later. The “special treatment” cannot refer to the 5 items mentioned except for item 3, because in that case the text would simply say “Evacuations total (incl. Theresienstadt),” as all other “evacuations” would be part of “special treatment.”

We have here a blatant incongruence of the mainstream interpretation. In a study of the Korherr report, which the authors quote,⁹⁶¹ the Jewish French historian Georges Wellers asserted:⁹⁶²

“Moreover, thanks to Korherr’s mistake, we now have a confirmation – if one was needed – coming from the top, that the ‘Sonderbehandlung der Juden’ is a term so unmentionable that it has to be

⁹⁵⁹ NO-5196.

⁹⁶⁰ NO-5197, p. 10.

⁹⁶¹ P. Witte, S. Tyas, *op. cit.* (note 18), note 51 on p. 485.

⁹⁶² G. Wellers, *La Solution Finale et la Mythomanie Néo-Nazie*, Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, Paris, 1979, p. 42.

hidden by the even more innocuous term 'evacuation' even in an internal SS document. By the same token, we now know that the column 'evacuations' of Korherr's report includes the 'Sonderbehandlung.'"

On the subject of the significance of this word, Wellers explains elsewhere:⁹⁶³

"The coded term Sonderbehandlung (special treatment) and its numerous derivatives have a very precise meaning: they stand for execution, killing, murder. It does not indicate the type of execution – hanging, shooting, use of poison gas – nor the kind of people involved, but it applies massively, systematically in all of its shapes, to the case of the Jews."

In short, if we follow Wellers, "evacuation" would be synonymous with "special treatment," which in turn is synonymous with killing.

Actually, as we have shown above, "special treatment" stands only for "transporting." It follows that according to Wellers' hypothesis only 1,449,692 out of a total of 2,506,849 Jews deported by the Germans had undergone a "special treatment," i.e. only those "passed through" the camps of the General Government and the Warthegau: 1,274,166 allegedly killed in the extermination camps at Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, and Majdanek (for the General Government) and 145,301 at Chełmno (for Warthegau). Therefore, none of the Jews deported to Auschwitz before 31 December 1942 would have received "special treatment," i.e. would have been killed, none of the 633,000 Jews evacuated to the Russian territories, none of the 170,642 evacuated to the East, and not the 6,505 evacuated to France or the 87,193 Jews who went to the Theresienstadt ghetto.

Witte and Tyas go on to say:⁹⁶⁴

"The authors have not been able to determine whether non-Polish Jews from Germany, Austria, the Protectorate, and Slovakia were included in Höfle's and Korherr's figure. Korherr's statistics are apparently too ambiguous to determine this. On the one hand, his number for Jews deported to Theresienstadt is more than 21,000 smaller than the actual number. This evident reduction in numbers suggests that at least some of the deportees from Theresienstadt to the Lublin district and Warsaw ghetto are probably included in the

⁹⁶³ G. Wellers, *Les chambres à gaz ont existé. Des documents, des témoignages, des chiffres*, Gallimard, Paris, 1981, p. 36.

⁹⁶⁴ P. Witte, S. Tyas, *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 478.

Höfle-Korherr number of 1,274,166 victims. On the other hand, his number of Jews deported from Slovakia comes near to the sum total of Jews actually deported. At the end of 1942 at least 30,000 to 35,000 of these Slovak Jews had already been murdered in the Reinhardt camps. It follows that they cannot be included in the Höfle-Korherr number; otherwise it would be statistical double-counting. Further research is required to resolve this contradiction.”

To elucidate this point, we must establish the exact distribution of evacuations dealt with in the Korherr report. Up to 1st January 1943 it shows the following numbers of Jews having been evacuated from the Reich:

From the <i>Altreich</i> and <i>Sudetenland</i> :	100,516
From <i>Ostmark</i> :	47,555
From the Protectorate:	69,748
Total:	217,748 ⁹⁶⁵

Altogether 87,193 Jews were evacuated to the Theresienstadt ghetto from the following territories:

From the <i>Altreich</i> :	33,249
From <i>Ostmark</i> :	14,222
From the Protectorate:	39,722
Total:	87,193 ⁹⁶⁶

Between 16 October and 4 November 1941, the Łódź/Litzmannstadt ghetto received:

From the <i>Altreich</i> :	9,431
From <i>Ostmark</i> :	5,002
From the Protectorate (Prague):	5,000
Total:	19,433 ⁹⁶⁷

The transports into the Lublin district carried:

From the <i>Altreich</i> (13 March – 15 July 1942):	9,194
From <i>Ostmark</i> (9 April – 14 June 1942):	6,000
From the Protectorate (11 March – 13 June 1942):	14,000
Total:	29,195

Finally, 6,615 Jews were deported to Nisko and other areas in the General Government from *Ostmark* (20 October 1939 – 12 March 1941).⁹⁶⁸ Thus we obtain the figures of Table 6.

⁹⁶⁵ NO-5194, p. 9.

⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹⁶⁷ Aufstellung der Neueingesiedelten. WAPL, PSZ 19, p. 195.

⁹⁶⁸ Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, Oldenbourg Verlag, Munich 1991, p. 76.

Table 6: Jews Deported by Origin and Destiny

	<i>ALTREICH</i>	<i>OSTMARK</i>	PROTEKTORAT	TOTAL
Evacuations	100,516	47,555	69,677	217,748
France	6,504	0	0	6,504
Theresienstadt	33,249	14,222	39,722	87,193
Litzmannstadt	9,431	5,002	5,000	19,433
District of Lublin	9,194	12,615 ⁹⁶⁹	14,001	35,810
Eastern territories	42,138	15,716	10,954	68,808

Thus, out of the 217,748 evacuees, 35,810 went to the district of Lublin and 68,808 to the eastern territories. The latter group arrived in 68 transports at Minsk, Riga, Kaunas, Raasiku, Maly Trostinec, and Baranoviči between 8 November 1941 and 28 November 1942.⁶³⁰

In the abridged Korherr report of 19 April 1943⁹⁷⁰ the data concerning the evacuation have a somewhat different distribution. In Table 7 we compare them with the report of 28 April.

Table 7: Comparison of Korherr's Figures

	Korherr Report:	19 April	28 April
Origin			
From <i>Altreich</i> (with <i>Sudetenland</i>)		100,516	
From <i>Ostmark</i>		47,555	
From Protectorate		69,677	
From <i>Ostgebiete</i> (with Bialystok)		222,117	
From General Government (with Lemberg)		1,274,166	
From Baden and Palatinate to France			6,504
From Reich territory incl. Protectorate and District of Bialystok to the east			170,742
From Reich territory and Protectorate to Theresienstadt			87,193
From Eastern Provinces to Russia			1,449,692
Total		1,714,031	1,714,031

The figure 170,742 includes the 35,810 deportees to the Lublin district, the 68,808 evacuees who went directly to the eastern territories (Minsk, Riga, Kaunas, Raasiku, Maly Trostinec, Baranoviči) we have already discussed, another (170,642 – 35,810 – 68,808 – 19,433 =) 46,591 Jews from Bialystok district, 8,500 of whom were deported to

⁹⁶⁹ 6,000 + 6,615 deported to Nisko.

⁹⁷⁰ NO-5193.

Auschwitz according to Franciszek Piper,⁹⁷¹ with the remaining 38,091 deported to the East without transiting through the “extermination camps” at Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Majdanek, or Chełmno.

The figure 87,193 includes 33,249 deportees from *Altreich*, 14,222 from *Ostmark*, and 39,722 from Protectorate.

The figure 1,449,692 includes 1,274,166 “transited through the camps in the General Government,” 145,301 “transited through the Warthegau camps,” and (1,449,692 – 1,274,166 – 145,301 =) 30,225 deported “to the Russian East” without passing through anyone of these camps.

From the above two reports we can compile the numbers of Table 8 for the evacuees.

Table 8: Summary of Deportation Origins and Destinations

ORIGIN	NUMBER	DESTINATION
<i>Altreich</i>	100,516	6,504: France 9,194: District of Lublin 9,431: Litzmannstadt 42,138: Ostgebiete 33,249: Theresienstadt
Ostmark	47,555	12,615: District of Lublin 5,002: Litzmannstadt 15,716: Ostgebiete 14,222: Theresienstadt
Protectorate	69,677	14,001: District of Lublin 5,000: Litzmannstadt 10,954: Ostgebiete 39,722: Theresienstadt
Bialystok District	46,591	8,500: Auschwitz 38,091: to the East
Warthegau*	145,301	
Unknown	30,225	
General Government with Lemberg/Lvov	1,274,166	
Total:	1,714,031	
*11,233 from <i>Altreich</i> , <i>Ostmark</i> and Protectorate coming from ghetto of Łódź/Litzmannstadt		

⁹⁷¹ F. Piper, *op. cit.* (note 378), p. 183. Deportations from Białystok and Grodno. However, the transport from Grodno dated “11.1942” (1,000 deportees) is not shown in D. Czech’s *Kalendarium* (*op. cit.*, note 825). On the way to Auschwitz, these transports had to pass through Malkinia, very close to Treblinka, (line Grodno-Białystok- Malkinia-Warsaw-Cracow-Auschwitz) or through Siedlce, about 80 km south of Treblinka (line Białystok-Czeremcha-Siedlce-Dęblin-Radom-Cracow-Auschwitz) or even through Sobibór (line Białystok-Czeremka-Brest/Litowsk-Tomaszowka/Włodawa-Lublin-Cracow-Auschwitz).

The 35,810⁹⁷² Jews who were moved into the Lublin district were part of a group of 69,804 who had been moved there by means of 72 transports between 11 March and 15 July 1942,⁹⁷³ viz.:

From <i>Altreich</i> , <i>Ostmark</i> , Protectorate (not counting the 6,615 Jews deported to Nisko):	29,195
from Slovakia:	39,889
<hr/>	
Total:	69,084

There is no doubt that at least part of these western Jews were later evacuated to the east. For example, the report by the county chief of Lublin dated 5 October 1942 to the governor of the Lublin district, mentioned above, stated that out of the 8,009 Jews who had been resettled into the county territory, 3,692 had already been transferred elsewhere.

But there is no doubt either that these transferred persons were counted twice in Korherr's report. In fact, 23,500 Jews from the *Altreich* and from *Ostmark* who had been deported to the Lublin district⁹⁷⁴ were sent to Sobibór according to Schelvis.

Out of the 57,752 Jews deported from Slovakia according to Vlasta Kladivová⁹⁷⁵ (Korherr has 56,691), 18,746 went to Auschwitz and the remaining 39,006 into the district of Lublin, a figure practically identical to the one mentioned previously (38,889) given by the Polish historian Janina Kiełboń.⁹⁷¹ As we have seen, Schelvis writes that 28,284 went to Sobibór.

As far as the 69,677 Jews from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia are concerned, 18,004 of the 39,722 who had been evacuated to Theresienstadt were deported to Treblinka between 19 September and 22 October 1942⁹⁷⁶ and 10,000 of the 14,001 moved into the Lublin district were sent to Sobibór according to Schelvis.

From the 19,433 Jews of the *Altreich*, *Ostmark*, and the Protectorate who initially went to the Łódź ghetto 11,233 were transferred in March, August, and September 1942,⁹⁷⁷ hence they are already included in the 145,301 Jews transited through the Warthegau camps.

⁹⁷² Except for the 6,651 Jews already deported from *Ostmark* to Nisko and other places.

⁹⁷³ C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 224ff. (list of the transports).

⁹⁷⁴ But the total number of the deportees came to 21,809.

⁹⁷⁵ Vlasta Kladivová, "Osudy židovských transportů ze Slovenska v Osvětimi," in: *Tragédia slovenských židov*, Banská Bystrica, 1992, pp. 148f.

⁹⁷⁶ Miroslav Kárný (ed.), *Terezínská Pamětní Kniha (Guide to the Terezín Memorial Book)*, Terezínská Iniciativa, Melantrich, Prague 1995, vol. I, p. 67.

⁹⁷⁷ WAPL, "Stand der Transporte," PSZ, 1203.

This is to say that some 90,000 Jews have been counted twice, first as evacuated, later on as transited.

The Korherr report of 28 April counts 1,274,031 Jews as having been “passed through the camps in the General Gouvenment,” an expression which leaves open the possibility of non-Polish Jews also having passed through such camps; the report of 19 April instead assigns this number explicitly to “General Gouvenment (incl. Lemberg).” Here it is in fact said that there were 2,000,000 Jews in this territory when it was taken over by the Germans; 427,920 are counted as losses due to emigration and excess of mortality over births as well as 1,274,166 due to evacuation, which means that as of 21 December 1942 only 297,914 remained in the area. The Höfle telegram, however, refers to the total number of Jews who transited through the camps of *Aktion Reinhardt*, not only to the fraction of Polish Jews.

Let us consider item 5 of the report dated 28 April 1943. The Jews listed there were taken to Auschwitz, except for the 39,006 (37,945 for Korherr) sent to the Lublin district. Table 9 lists, next to Korherr’s data, the deportations to Auschwitz according to F. Piper,⁹⁷⁸ the registrations at Auschwitz given in Danuta Czech’s *Kalendarium*,⁸²⁵ as well as those selected (i.e. taken off the train) at Kosel before arriving at Auschwitz.⁹⁷⁹

Table 9: Jews deported to and registered at Auschwitz

Author: Country	Korherr: Deported	Piper: Deported	Czech: Registered	Klarsfeld: Selected at Kosel	Total registered/ selected
France	41,911	41,951	17,561	3,056	20,617
Netherlands	38,571	38,578	11,180	3,540	14,720
Belgium	16,886	16,621	4,489	1,373	5,862
Norway	532	532	186	0	186
Slovakia	56,691	18,746 ⁹⁷⁵	12,787	0	12,787
Croatia	4,927	5,000	587	0	587
Total	159,518	121,428	46,790	7,969	54,759

These Jews, although they were moved into the alleged extermination camp at Auschwitz, do not show up in the category which was originally labeled “special treatment of Jews.” We will see later on how

⁹⁷⁸ F. Piper, *op. cit.* (note 378), pp. 183-198.

⁹⁷⁹ Data taken from: S. Klarsfeld, *op. cit.* (note 75); Serge Klarsfeld, Maxime Steinberg, *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de Belgique*, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York 1994; Het Nederlandsche Rode Kruis, *Auschwitz. Deel II: De deportatietransporten van 15 juli 1942 tot en met 24 august 1942*. 's Gravenhage 1948.

these inconsistencies can be explained and what conclusions can be drawn from them.

There is another important question on which Witte and Tyas have foundered without being able to provide a proper answer and which shows instead that their interpretation of the Korherr report and consequently of the Höfle telegram is unfounded. They write:⁹⁸⁰

“Now we have a fourth camp – L – obviously the Concentration Camp Lublin, commonly known as Majdanek, listed by Höfle ahead of the other three camps. Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka were extermination camps, so it is reasonable to assume that the numbers given for ‘L’ are numbers of Jews murdered also: it would not make sense to give the numbers killed for three camps and make Lublin an exception.”

Here we have again an instance of false reasoning “by analogy,” like the one for C. Browning we have dealt with above. Here, however, we may also reverse the reasoning: given that Majdanek was not an extermination camp,⁶⁸⁶ it would not have made sense to lump it together with three such camps, and hence Belżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka were not extermination camps.

Witte and Tyas examine the 24,733 Jews mentioned by Höfle which they claim were assassinated in the Majdanek gas chambers:⁹⁸¹

“Globocnik must have been responsible for sending these unknown Jewish victims to the gas chambers of Majdanek, because, according Höfle’s telegram, he counted them as Einsatz Reinhardt victims.”

They speak of “unknown Jewish victims,” because for some strange reason they are trying – in vain – to identify these alleged victims before even wondering, whether the 24,733 Jews in question were in fact gassed according to the official history of the Lublin-Majdanek camp. In this connection they enounce two hypotheses: the alleged victims stemmed “from unknown transports from the Bialystok General District, or, more likely, from small forced labor camps.”⁹⁸²

We must remember, though, that 12,761 out of these 24,733 Jews are said to have been gassed in the two weeks between 18 and 31 December 1942. According to Tatiana Berenstein and Artur Eisenbach, however, in November/December of 1942 only 5,000 Jews arrived at

⁹⁸⁰ P. Witte, S. Tyas, *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 471.

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 472.

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 471f.

Majdanek from Poland, 4,000 of whom are said to have been killed immediately (“zgłodzono od razu”).⁹⁸³ This will be discussed below. Zofia Leszczyńska, the author of the most detailed analysis of the transports of detainees to Majdanek, asserts that between July and December of 1942 15,000 Jewish detainees arrived at the camp in 13 transports and mentions the more important ones:

- 15 August: a large transport from Warsaw;
- 2 September: 1,000 Jews from the ghetto at Lublin;
- September: Jews from Bełżyc and Piask;
- September: 111 Hitlerjugend youths of Jewish descent;
- October: 1,700 Jewish women from Bełżec(!);
- November: Jews from Izbica.⁹⁸⁴

For the second half of December there is only one Jewish transport mentioned in the corresponding list for the 19th of the month, but neither the number of persons nor their origin are reported.⁹⁸⁵

Further on Witte and Tyas take up the problem of the gassings:⁹⁸⁶

“Lublin, however, was a regular concentration camp; from October 1942, three gas chambers were used to murder prisoners after selections of those deemed unable to work. The number culled during selections in Majdanek from October onwards is known: their sum is much lower than the figures given in Höfle’s telegram. As the document indicates, the murder of Jews transported to Lublin without being registered at the concentration camp became an integral part of Einsatz Reinhardt from an unspecified date onward. Further research, one hopes, will hopefully permit more precise information.”

Hence, the number of those allegedly gassed between October and December of 1942 is said to be known and to be “much lower than the figures given in Höfle’s telegram.” But then, how could those 12,761 Jews have been gassed? The authors leave the answer to this contradiction to future researchers! Their wording is misleading, because it makes the reader believe that at least part of the 12,761 Jews in question were indeed gassed. Leaving aside the fact that there were no homicidal gas chambers at Majdanek, as has been shown in a study concerning this camp,⁶⁸⁶ Witte and Tyas’ pronouncements on the number of alle-

⁹⁸³ T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, “Żydzi w obozie koncentracyjnym Majdanek (1941-1944),” in: *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, n. 58, 1966, p. 14.

⁹⁸⁴ Z. Leszczyńska, *op. cit.* (note 886), pp. 188f.

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁹⁸⁶ P. Witte, S. Tyas, *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 473.

gedly gassed prisoners are a bit risky, to say the least. As their sources they refer to a “historical expert opinion by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Scheffler in the Düsseldorf ‘Majdanek Trial,’ p. 173 (unpublished)” and to the book by “Józef Marszałek, *Majdanek. Konzentrationslager Lublin* (Warszawa: Interpress, 1984).”⁹⁸⁷

We know nothing of professor Scheffler’s “historical expert opinion,” but as far as the alleged gassings at Majdanek are concerned, the verdict of the Düsseldorf trial did not even take it into consideration. No figures are indicated in the section dealing with gas chambers and gassings. Regarding this topic the tribunal declared:⁹⁸⁸

“The evidence considered has not yielded precise results concerning the total number of persons killed in the KL Majdanek by gassings, shootings, or some other violent death, through epidemics or lack of food, due to ill-treatment or other privations, or any other causes. The court, however, regards as certain that there were at least 200,000 victims, among them 60,000 Jews.” (Emph. added)

The latter figures are so “certain” that, of late, Tomasz Kranz, historian at the Majdanek Museum, has brought them down to 78,000,⁹⁸⁹ a number which includes the 18,000 fictitious dead of the “*Erntefest*”⁹⁹⁰ (harvest festival) as well as all of the 24,733 deportees mentioned in Höfle’s telegram.

Among its sources (nearly all of them testimonies) the Düsseldorf court also cites “the professional opinion of the expert for contemporary history Prof. Dr. Scheffler.”⁹⁹¹

Józef Marszałek, too, limits himself to general assertions without producing any figures:⁹⁹²

“After the gas chambers had been opened, gassing became the chief form of immediate extermination of persons unfit for manual work: the sick, the disabled, elderly people, and children. [...]

Selections of the new arrivals commenced in the autumn of 1942. These were initially Jews brought from the closed ghettos and la-

⁹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, note 25 on p. 482.

⁹⁸⁸ Landgericht Düsseldorf, *op. cit.* (note 509), pp. 89f.

⁹⁸⁹ Tomasz Kranz, *Zur Erfassung der Häftlingssterblichkeit im Konzentrationslager Lublin*, Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, Lublin 2007, p. 62.

⁹⁹⁰ J. Graf, C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 686), Chapter IX: “Operation ‘Harvest Festival,’” pp. 209-230.

⁹⁹¹ Landgericht Düsseldorf, *op. cit.* (note 509), p. 96.

⁹⁹² J. Marszałek, *Majdanek. The Concentration Camp in Lublin*, Interpress, Warsaw 1986, p. 136.

bour camps in the Lublin district, and later French and Dutch Jews deported to Majdanek in March 1943.”

Yet at the same time he stresses that “in the period when the gas chambers were operating, from September 1942 till September 1943, no cases of mass execution by shooting are known,”⁹⁹³ which means that the 12,761 victims of *Einsatz Reinhardt* must have been gassed. But not even in the most important publication on Majdanek is there the slightest trace of these gassings.⁹⁹⁴

Hence, the 12,761 Jewish victims of *Einsatz Reinhardt* would have been gassed and burned and/or buried at Majdanek within 14 days without any witness having mentioned this and without leaving any documentary or material traces: How can anyone honestly believe such a story? It is also obvious that T. Berenstein and A. Eisenbach’s assertion concerning the immediate killing of 4,000 Jews at Majdanek in November/December of 1942 has no foundation; hence one cannot even claim that at least part of the above 12,761 Jews were gassed.

Witte and Tyas have also skirted the absurdity of what we have been told about *Einsatz Reinhardt* – the transportation of the 12,761 victims to Majdanek – in the last two weeks of December of 1942. Their alleged extermination would necessarily have taken place in full view of all concerned, as compared to a mere 515 sent to Sobibór with its super-secret camp III. If the former Jews had had to be killed, why would this not have been done quietly at Sobibór? Just as strange is the fact that during the said two weeks more Jews were sent to Majdanek than to Treblinka: 12,761 as against 10,335. This would mean that the SS, in spite of the availability of two camps for total extermination, would have gassed these 12,761 deportees in a minor camp which had received only 2% of all deportees up to 21 December 1942 (24,733 out of 1,274,166).

The most reasonable explanation would thus be that these 12,761 Jews transited through Majdanek before moving on, alive, to the East. This obviously goes for all of the 24,733 Jews mentioned in the Höfle message.

This conclusion also flows out of the Korherr report. Under paragraph VIII “the Jews in the concentration camps” it says:⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁹⁹⁴ Czesław Rajca, “Eksterminacja bezpośrednia,” in: Tadeusz Mencil (ed.), *Majdanek 1941-1944*, Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, Lublin 1991.

⁹⁹⁵ NO-5194, p. 11.

“Not included are the Jews housed in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Lublin in connection with the evacuation operation.”

(Emph. added)

This statement refers to Jews who had been deported to the two camps without having been counted, but who were alive. An analysis of the data furnished by SS statistics confirms this. For the Auschwitz camp the data specify a total of 5,849 male and female Jews admitted (*eingeliefert*), 1 released (*entlassen*) and 4,436 deceased.⁹⁹⁶

However and as mentioned above, item 5 of the Korherr report lists 159,518 Jews deported only from France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Slovakia, and Croatia, 121,428 of whom were sent to Auschwitz. 54,759 of these were registered at the camp or selected at Kosel, which means that they could not have been among those assassinated. These Jews were part of the “*Evakuierungsaktion*” (evacuation campaign) which was the same as the “*Ostwanderung*” mentioned above.

For the camp at Lublin-Majdanek, Korherr presents the following data:

Table 10: Korherr’s Figures for Majdanek

	Arrivals	Releases	Deaths	Present on 31 Dec. 1942
Lublin/Men	23,409	4,509	14,217	4,683
Lublin/Women	2,849	59	131	2,659
Total	26,258	4,568	14,348	7,342

We know from Höfle’s telegram that the evacuation campaign had affected 24,733 Jews up to 31 December 1942, and Korherr tells us that at that time at least part of them were *housed*, alive, at Majdanek. They can thus not all be considered to have been assassinated, as Witte and Tyas will have it. All the more so, as there were 4,568 Jews who were released from Majdanek – a strange “extermination camp” indeed!

Tatiana Berenstein and A. Eisenbach assert that 51,700 Jews were brought to Majdanek in 1942, where 25,200 of them were registered (26,258 according to Korherr) and 26,500 allegedly murdered on the spot.⁹⁹⁷ This figure is very close to Höfle’s (24,733). It is much more logical for the allegedly gassed persons to have been transited through the Majdanek camp without having been registered, just like the more than 100,000 Jews who passed through the transit section (*Durch-*

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹⁹⁷ T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, *op. cit.* (note 983), p. 14.

gangslager) of the Birkenau camp between May and October of 1944 without registration.⁹⁹⁸

Schelvis tells us what happened to the transport of 1,000 Jews from Prague which left on 10 June 1942, i.e. after Sobibór had gone into operation:⁹⁹⁹

“The train stopped briefly at Lublin, where some of the men aged between 13 and 50 were selected for work at the camp, then continued to the Chełm area, where the deportees were put to work on various drainage projects, some at Ujazdów, near Hansk”

He then claims, however, that “the majority” of the deportees were killed at Sobibór in October of 1942 “after an outbreak of typhoid,” whereas “a small group ended up at nearby Krychów, until they too were gassed at Sobibór.” Two Jews escaped during the removal from Ujazdów to Sobibór, one of them 12 years old, who would tell the story of this transport.

Hence, male deportees between 13 and 50 years of age were selected at Majdanek and remained there; younger and older deportees (i.e. those unfit for work) and all women,¹⁰⁰⁰ regardless of age, were sent on to Ujazdów in Chełm county. As we have seen above, the local county chief asked on 13 May 1942 “to send along the able-bodied Jews as well with the next transport,” which obviously means that at this point in time only the unfit had arrived.

Fritz Reuter’s memo of 17 March 1942 cited above states that, if it is not possible to “separate Jews fit for work from those unfit already on departure,” this was to be done at Lublin. We have also seen that some local authorities protested because “food, which is added to the transport trains,” and “the baggage of the evacuees” often remained in Lublin.

If this was normal practice, the unfit detainees who arrived at Majdanek were removed and eventually went to Sobibór or Bełżec; the able-bodied were selected for work and were *housed* at the camp without registration or moved to other camps.

⁹⁹⁸ Andrzej Strzelecki, *Endphase des KL Auschwitz*, Verlag Staatliches Museum in Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 1995, p. 352.

⁹⁹⁹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 209. Ujazdów is located only some kilometers from Sobibór, as noted by Schelvis in the German edition of his study (*op. cit.*, note 70).

¹⁰⁰⁰ At Majdanek, a women’s sector was opened on 1st October 1942 in Feld V. This is the reason why the Korherr report has only such a small number for the female Jews in this camp.

The minutes of a meeting “on the subject of the evacuation of the Jews of the General Government and the removal of the Romanian Jews to the General Government,” held in Berlin on 26 and 28 September 1942, create yet more problems for Wittes and Tyas’ theses. The document states:¹⁰⁰¹

“A discussion has been proposed on:

- 1. The evacuation of 600 000 Jews of the General Government.*
- 2. The deportation of 200 000 Jews from Romania into the General Government.*

Concerning item 1.: Urgent transports, proposed by the chief of security police and by the SD, viz.:

- 2 trains per day from Warsaw to Treblinka,*
- 1 train per day from Radom district to Treblinka,*
- 1 train per day from Cracow district to Bełżec,*
- 1 train per day from Lemberg district to Bełżec*

would be implemented by means of 22 G-Wagen [= freight cars] which have already been provided for this purpose by the directorate of German railways at Cracow to the extent that this can be done. [...] After termination of the repair work on the line Lublin-Chelm, probably from 1st November 1942, the other urgent transports can be carried out as well, viz.:

- 1 train per day from Radom district to Sobibór,*
 - 1 train per day from Lublin North district to Bełżec and*
 - 1 train per day from Lublin Center district to Sobibór*
- to the extent possible and provided the required number of G-Wagen are available.”*

Thus, after 1st November 1942, i.e. after the alleged homicidal gas chambers at Majdanek are said to have gone into operation (October 1942), the alleged extermination of the Jews in the Lublin district was implemented in its entirety at Bełżec and Sobibór. If the evacuation of the Jews had stood for their extermination and if Majdanek had been part of *Aktion Reinhardt*, this camp would have been a natural destination for at least part of the Jews in the district of Lublin, yet they were sent to Bełżec and Sobibór instead. This, as we shall see below, renders even more questionable the fact that the Höfle message should have an arrival (*Zugang*) of 12,761 Jews for Majdanek within the last two weeks of December of 1942.

¹⁰⁰¹ Heiner Lichtenstein, *Mit Reichsbahn in den Tod*. Bund-Verlag, Collogne 1985, p. 62.

On the other hand, if Majdanek had been part of the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps, why would its homicidal gas chambers¹⁰⁰² have used Zyklon B rather than the exhaust gases from an internal combustion engine? In this context it is absurd to believe that, according to mainstream Holocaust historiography, Belżec initially experimented with Zyklon B for its killings, but abandoned it later. In the reasoning of the verdict in the trial against Josef Oberhauser in Munich it is in fact said:¹⁰⁰³

“Over the first few weeks Zyklon-B-gas was used as the killing medium, later on, for reasons of economy, exhaust gas from a Diesel engine.”

And for what purpose would Jews have been sent from Majdanek to Sobibór, i.e. from one alleged extermination camp to another? Schelvis tells us:¹⁰⁰⁴

“In the autumn of 1942 some 1,600 Jews arrived in their striped suits from Lublin/Majdanek; they were to be murdered the same day.”

According to the witness Joseph Duniec, the transport which left France on 25 March 1943 with 1,008 deportees on board was rerouted “to Majdanek and on to Sobibór, as Majdanek could not accommodate them.”¹⁰⁰⁵

In stark contrast to this we have seen above in Fritz Reuter’s memo of 17 March 1942, that “Hstuf. Höfle is about to build a large camp in which the Jews fit for work can be classified according to their professions and delegated as necessary” (see p. 296).

These Jews were certainly excluded from any evacuation beyond the confines of the Government General and were in all likelihood employed in the network of camps in the Lublin district.

The deportations envisaged at the meeting of 26 and 28 September 1942 were later implemented only partially, because in the section “The Jews in the ghettos” Korherr established the estimate for “the Jews primarily housed in the remaining ghettos of the General Government” as of 31 December 1942 as given in Table 11.¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰² Actually, they were disinfestation chambers as has been documented abundantly in the book already mentioned, *op. cit.* (note 686), chapter VI.2: “Design, Construction and Purpose of the Gas Chambers,” pp. 128-138.

¹⁰⁰³ A. Rückerl (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 36), p. 133.

¹⁰⁰⁴ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 109.

¹⁰⁰⁵ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 233.

¹⁰⁰⁶ NO-5194, p. 11.

Table 11: Korherr's Ghetto Jews end of 1942

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF JEWS
Cracow	37,000
Radom	29,400
Lublin	20,000 (estimated)
Warsaw	50,000
Lemberg	161,514
Total, General Government	297,914

If there were about 600,000 Jews in the General Government yet to be evacuated at the end of September 1942 and if some 297,900 still remained at the end of December, it follows that between October and December roughly ($600,000 - 297,000 =$) 302,100 and up to the end of September ($1,274,000 - 302,100 =$) 971,900 had been evacuated.

But if 12,761 Jews had been gassed at Majdanek within two weeks, the remainder of 20,000 in the entire district could have been gassed in little more than three weeks.

The completion of the first disinfection facilities at Majdanek, officially labeled “2 delousing barracks with baths,” but which mainstream historiography claims to have housed the alleged homicidal gas chambers, was announced on 22 October 1942.¹⁰⁰⁷ At that time they were no doubt already in operation. If what mainstream historians claim were true, they would have had an extermination capacity of at least ($12,761 \div 2 =$) about 6,380 persons per week. But even if the 24,733 Jews mentioned in the Höfle report had been taken to the camp after that date, the alleged gas chambers would have been able to operate for nine weeks, up to the end of December, and could have gassed ($6,380 \times 9 =$) about 57,400 persons, i.e. not only the 24,700 Jews who had arrived at the camp in 1942, but also the 20,000 remaining in the Lublin district at the end of the year, plus another 12,700.

The case of the district of Lemberg is stranger still. According to the Katzmann report a total of 254,989 Jews¹⁰⁰⁸ had been “removed and/or resettled” as of 10 November 1942, presumably to Bełżec. On 31 December there were still 161,514 in the district, but in spite of this the Bełżec camp was shut down on 11 December.¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰⁷ Letter from Zentralbauleitung at Lublin to SS-Wirtschaftler Gruppe C-Bauwesen with Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer im Generalgouvernement dated 22 October 1942. WAPL, ZBL, 8, p.22.

¹⁰⁰⁸ IMT, vol. XXXVII, p. 398.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Robert O’Neil, “Bełżec: Prototype for the Final Solution. Hitler’s answer to the Jewish

The conclusion we may draw from the analysis of the Korherr report is that the “special treatment of Jews” stood only for the deportation of western Jews (those from the *Altreich* with *Sudetenland*, *Ostmark* and Protectorate) and of the eastern Jews (those from *Ostgebiete* with Bialystok and General Government with Lemberg) to the East, i.e. beyond the confines of the Greater German Reich. The Jews deported within these confines, in particular the roughly (121,428+8,500=) 130,000 Jews sent to Auschwitz, were not subjected to “special treatment.”¹⁰¹⁰ Neither were the 69,084 Jews deported from the *Altreich*, *Ostmark*, Protectorate, and Slovakia to Nisko and the Lublin district *formally* subjected to it. We say *formally*, because they acquired the status of “specially treated” (*sonderbehandelt*) gradually as they were transited from the Polish ghettos through the various camps.¹⁰¹¹ This is also true for the 18,004 Jews deported to Theresienstadt and then from that ghetto to Treblinka. In practice there was a double accounting system: one for the Jews evacuated from individual countries, and one for the Jews who were transited through the above camps and who were counted independently of their origin.

Within the scope of *Aktion Reinhardt* the count of the western Jews was, in fact, based on the transport lists of which SS-*Obersturmführer* Helmut Pohl in Lublin received two copies in his quality as Head of Resettlement at Lublin.¹⁰¹² Here the western Jews in transit were counted again as arrivals (*Zugang*) or as transited (*durchgeschleust*) to Majdanek or the other camps.

Question,” chapter 10: “Bełżec’s dead: burning of the corpses,” in: www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Bełżec1/beł000.html.

¹⁰¹⁰ At Auschwitz, however, the term “Sonderbehandlung” had an analogous meaning but on a smaller scale; it designated the Jews who, as part of *Ostwanderung*, were transited through the camp on their way to the *Durchgangsgghettos* in the eastern territories.

¹⁰¹¹ The 12,021 Jews sent to Sobibór were part of those evacuated and not of those specially treated (*sonderbehandelt*), therefore they were not quickly transited (*durchgeschleust*) either through this camp, but were probably spread over the whole area, as is suggested by the transport of 9 May 1942 mentioned above for work on *Wasserwirtschaft* and *Entwässerung*. Cf. also chapter 7.

¹⁰¹² J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 70), p. 237.

9.5. Registration of Deportees in the *Aktion Reinhardt* Camps

The eastern Jews were sent to Sobibór and the other two camps without transport lists, and yet the figures of the Höfle message are extremely precise, down to single units. How can we explain this fact? The Museum at Konin provides us with a significant indication concerning this question, as far as the Chełmno camp is concerned:¹⁰¹³

“South of the grave a round aluminum badge with No. 1280 and a hole for hanging the badge was found. According to the accounts of the employed workers, in the period between 1962-1964 when the cemetery was being tidied, 6 similar badges were found near the ‘włocławska’ grave. They were later handed over to the Town Council in Dąbie, which further handed them over to a newly-established Museum in Chełmno. Interesting is the fact that the badges have the same diameter, while the numbers on most of them form a sequence: 3276, 3277, 3378, 3280, 3281, 2521. In the Chełmno estate grounds, near the granary, a smaller badge with number 1104 was found. It is unknown which group of prisoners had to wear such badges. Significantly greater quantities (over 300) of such numbered badges made of concrete were found during archeological research in Bełżec; their function, however, has not been explained there either. Perhaps an answer to this question lies in the organization of labor camps for Jews.”

Andrzej Kola has, in fact, published three photographs showing various cement disks with an imprinted number in the middle and a hole near the upper edge.¹⁰¹⁴ Photograph 117, which also show a metric ruler, allows us to say that the diameter of these disks was about 5 centimeters, and the six disks visible show the following sequence of numbers: 12262, 12816, 12707, 12285, 12099, and 12420. But photograph 115 shows a disk with a number over 66000 (possibly 66977, the lower portion of the disk is missing). Kola tells us that these disks were found in excavation 11e/98, i.e. in an area of 31.5 sqm of Building D.¹⁰¹⁵ What was the function of such disks?

What comes to mind is a “token” in receipt of clothes that were to be disinfested; cement disks could have been attached to the clothes on

¹⁰¹³ “Chełmno,” in: www.muzeum.com.pl/en/Chełmno.htm.

¹⁰¹⁴ A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 299), photographs 115-117 on pp. 83f.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

their passage through the disinfection chamber, even if steam was being used there, so that the goods could be identified as they came out. The detainees would be given a token as a receipt with a corresponding number, as some witnesses have stated. On this point Louis de Jong declared:¹⁰¹⁶

“The luggage [of the deportees] had to be left in the luggage barracks; in exchange the arrivals were generally handed numbered metal tags.”

From the “Holocaust” point of view, which de Jong shares, the “metal tags” could be explained as being fake “receipts” handed out to deceive the victims, but this would not apply to the cement disks as well. And even if they, too, were fake “receipts,” why would one have produced over 66,000 of them? Such a high number makes sense only if the disks somehow related to people. Were they dead or alive? From the perspective of mainstream historiography it would have been useless to number the corpses by means of cement tags. If anyone had wanted to count the victims, a simple list would have been enough. The only instance where a similar system of identification is described is the case of the “*Schamotte-Marken*,” disks made of refractory material and carrying a number that would be placed into the coffin to enable the identification of the ashes after incineration in civilian crematoria. Initially this method was also in use at Auschwitz.

In a letter dated 3 June 1940 the firm I.A. Topf & Söhne of Erfurt offered to SS-*Neubauleitung* of Auschwitz “500 pcs. refractory tags numbered consecutively 1 – 500” for the sum of 65 Reichsmark.¹⁰¹⁷ But in the camps of *Aktion Reinhardt* such a procedure would not have made any sense in the eyes of “Holocaust” historians, both because most of those camps didn’t have crematories to begin with (Belzec, Sobibór, Treblinka) and because it would have been absolutely foolish, if not close to impossible, to later on try to identify the remains of corpses in mass graves or incinerated in open pits.

Hence, the only explanation we are left with is that the tags concerned persons that were still alive. They were no doubt a means of identification based on the ID numbers as were used by all concentration camps. At Mauthausen, for example, a detainees would be given cloth tags with numbers, to be sewn on their uniforms, plus “a metal tag

¹⁰¹⁶ L. de Jong, *op. cit.* (note 244), pp. 24f.

¹⁰¹⁷ RGVA, 502-1-327, pp. 226-227.

with punched numbers”¹⁰¹⁸ to be worn like a military ID tag. The cement disks were therefore the ID numbers of the deportees passing through Belżec and the other *Aktion Reinhardt* camps and, in all likelihood, tied in with a file system. On account of their precision, the numbers cited in Höfle’s message speak in favor of such a procedure.

This does not stand in the way of the explanation we have proposed above: If each deportee going through an *Aktion Reinhardt* camp did indeed receive an ID number, then we can also understand why the cement disks accompanying the clothes into the disinfection chambers show such high figures – over 60,000.

9.6. Prof. Kulischer on the Expulsion of Jews

But where did the Jews who had been evacuated from Greater Germany actually end up? This question was answered at the time of Korherr’s report by Professor Eugene M. Kulischer, member of the International Labour Office at Montreal, Canada, in a book entitled *The displacement of population in Europe*¹⁰¹⁹ published in 1943. For his work the author used the assistance of 24 institutions – Jewish, American, Belgian, Czechoslovak, Finnish, French, Greek, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Turkish, Yugoslav, as well as the International Red Cross.

Each one of these institutions had a dense network of information channels in the various European countries, which meant that Kulischer had at his disposal the best sources of information relative to his project.

The book has a section entitled “The Expulsion and Deportation of Jews,” which testifies to the author’s profound knowledge of the National Socialist policy towards the Jews. It was a detailed statistical presentation, which constitutes the best comment on Korherr’s report. We will quote the major passages:¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹⁸ H. Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslager Mauthausen*. Dokumentation, Österreichische Lagergemeinschaft Mauthausen, Vienna 1980, p.45. We wish to add that metal tags were used in the German army for the identification of soldiers. They were worn with a neck-band and had two sections, each bearing the same ID numbers etc.

When a soldier was killed, one half was broken off and sent to the competent military authorities, the other half would be buried along with the body.

¹⁰¹⁹ E.M. Kulischer, *The Displacement of Population in Europe*, International Labour Office, Montreal 1943.

¹⁰²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-99.

“Until the outbreak of war, emigration was ostensibly encouraged; Chancellor Hitler said that he would willingly give a thousand mark note to every Jew who would leave. In practice, however, less humane and more effective methods of promoting Jewish emigration were adopted. Life in Germany was made impossible for Jews in order to induce them to leave, and when they left they had to abandon almost all their property. At the same time, a moral obligation to receive the Jews was imposed on other nations.

With the extension of German conquests, the aims of Germany’s Jewish policy were widened to embrace the ‘liberation of all Europe from the Jewish yoke.’ Not only the deportation and segregation of the Jews, but their extermination^[1021] also was an openly proclaimed objective of German policy. But the main factor which changed the character of the anti-Jewish measures lay in the changed conditions themselves. With the progress of the war, emigration possibilities became more and more restricted. On the other hand, Germany was now able to send Jews to non-German territories under German control, so that as stimulated emigration declined, deportation increased. The Jews were either expelled to ‘purge’^[1022] a given country or city of its Jewish element, or they were concentrated in specific regions, cities or parties of cities to ‘purge’ the rest of the locality.^[1023]

It must be emphasised that the wholesale and recurrent removal of Jews is at the same time an effective method of securing their economic extermination. No regard is had to their prospects of earning a livelihood; on the contrary, the transfer is carried out in such a way as to make it impossible for the Jew to reorganize his economic life. His relations not only with the Gentiles but also with his own people are severed; and if he succeeds in establishing new connections they are again broken by a further move. Because of the various methods used to secure the segregation and concentration of Jews, they are uprooted over and over and prevented from striking

¹⁰²¹ In NS lingo “Vernichtung” or “Ausrottung.” The significance of the term will be explained below; author’s comment.

¹⁰²² In NS lingo: to carry out a “Bereinigung” or to render “judenfrei;” author’s comment.

¹⁰²³ This was actually the usual procedure. For example, the counties (Kreise) of Biala Podlaska and Radzin in the Lublin district jointly selected Międzyrzec “als jüdisches Wohngebiet”; as this community was part of Radzin county, Biala Podlaska county ended up “judenfrei.” *Lemberger Zeitung*, no 246, 17 October 1942, p. 5, “Die erste judenfreie Stadt im GG;” author’s comment.

fresh roots anywhere. First they are sent to the General Gouvernement. Then the town in which they were settled is 'purged.' In their new place of residence a ghetto is established. But even the ghetto does not give the Jews the security of a permanent residence, and they are again removed further east.

In many cases the immediate motive for expulsion or deportation was to make room for Germans. The first victims of expulsion on a grand scale were the Jews of the incorporated western Polish provinces, who were expelled along with the Polish inhabitants, in both cases to make room for the 'repatriated' Germans. Later, Jews were deported because, according to the official statements, they owned apartments suitable for alien refugees from cities subject to air-raids.^[1024]

At the same, however, another factor, perceptible since the end of 1940 and now assuming growing importance, is strongly operating in a contrary direction – namely, the needs of the German war economy. As a result, Germany's Jewish policy may be described as a compromise between extermination of the Jews and their utilisation in the war economy.

Early in 1941 a semi-official German article described with satisfaction the exclusion of the Jews working population from economic life. Already in 1938 the Jews had been 'released' from productive work on a wide scale. 'But,' the article continues, 'in consequence of the incipient strain on labour resources and of the necessity of harnessing all the available supply of manpower, a trend in the opposite direction soon became noticeable.' At first the Jews were used for unskilled jobs, but later the 'more efficient' among them were given suitable higher grade work. Jews were not, of course, reinstated in the professional activities from which they had been expelled. They were conscripted as forced labour, at first to 'release German workers for urgent construction work for the Reich,' but later also for direct employment in industries manufacturing army supplies. In a number of cases the Jews were not removed because they were needed as workers; in others, they were deliberately sent to places where they could be put to work. To some

¹⁰²⁴ The "Zusammenhang zwischen dem Wohnraumangel im Reich und den Judendeportationen" (relationship between housing shortage in the Reich and Jewish deportations), also in connection with "Wohnungen für Bombengeschädigte" (housing for victims of bombing), has been illustrated by Peter Witte, *op. cit.* (note 595), pp. 43-46.

extent, therefore, the character of deportation and even its direction were influenced by labour requirements.

Generally speaking, no other group of people has been subjected to compulsory removal from their homes on so great a scale. This forced transfer had taken the following forms:

- *Mere expulsion from a territory, the Jews being taken to the frontier of the territory they are to leave. This was the procedure adopted in regard of the Jews from Alsace and south-west Germany, who were taken to the French frontier,^[1025] and also at times in regard to the Jews of the Incorporated Provinces, who were taken to the General Government and there left to their fate.*
- *Mere expulsion from a city without any assignment or destination, as in the case of the Jews expelled from Cracow.*
- *Expulsion from an area which is to be 'purged of Jews' and deportation to a special region (e.g. the Lublin reservation), city or town, or part of such region, city or town. Since 1940 this has been the usual practice adopted in removing Jews from various German-controlled territories and deporting them to the General Government, or, latterly, to the occupied area of the Soviet Union.*
- *Deportation within the limits of the same territory; thus the Jews of the General Government are deported to other cities and towns in the same territory, in which ghettos are set up.*
- *Removal from one part of a city to another, by means of the setting up of ghettos or segregation in specified quarters.*
- *Removal of Jews conscripted for forced labour to special Jewish labour camps.*

It is worth noting that compulsory transfer is tending more and more to become the sole form of Jewish migration. Thus a Decree of 11 December 1939 prohibited the Jews in the General Government from changing their residence without a special permit, and similar measures have been adopted throughout the whole of German-dominated Europe.

¹⁰²⁵ The Jews deported to France from Baden and Pfalz (Palatinate) in Germany, estimated by Kulischer at 9,000. Korherr has 6,504.

Earlier Forms of Expulsion and Deportation.

There were various isolated instances of expulsion even before the outbreak of war. Thus, in November 1938, between 15,000 and 16,000 Polish Jews living in Germany were seized, packed into freight cars and taken to the Polish border, many of them to the frontier town of Zbonszyn.

In this case the German authorities could claim that they were foreigners.^[1026] But this was not so in another case which attracted much attention because of the exceptional attendant circumstances. After the annexation of Austria, 400 Jewish families living in the province of Burgenland were expelled. Some escaped to Vienna and other to Czechoslovakia, but a group of about 70, who were packed on an old freighter, remained aboard for more than four months in a no-man's land between Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

After the outbreak of the war, the expulsion of Jews began at first in a somewhat unorganized fashion, its object being to place the Jews outside the limits of German rule. In September 1939 Polish Jews fled in masses from the invading armies, pushing further and further east in an attempt to escape to Soviet-occupied territory. In this they succeeded, owing to the attitude of the Soviet authorities during the first two months of the Soviet occupation of Poland. The Germans often tried to encourage this flight; many cases were reported of Jews literally driven at the point of guns and bayonets to the demarcation line and into the frontier rivers. Many were openly admitted by the Soviet authorities; many others managed to cross the border secretly. The number of Jews who fled into the eastern Polish provinces (both before they were occupied by the Soviet Union and after) is estimated by the Institute of Jewish Affairs at 200,000 at least.

At the end of November, the Soviet Government closed the frontier. In the meantime the Germans had begun to carry out another plan for the elimination of the Jews, that of deportation to the so-called Lublin 'reservation.' This idea of a special Jewish region, to which Jews from all German-ruled countries would be sent, is attributed to the National Socialist theorist Alfred Rosenberg, who pro-

¹⁰²⁶ As described by Reitlinger who speaks of 17,000 persons expelled in his German book *Die Endlösung. Hitlers Versuch der Ausrottung der Juden Europas 1939-1945*, Colloquium Verlag, Berlin 1992, pp. 10f. In the 1968 English edition, *op. cit.* (note 560), p. 9, he speaks of "15,000 Jews with Polish passports."

posed in a lecture on 7 February 1939, developing his scheme for a reservation in contrast with the Zionist idea of a Jewish State. After the occupation of Poland the Lublin district, which according to the census of 1931 had a population of 2,465,000 and numbered 314,000 Jewish inhabitants, was set apart for the execution of this plan. Before the middle of 1940, 650,000 Jews were to be settled there. Great publicity was given to the scheme and a press campaign was launched to convince the German people that ‘a solution of the Jewish problem in Europe’ had finally been found. Deportation started in the second half of October 1939, and during the first months large numbers of Jews, especially from Vienna and the Protectorate and from the Old Reich, were sent to the reservation.^[1027] The deportees were given a few hours to leave. They were permitted to take with them up to 50 kilograms (110 lbs.) of luggage and a sum of money equivalent to between \$40 and \$120. No preparations were made to receive them, and the reservation soon became a hotbed of epidemics which were bound to spread to the German army too. The idea of a special reservation for Jews was accordingly given up for the time being, after some 30,000 Jews had already been sent there.”

This is followed by a detailed statistical analysis of the individual countries, headed “Countries and Territories of Expulsion and Deportation,” the results of which are summarized in the final tables set out below.

Kulischer then devotes a major section to the destination of the deported Jews, entitled “Territories of Destination and Methods of Confinement,” which brings to mind the territorial final solution envisioned by Heydrich:¹⁰²⁸

“The number of the Jews deported up to December 1942 from all European countries except Poland, i.e. from Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, may be estimated on the basis of the figures given above at about 650,000. Furthermore, 50,000 to 60,000 Jews from Bohemia-Moravia have been confined in a concentration camp within the country itself.”^[1029]

¹⁰²⁷ This was the Nisko plan. As already stated, the deportations from the “Jewish reservation” would begin on 20 October 1939; author’s comment.

¹⁰²⁸ E.M. Kulischer, *op. cit.* (note 1019), pp. 107f.

¹⁰²⁹ The ghetto of Theresienstadt; author’s comment.

Some of the Jews from Belgium were sent to a neighbouring part of Western Europe for forced labour, but generally speaking the tendency has been to remove the Jews to the east. Many Western European Jews were reported to have been sent to the mines of Silesia. The great majority were sent to the General Government and, in ever growing numbers, to the eastern area, that is, to the territories which had been under Soviet rule since September 1939 and to the other occupied areas of the Soviet Union.

During the early period, deportation meant removal to the General Government, but since 1940 the deported Jews have tended more and more to be sent exclusively to ghettos and labour camps.

Ghettos.

The first ghettos were set up in Łódź in the winter of 1939-1940. Since spring of 1940 they have been introduced in a number of cities and towns in the Warthegau and the General Government. In the summer of 1940 the Germans segregated the district of Warsaw inhabited mainly by Jews under the pretext that it was a breeding-place of contagious diseases, and in the autumn of the same year a ghetto was formally established. All Jews living outside its confines were ordered to move into the ghetto and all Poles living inside to leave the ghetto area. Many Jews were also brought there from abroad. In the first half of 1942 about 500,000 persons were crowded into the Warsaw ghetto.

The growth of the ghettos is illustrated by the following estimates. In November 1941 the Institute of Jewish Affairs estimated the number of Jews confined in the ghettos 'at no less than 1,000,000.' In December 1941 figures released by Polish Jewish circles in London showed that about 1,300,000 Jews had been herded into eleven ghettos in various parts of the country. For the early summer of 1942 the Institute of Jewish Affairs gave the number as 1,500,000. On 28 October and 10 November 1942 the Secretary of State for Security in the General Government issued regulations about Jewish ghettos in the five districts of the General Government (Warsaw, Lublin, Cracow, Radom and Galicia), providing that from 30 November 1942 all General Government Jews must live in confined areas. Jews employed in armament and other war industries and living in closed camps are exempted. The confined areas are of two kinds: ghettos inside the larger towns, and purely Jewish

towns, cleared of their non-Jewish population. In the whole of the General Gouvennement there are 13 ghettos, the largest being the Warsaw ghetto, and 42 Jewish towns.^[1030]

Since the invasion of the U.S.S.R., ghettos have been established in Western Byelorussia, Western Ukraine and the Baltic States, and also in occupied Russia.

The primary purpose of the ghettos and special Jewish towns is the segregation of the local Jewish population. This consists of the former inhabitants of the area which was turned into a ghetto or a Jewish town, the inhabitants of the same town who are removed to the ghetto, and Jews removed from other localities of the same country. For the second and third categories segregation in the ghetto meant compulsory removal, and for the third category forced migration also. The number of persons affected by this internal forced migration may have numbered many hundreds of thousands in the General Gouvennement alone.

The ghettos of the General Gouvennement or of the Eastern Territories are also the usual destination of the Jews deported from the west by the German authorities or by authorities of other countries allied to Germany." (Emph. added)

The section which follows treats the *Forced Labour Camps*. After discussing age limits, working hours and types of work, Kulischer writes:¹⁰³¹

"Up to the summer of 1941, at least 85 Jewish labor camps were known to exist in the General Gouvennement. Of the 35 camps the position of which was known, two-thirds were located on the eastern frontier.

Forced labour for Jews expanded rapidly, having developed from a subsidiary measure into an essential feature of the treatment of Jews. In April 1942, the *Gazeta Żydowska* reported that 25,000 Jews were engaged in compulsory construction work in the Warsaw district, and on the basis of other data given by the same journal, the

¹⁰³⁰ It was the "Polizeiverordnung über die Bildung von Judenwohnbezirken in den Distrikten Warschau und Lublin" and the "Polizeiverordnung über die Bildung von Judenwohnbezirken in den Distrikten Warschau und Lublin" issued by SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger in his quality of Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer in the General Government and of State secretary for security on 28 October and 10 November 1942, respectively. The first set up 12 Judenwohnbezirke, the second 41. Cf. the list in C. Matogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 266f.

¹⁰³¹ E.M. Kulischer, *op. cit.* (note 1019), pp. 107-111.

Institute of Jewish Affairs estimated the total number of Jews in forced labour camps in Poland in the fall of 1941 at 100,000. During 1942, forced labour became the common fate of the Jewish in Poland and in German-occupied territory. The period for which Jews fit to work are liable for forced labour is no longer limited. Their removal to east was largely motivated by the wish to make use of them as forced labour, and as Germany's need of manpower grew, deportation for adults of working age was tantamount to assignment to forced labour.

In contrast with the other inhabitants of German-occupied countries, Jews are not sent to work in the Reich, because Jewish immigration would run counter to the policy of making Germany 'free of Jews.' The needs of the war economy compelled German authorities to deviate from this rule to some extent, and indeed some exceptions have been reported. But, generally speaking, deportation to the east is for the Jews the equivalent of the recruitment for work in the Reich to which the rest of the population of German-controlled Europe is subject, and their removal further and further eastwards is doubtless connected with the need for supplying the army's requirements near the front.

For the Polish ghettos are not the last stage in the forced eastward migration of the Jewish people. On 20 November 1941, the Governor General, Hans Frank, broadcast the information that the Polish Jews would ultimately be transferred further east. Since the summer of 1942 the ghettos and labour camps in the German-occupied Eastern Territories have become the destination of deportees both from Poland and from western and central Europe; in particular, a new large-scale transfer from the Warsaw ghetto has been reported. Many of the deportees have been sent to the labour camps on the Russian front; others to work in the marshes of Pinsk, or to the ghettos of the Baltic countries, Byelorussia and Ukraine. It is hardly possible to distinguish how far the changes in the Jewish population of the General Government are due to deportation and how far they are attributable to 'ordinary' mortality and extermination. Moreover, the number of Jews remaining in the General Government is in any case uncertain."

Finally, Kulischer sets out a statistical summary for the countries of the Jewish deportations, arranged in a way similar to Korherr's report:¹⁰³²

"Total number of Uprooted Jews.

On the basis of the data presented above, the numbers of Jews expelled and deported from Germany and countries under German occupation or control since the outbreak of war in September 1939 may be estimated as follows:

– Germany and Austria	180,000
– France (excluding Alsace-Lorraine)	70,000
– Alsace-Lorraine	22,000
– Belgium	50,000
– Netherlands	80,000
– Luxemburg	2,000
– Norway	1,000
– Slovakia	70,000
– Subcarpathia	20,000
– Incorporated Polish Provinces	400,000
– Old Romania, Transylvania	
– Bukovina and Bessarabia	185,000
<hr/>	
Total	1,080,000.

In addition, some tens of thousands have been deported from the Bulgarian controlled parts of Yugoslavia and Greece. This brings the total number of expelled and deported Jews up to some 1,100,000. Of this total, 9,000 Jews from Baden and Palatinate, 22,000 from Alsace-Lorraine, some of the 70,000 from Slovakia, some of the 2,000 from Luxemburg, and the first 300,000 from the Incorporated Provinces of Poland, were expelled; the others have been deported.

Only a few thousand of these deportees were sent to western Europe; all the others went to the General Government, and further east to the German and Romanian-occupied territories of the Soviet Union. It should be noted that some of the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine and Germany may possibly appear twice in the calculation, since the 70,000 Jews deported from France to the east probably include a number of those expelled at an earlier date from Alsace-Lorraine

¹⁰³² *Ibid.*, pp. 111-113.

and south-western Germany. In any case, a total of 1,050,000 would make allowance for any double counting.

In order to estimate the total number of uprooted Jews, however, this figure must be increased by the addition of those who were evacuated, fled or emigrated. According to the data given above, these figures are as follows:

– Refugees from Poland to and through Romania, Hungary and Lithuania	50,000
– Refugees from the Incorporated Provinces to the General Government	60,000
– Refugees from German-occupied Poland to Soviet-occupied territory	200,000
– Refugees from Bessarabia	100,000
– Evacuees from the Baltic States	30,000
– Evacuees from Western Byelorussia and Western Ukraine	500,000
– Evacuees from the pre-1939 territory of Soviet Union	1,100,000
– Emigrants to overseas and neutral European countries	160,000
<hr/>	
Total	2,200,000

This number again includes some refugees who have been counted twice, among the following groups: (1) 50,000 refugees from Poland who went to European countries; many of these emigrated later, while others were afterwards deported; (2) 200,000 Jews who went from German-occupied Poland to Soviet-occupied territory in 1939; some of them were afterwards removed to the east, and therefore figure in the total of 500,000 Jews removed from Western Byelorussia and the Western Ukraine. To avoid the possibility of double counting, half of both these groups may be deducted, thus giving a total of 2,100,000.

Summing up both sets of figures, i.e. figures relating to Jews deported and expelled and to those otherwise displaced, a total of 3,150,000 is obtained.

This figure does not include. (a) the hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews deported eastward from the General Government, and (b) hundreds of thousands of Jews transferred by compulsion within the limits of the same country or territory to be segregated in ghettos and special Jewish towns, in particular in the General Government and in the German-occupied Eastern Territories. Assuming that only

a third of the resident Jews who remained in these territories were affected by (a) and (b), nearly 1,000,000 Jews must have been compulsorily removed eastward or from one town to another. Accordingly, the number of Jews compulsorily removed from their homes would be about 2,100,000, or in any case over 2,000,000, and the total of all uprooted Jews 4,150,000, or in any case over 4,000,000."

In a table entitled "Movements of non-German Populations" Kulischer summarizes the results of his study. We reproduce in Table 12 the numbers concerning the Jews.¹⁰³³

FROM	#	To
Germany (incl. Austria)	170,000	General Government
Germany (Baden and Palatinate)	9,000	Unoccupied France
Slovakia	60,000	Eastern Galicia
Slovakia	10,000	Hungary
German occupied Poland	3,000	Hungary
	1,600	Romania
	15,000	Baltic States
	200,000	W. Byelorussia and W. Ukraine
Incorporated Provinces	460,000	General Government
Western Byelorussia and Ukraine (frontiers of '40)	500,000	Eastern U.S.S.R.: (113,000 beyond to Iran, India and Africa)
Lithuania	10,000	Eastern U.S.S.R.
Latvia	15,000	Eastern U.S.S.R.
Estonia	5,000	Eastern U.S.S.R.
Norway	1,000	General Government
Netherlands	80,000	German-occupied Soviet Territory
Belgium	1,000	Northern France
	50,000	German-occupied Poland
Alsace-Lorraine	22,000	Unoccupied France
Other parts of France	70,000	Incorporated Polish Provinces and General Government
Old Romania, Transylvania and Dobruja	80,000	Bessarabia and North Bukovina
Bessarabia and North Bukovina	185,000	Romanian-annexed Soviet territory (Transnistria)
Bessarabia and North Bukovina	100,000	Eastern U.S.S.R.

Kulischer appears to be well informed about the National Socialist policy toward the Jews and about the deportations, even though his sta-

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 114f.

tistical data at times diverge considerably from those of Korherr.¹⁰³⁴ We must, however, remember that he was also well informed about the destination of the deportees. What he writes is in any case confirmed by contemporary documents.¹⁰³⁵

A number of high-level meetings of German officials in late 1941 dealing with the deportations from the Protectorate to the East and the difficulties encountered at the receiving end have been discussed in detail in chapter 7.

The *Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz* (Israelite weekly for Switzerland) reported the following on 16 October 1942:¹⁰³⁶

“For some time there has been a trend toward dissolution of the ghettos in Poland. That was the case with Lublin, then it was Warsaw’s turn. It is not known how far the plan has been carried out already. The former residents of the ghetto are going farther to the east into the occupied Russian territory; Jews from Germany were brought into the ghetto to partly take their place. [...] an eye witness, who was in Riga a short time ago and was able to flee, reports that 32,000 Jews are still in the ghetto of Riga now. Since the occupation, thousands of Jews have been killed. In the morning, the Jews are said to have to line up outside the city for forced labor. They are said to not receive salaries but only permissions for food supply. Compared to the rest of the populace, they are said to receive only severely short rations: they are said to receive only 100 g of bread daily and 2 kg of potatoes per week. Recently, transports of Jews from Belgium and other nations of western Europe were noted in Riga, which, however, immediately traveled on again toward unknown destinations. In the ghetto of Riga, so it is said, there were pogroms on the 30th of November and the 8th of December, to which a great many Jews fell victim.”

What was the fate of these deportees? We will address this question in the next chapter.

¹⁰³⁴ However, the total number of missing registered Jews is equal to Korherr’s figure: 4 million. NO-5194, p. 15.

¹⁰³⁵ For a more detailed treatment of this topic we refer the reader to chapter VIII.6: “Final Destination of Jews Deported to the East,” C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), pp. 233-273.

¹⁰³⁶ *Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz*, No. 42, 16. Oktober 1942, p. 10f.

10. The Fate of the Deportees

10.1. The Fate of Jews Deported Directly to the East

As mentioned above, Reichsbahn documents show that at least 66,210 Jews from the *Altreich*, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia were moved directly into the occupied Eastern Territories between November of 1941 and November of 1942.¹⁰³⁷ We can retrace the fate of a certain portion of these people. In his book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, Arthur Butz addresses the case of the German Jewess Jeannette Wolff, a socialist who was taken to Riga in 1942 and who described her experiences after the war.¹⁰³⁸ A collective volume contains the reports of seven German Jews, five women and two men, who were likewise transported to Riga in 1941 and/or 1942 and who were later moved from there to the Stutthof concentration camp east of Danzig.¹⁰³⁹

It is of interest in this context to note that, out of the 48,609 Jews who arrived at Stutthof between 29 June and 27 October 1944, more than half of them – 25,043 persons – came from the Baltic states (10,458 from Kaunas in Lithuania and 14,585 from Riga in Latvia). Among them we find hundreds of children, labeled “Knabe” (boy) or “Mädchen” (girl) on the deportation lists. Some of the lists for the transports from Kaunas have survived. We can glean from the corresponding names and other details that the above designations applied to persons born in 1929 or later, i.e. to children not older than 15 at the time. The transport list of 12 July 1944 contains 3,098 names, among them those of 80 boys and girls. The nearly complete list of 19 July has 88 out of 1,095 names which belong to this category. The total number

¹⁰³⁷ Cf. end of chapter 7, p. 216.

¹⁰³⁸ Arthur Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, Theses and Dissertation Press, Chicago 2003, p. 268. Jeannette Wolff’s account was published in the collective volume *We Survived*, edited by Eric E. Sstatement in Hagen, Yale University Press, New Haven 1949.

¹⁰³⁹ Hermann Kuhn, *Stutthof. Ein Konzentrationslager vor den Toren Danzigs*, Edition Temmen, Bremen 1990.

of children must have been far higher because 483 boys and 416 girls were moved on from Stutthof to Auschwitz on 25 July 1944.¹⁰⁴⁰

The deportation of German Jews into the eastern territories is mentioned in the official “Holocaust” literature as well. Gerald Reitlinger writes:¹⁰⁴¹

“A larger number of deportees were taken to Riga. [...] *Jeanette Wolff* [...] mentions eleven transports, including the exceptionally large one by which she, along with 1,350 others, was taken from Dortmund to Riga on 25 January 1942. [...] In response to this [i.e. to an objection by the Wehrmacht which appreciated the Jews as workers and secretarial staff] the *Russia Plan* was reactivated with some 25,000 Jews from the Greater Reich being taken to Riga, Estonia and the Minsk area.”

The relations between the Wehrmacht and the German Jews working for them seem to have been very good, because on 20 August 1943 they prompted SS-*Obergruppenführer* Richard Hildebrand, Head of the SS-*Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (SS central office for race and settlement) to prohibit any contacts between Jews and German army personnel beyond the strict minimum necessary for the tasks at hand. He also banned any assignment of Jews to office work or private purposes.¹⁰⁴²

These facts are in disagreement with the official version of history, for we must remember the following:

As mentioned previously, the deportations began in November of 1941.¹⁰⁴³ According to mainstream Holocaust literature, a first “extermination camp” went into service at Chełmno (Kulmhof) in December of 1941. As such a camp cannot be set up overnight, the construction of Chełmno must have been in the planning stage for months. If it actually was an extermination camp, then we would have to believe that a plan for the physical liquidation of the Jews already existed at such an early stage. (We remind our readers of the fact that Chełmno, just like the later camps set up at Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka, is said to have been a pure annihilation camp in which even the able-bodied Jews were gassed

¹⁰⁴⁰ Jürgen Graf, Carlo Mattogno, *Concentration Camp Stutthof and its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2003, p. 8, 93f.

¹⁰⁴¹ Gerald Reitlinger, *Die Endlösung*, Colloquium Verlag, Berlin 1983, pp. 100ff.; Reitlinger’s 1968 Engl. edition, *op. cit.* (note 560), pp. 92ff, mentions only “a few thousand Reichs Jews.”

¹⁰⁴² NO-1624, summarized by A. Butz, *op. cit.* (note 1038), pp. 267f.

¹⁰⁴³ Cf. chapters 8.1. and 9.

immediately on arrival, unregistered, except for a handful of “working Jews” whose lives were spared for the moment.)

Why then were German, Austrian, and Czech Jews not sent to Chełmno to be gassed, but moved into the eastern territories starting in November of 1941? Reitlinger confirms that from July and August of 1942 onwards some 25,000 German Jews were moved to Latvia, Estonia, and White Ruthenia, yet not to be gassed but to be used as workers or office staff. If we follow the mainstream Holocaust literature, five “extermination camps” were in operation by July of 1942, with a sixth being added the following month. Why did these Jews bypass these five or six “extermination camps” and go into White Russia or the Baltic states?

Such elementary questions have never been addressed by the court historians, and it is easy to see why this should be so.

10.2. Number of Jews Moved to the East

10.2.1. Via the *Aktion Reinhardt* Camps

Before addressing the question of the fate of the Jews moved into the eastern areas indirectly, i.e. via transit camps, we shall try to determine their total number. For this purpose we shall assume that this population is roughly identical to the persons who “were gassed in the extermination camps without being registered” according to the orthodox literature. We shall not attempt to subdivide this population according to nationalities and shall limit ourselves to a distinction based on only two categories: the Polish and the non-Polish Jews.

Let us first consider the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps. The most important document by far which we can consult for this purpose is the *Korherr Report*, according to which 1,274,166 Jews had transited “through the camps in the General Government” by the end of 1942.¹⁰⁴⁴ As far as the figures for 1943 are concerned, the absence of any documents forces us to make an approximation for the number of persons having transited through the four camps. The general situation regarding the individual camps can be described as follows for the year 1943:

- Majdanek: No documents refer to any transfers to the eastern areas originating from Majdanek in 1943.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Cf. chapter 9.

- Belżec: This camp was closed down in November of 1942, hence no deportations can have originated there in 1943.
- Sobibór: Jules Schelvis speaks of 68,795 Jews arriving at this camp in 1943. Even though his figure may be slightly on the high side,¹⁰⁴⁵ we shall use it in compensation of any possible transfers from Majdanek and round it to 69,000 for the sake of simplicity.
- Treblinka: In the third edition (2003) of his standard work, Hilberg sets the total number of Jews taken to Treblinka at “up to 800,000.”¹⁰⁴⁶ Using Hilberg’s maximum as a working hypothesis and deducting from it the 713,555 deportees mentioned in the Höfle radio message¹⁰⁴⁴ as having been taken to Treblinka up to the end of 1942, we obtain a maximum figure of 86,445, rounded to 86,000 persons.

On this basis we can estimate the number of Jews moved from the camps of *Aktion Reinhardt* to the eastern areas in 1943 as being (69,000 + 86,000 =) 155,000 persons at the utmost. Together with the deportees of 1942, i.e. 1,274,166 or roughly 1,274,000 persons, we obtain a combined maximum of about 1,429,000 persons.

Now, what was the share of non-Polish deportees within this group? On the subject of Jews deported to the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps from Western and Southern Europe, the only precise indications concern Sobibór and Treblinka:

- Sobibór: If we follow Jules Schelvis, out of the total of about 170,165 (rounded to 170,200) deportees moved to this camp, some 54,550 came from Poland and another 13,700 from *Ostland*.¹⁰⁴⁵ Hence, if Schelvis’ figures are correct, about (170,200 > 54,500 > 13,700 =) 102,000 Jews from other countries must have reached Sobibór.
- Treblinka: According to the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* the following non-Polish Jews arrived at the Treblinka camp: 7,000 from Slovakia, 8,000 from Theresienstadt, 4,000 from Greece, 2,800 from Saloniki (which for unknown reasons is treated separately from the remainder of Greece), as well as 7,000 from Macedonia,¹⁰⁴⁷ yielding a total of 28,800 persons. As the documented number of Jews from Theresienstadt was not 8,000, but 18,004 (rounded off to 18,000 per-

¹⁰⁴⁵ Cf. chapter 2.3.19.

¹⁰⁴⁶ R. Hilberg, *op. cit.* (note 33), p. 1320.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust, op. cit.* (note 15), vol. I, p. 1430.

sons),¹⁰⁴⁸ we must raise the grand total by 10,000 to 38,000 altogether.

- Belżec and Majdanek: On the subject of Belżec, the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* has this to say:¹⁰⁴⁹

“Some of the transports to Belżec brought along German, Austrian and Czechoslovak Jews who had previously been deported from their home countries to Polish ghettos.”

The Polish ghettos in question were situated in the Lublin district. It should be remembered that the total number of German, Austrian, Czech, and Slovak Jews moved to this district amounted to 69,084 persons.⁹²¹ According to Schelvis, 28,284 (rounded to 28,300) Slovak, some 10,000 Czech, and about 23,500 German and Austrian Jews reached Sobibór,¹⁰⁴⁵ a total of 61,800 persons. For Treblinka the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* merely mentioned 7,000 deportees from Slovakia. This brings the total of Jews reported by these two sources to have been moved to Sobibór and Treblinka from the countries mentioned to 69,084 persons.

If we take into account that a certain number of the Jews moved into the Lublin district must have died there, there is no room left for any Jews deported to Sobibór from the countries in question – unless the figures given by the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust* and by Schelvis for Sobibór and Treblinka are too high and a portion of the deportees did not reach these two camps, but were taken to Belżec instead. Any German, Austrian, Czech, or Slovak Jews who may possibly have been moved to the eastern areas from Majdanek had likewise spent time in the ghettos or work camps of the Lublin district, and the figures for Sobibór and Treblinka would have been reduced accordingly.

The approximate number of non-Polish Jews who transited to the East via the *Aktion Reinhardt* camps thus amounted to (102,000+38,800=) 140,800 persons. In the same way we find a maximum figure of (1,429,000–140,800=) 1,288,200 for the Polish Jews moved to the East via the four camps in question.

10.2.2. Via Chełmno

According to the Korherr report 145,301 Jews “were moved through the camps in the *Warthegau*.”¹⁰⁴⁴ As there was only one such camp in

¹⁰⁴⁸ Miroslav Kárný, *Konečné řešení. Genocida českých židů v německé protektorátní politice*, Academia, Prague 1991, pp. 115f.

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust*, *op. cit.* (note 15), vol. I, pp. 179f.

the *Warthegau*, Chełmno (Kulmhof), Korherr must have made a mistake in using the plural, apparently because he said “moved through the camps in the General Government” elsewhere in his text.

For Chełmno no gassings are claimed to have taken place in 1943, which means that the figure of 145,301 (rounded to 145,300) must also be the total number of persons having been moved into the eastern areas via Chełmno.¹⁰⁵⁰ Some 11,000 of them came from countries other than Poland,¹⁰⁵¹ hence the number of Polish Jews within these deportees amounted to about 132,300 persons.

10.2.3. Via Auschwitz

A considerable portion of the Jews who reached Auschwitz and are said to have been gassed there on the spot without having been registered were Jews from Hungary. The deportations from Hungary, however, did not begin until May of 1944, and hence no Hungarian Jews ever reached the eastern areas, which were rapidly shrinking in size at the time. Only a certain number of Jewesses were moved into the Baltic

Table 13: Number of Jews deported to Auschwitz

Origin	Deported	“gassed without registration” (i.e. moved elsewhere)
France	68,921	39,485
Belgium	24,906	15,724
Holland	60,085	38,231
Italy	7,422	5,661
Greece	54,533	41,776
Theresienstadt	42,454	18,396
Germany incl. Austria	23,438	17,165
Yugoslavia	8,000*	7,342
Norway	532	346
Czechoslovakia	21,572	9,082
Other camps	34,000	7,538
Unknown origins	6,016	4,262
Poland	188,000	149,000
Total	531,879	354,008

* hypothetical figure

¹⁰⁵⁰ For the summer of 1944, 7,000 gassings have been alleged for Chełmno. As the “gassed victims” (i.e. persons transferred) did, however, not reach the eastern territories, we need not take them into account here. Cf. Carlo Mattogno, *Il campo di Chełmno tra storia e propaganda*, Effepi, Genua 2009.

¹⁰⁵¹ Jüdisches Historisches Institut Warschau (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 116), p. 285f.

states and were then sent on to Stutthof¹⁰⁵² when these regions were about to be abandoned by the German army. For that reason we do not have to consider Hungary in this respect.

Table 13 indicates the number of Jews sent to Auschwitz from countries other than Hungary as the well as the percentage claimed to have been “gassed without registration” (or moved further east in our opinion):¹⁰⁵³

Hence, about 354,000 Jews were moved east from Auschwitz, among them some 149,000 Poles and some 205,000 persons from countries other than Poland.

10.2.4. Balance

We can now draw our conclusions regarding the number of Jews deported into the eastern areas:

➤ Deported via the <i>Aktion Reinhardt</i> camps:	~1,429,000
➤ Deported via Chełmno:	~145,300
➤ Deported via Auschwitz:	~354,000
➤ Deported directly w/o any stop-over in a camp:	~66,200
Total:	~1,994,500
➤ of which Polish Jews:	
(1,288,200 + 134,300 + 149,000 =)	~1,571,500
➤ of which non-Polish Jews:	
(140,800 + 11,000 + 205,000 + 66,200 =)	~423,000

Obviously, one has to deduct from these figures the deportees who died on the way to or at the transit camps. In the case of Sobibór we estimated their number to have amounted to about 10,000 persons, i.e. deportees who either died along the way or were killed in the camps in euthanasia operations – a practice which we believe to be probable although it is not documented.¹⁰⁵⁴ As the conditions at Belżec and Treblinka hardly differed from those at Sobibór and in view of the far greater number of people involved, the number of persons who died in these two camps or on the way there must have been much higher than in the case of Sobibór.

¹⁰⁵² Cf. J. Graf, C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 1040), p. 31.

¹⁰⁵³ The table was set up by Carlo Mattogno on the basis of his article “Franciszek Piper und die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz,” *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung*, 7(1) (2003), pp. 21-27, and of data in D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 825).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Cf. chapter 5.

Seen in this light, the total of 1,994,500 persons arrived at above for the number of people moved into the eastern areas is necessarily too high. We wish also to stress that we have accepted the numbers quoted for the deportations in several instances in mainstream “Holocaust” literature, even if we judge them to be too high (especially in the case of the deportations to Treblinka in 1943). If allowance is made for this, then the actual figure for the Jews who were deported to the eastern areas may be lower by 100,000 than the maximum estimated by us, thus possibly being about 1.9 million at the utmost.

10.3. The Dissolution of Polish Jewry in the USSR

We must now consider the question of what happened to the Jews transferred into the Eastern Territories at the end of the World War II and over the ensuing years – to the extent that they survived the harsh conditions of the wartime. We shall first consider the Polish Jews who constitute the clear majority.

In June 1945 the World Jewish Congress claimed 475,000 to 525,000 Jewish survivors among the Jews formerly residing in Poland prior to Axis control, of which some 80,000 were still residing in Poland at war’s end.¹⁰⁵⁵ At that time repatriation of Polish Jews from the Soviet Union had just begun. The *American Jewish Yearbook* states that by the end of June of 1946, when the repatriations came to an end, some 140,000 Jews had returned to Poland from the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵⁶ The same source puts the number of Jews surviving in Poland before the repatriation at some 86,000 persons.¹⁰⁵⁷

The order of magnitude of this latter figure could have been correct. On 19 July 1942 Heinrich Himmler had decreed that persons of Jewish origins in the General Government would only be allowed to reside in the “collection camps,” (i.e. the ghettos) at Warsaw, Cracow, Czestochowa, Radom, and Lublin.¹⁰⁵⁸ Over time these ghettos were dissolved

¹⁰⁵⁵ “Statistic on Jewish Casualties during Axis Domination,” Institute of Jewish Affairs, Records of the World Jewish Congress. Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives;
www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/nuremberg/documents/index.php?documentdate=1945-06-00&documentid=C107-6-1&studycollectionid=&pagenumber=1.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *American Jewish Yearbook*, No. 49 (1947-1948), p. 381.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *American Jewish Yearbook*, No. 48 (1946-1947), p. 336.

¹⁰⁵⁸ NO-5574.

and their residents evacuated. In the western Polish regions, integrated into Germany and designated “Warthegau,” the Jews were concentrated in the Łódź ghetto to the extent that they had not been transferred to the East. In view of this ghetto’s industrial significance, it was dissolved only in the summer of 1944. Considering this general situation, it is quite possible that the only Jews still living in the former General Government or the former *Warthegau* were Jews who had been lucky enough to find refuge among the Aryan population.

We believe the figure of 140,000 Jews who returned to Poland from the USSR, as quoted in the *American Jewish Yearbook*, to be far too low. By 1946 the “Holocaust” lore had already taken shape, and it would therefore have been in the interest of the Zionists to raise the Jewish losses to as high a level as possible.

Could these returnees have been, to a greater or lesser degree, Jews who had taken refuge in the part of Poland which was annexed to the USSR after the German invasion of September of 1939? The number of such refugees was extremely high. E. Kulischer, whose statistics are generally quite reliable, stated that there were 500,000 of them.¹⁰⁵⁹ The *American Jewish Yearbook* informs us that, in the first half of 1940, these refugees were given the choice of either taking on Soviet citizenship or going back into the German zone. According to the *Yearbook* “many” of the refugees opted for the latter alternative, but Germany refused categorically to let these Jews return. Towards the end of June 1940 the Soviet government ordered them to be deported into the inner regions of the Soviet Union, where the conditions are reported to have been extremely harsh.¹⁰⁶⁰

We believe it to be highly improbable that these Jews had the possibility to return to Poland from Central Asia or Siberia in 1945 or 1946. In the same way, the returnees are unlikely to have been Jews who had acquired Soviet citizenship, because Soviet citizens normally were not allowed to emigrate. Thus it is most likely that the returnees were part of the Jews who had been moved to the eastern areas by the Germans three or four years earlier.

¹⁰⁵⁹ E.M. Kulischer, *op. cit.* (note 1019), table without page number, “General Survey of Population Displacement in Europe since the Beginning of the War.”

¹⁰⁶⁰ *American Jewish Yearbook*, No. 43 (1941-1942), p. 241f.

In mid-1946 the Soviet government prohibited any further returns of Jews to Poland. Three years later the *American Jewish Yearbook* reported the following developments:¹⁰⁶¹

“During the summer of 1949, the Jewish press outside the Soviet Union carried a number of reports about the mass deportation of Jews from the Western border region of the Soviet Union, especially from White Russia, the Ukraine, Eastern Galicia, Bukovina, and Bessarabia. According to one report, the deportation affected mainly the Jewish citizens who had relatives in America or Western Europe; other sources maintain that the whole Jewish population of some territories was deported. The reports described, often in great detail, how the secret police rounded up the Jews, put them on deportation trains, and sent them off to unknown destinations, presumably Siberia or the Arctic regions of European Russia. One report asserted that 30,000 Jews had been deported from Lwów (Lemberg) and other cities of former Polish Eastern Galicia, and that the whole region was now free of Jews. Another dispatch described similar proceedings in an unnamed Ukrainian city. Indirect evidence of the veracity of these reports was seen in the fact that Polish Jews who had maintained correspondence with their relatives in the Ukraine and White Russia ceased to receive answers and their letters were returned with the comment: ‘Returned to sender. Addressee has left.’ [...] The American Jewish League against Communism sent a protest to the Secretary General of the U.N. in which it estimated the number of Jews affected by the deportations as 400,000.”

Without the shadow of a doubt we may say that among the deportees there were many Jews who had been moved into the occupied eastern territories by the Germans a few years earlier. Most of them were probably Polish, but western Jews were among them as well.

At that point in time the distinction between ethnic Polish Jews and other Jews in the USSR becomes blurred. The distinction between the two had never been very precise. Up to the end of the First World War they had been subjects of the Tsar.¹⁰⁶² The Polish state, after its foundation in 1918, profited from the weakness of the young Soviet government and conquered the western regions of Byelorussia and Ukraine. Two decades later, however, these regions returned to the Soviet Union.

¹⁰⁶¹ *American Jewish Yearbook*, No. 51 (1950), p. 340.

¹⁰⁶² Except for those from Galicia; that region was part of the Austrian monarchy until the latter's collapse.

The local Jews spoke at least one of four closely related Slavic languages – Russian, Belorussian, Ukrainian and Polish – current in the area and usually in addition to Yiddish.

Three waves of deportations had swept a large part, if not the majority, of the ethnic Polish Jews into the inner or eastern regions of the USSR: The refugees coming from the German zone of occupation were deported to the extent that they did not take on Soviet citizenship. After the German invasion of 1941, large portions of the Jewish population in the western regions were evacuated before the Germans arrived.¹⁰⁶³ Finally we have the mass deportations reported in the *American Jewish Yearbook* in 1949. Under these conditions the Polish Jews deported to the East by the German authorities in 1942 and 1943 could have inconspicuously blend into Soviet Jewry in general.

The situation of the non-Polish Jews who found themselves in the occupied eastern territories was entirely different. We shall now present several instances of unassailable evidence to show that the “Migration to the East” was far from being a “myth” for these Jews, as R. Hilberg would have it, but solid reality.

10.4. Western Jews in the Eastern Territories

10.4.1. Steffen Werner’s White Ruthenia Hypothesis

In his book *The Second Babylonian Captivity*¹⁰⁶⁴ Steffen Werner presents a large amount of circumstantial evidence for the deportation of Jews to White Ruthenia. Among them we have utterances by Hitler who justified himself in a small circle of close collaborators for having sent the Jews “into the mud.” Werner takes the “mud” to have been the Pripyet swamps in White Ruthenia, which the Jews allegedly were to clear. This hypothesis is supported by other sources. Gerhard Reitlinger says:¹⁰⁶⁵

“A letter from Rosenberg’s office, dated October 25th [1942], shows that it was intended to select the able-bodied to work behind the Eastern front. Later, there were some rumours that Jews had

¹⁰⁶³ Concerning these deportations cf. primarily Walter Sanning, *The Dissolution of Eastern European Jewry*, Institute for Historical Review, Torrance (CA), 1983.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Steffen Werner, *Die zweite babylonische Gefangenschaft*, private edition 1990. A second edition was published in 1991 by Grabert-Verlag, Tübingen.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Gerald Reitlinger, *op. cit.* (note 560), 1968, p. 90f.

been sent from Łódź to the land reclamation scheme in the Pripet Marshes and to the Jewish agricultural colonies near Krivoi Rog in the Ukraine”.

That such reports were not merely “rumors” is borne out by a letter written on 21 June 1942 by Walter Föhl, who was Head of the Main Department with the Reich commissar for the Consolidation of German Ethnicity.¹⁰⁶⁶ The letter was addressed to an unknown member of the SS, a section of which reads:¹⁰⁶⁷

“Every day now, we have been receiving trains, each with 1,000 Jews from Europe, processing them and housing them in one way or another, and sending them on, right into the swamps of White Ruthenia towards the Arctic Ocean; that is where they will all find themselves when the war is over – if they survive (and the Jews from the Kurfürstendamm or from Vienna or Pressburg surely will not) – not without having built a few motorways. (But we should not talk about that.)”

Highly significant in this connection is another quote from Werner’s book, a text from a book entitled *Sowjetische Partisanen und deutsche Antifaschisten* (Soviet Partisans and German Antifascists), which appeared in communist East Germany in 1976:¹⁰⁶⁸

“Within the brotherly family of the Belorussian partisans, Czechs and Slovaks, Frenchmen and Yugoslavs, Greeks and Dutchmen, Spaniards and Austrians, Germans and members of other nations fought courageously against fascism. The Communist Party and the Soviet government attached great importance to the heroic fight of these true internationalists. For their antifascist fight alongside the partisan units of Belorussia and for the heroic deeds they accomplished, orders and medals of the USSR were conferred i.a. to 703 Poles, 188 Slovaks, 32 Czechs, 36 Greeks, 25 Germans, 24 Spaniards and 14 Frenchmen.”

The presence of Poles (both Jewish and non-Jewish) in Byelorussia can be explained by the fact that they came from the western regions of

¹⁰⁶⁶ Reichshauptstellenleiter der Dienststelle Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums (RKF)

¹⁰⁶⁷ Fritz Arlt, *Polen-, Ukrainer-, Juden-Politik*, Wissenschaftlicher Buchdienst Herbert Tage, Lindhorst 1995, p. 22. Fritz Arlt had been part of the Main Department with the Reich commissar for the Consolidation of German Ethnicity in his function as head of the office for Upper Silesia.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Heinz Kühnrich (ed.), *In den Wäldern Belorusslands. Erinnerungen sowjetischer Partisanen und deutscher Antifaschisten*, Dietz, East-Berlin 1976, p. 9.

Byelorussia which had been part of Poland until September of 1939, but this reasoning does not hold for the members of the other nations mentioned. We cannot explain the presence of Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Yugoslavs, or Greeks among the Byelorussian partisans except by assuming that they were Jews who had been deported to the East from their respective countries, although this assumption would not apply to the Spanish fighters.¹⁰⁶⁹

Still, in spite of many valuable indications and ideas which can be found in Werner's book, we must not disregard its glaring shortcomings. Werner writes at the very beginning of the book:¹⁰⁷⁰

"I assert: 1) The final solution of the Jewish question consisted in the Jews being assigned to the eastern parts of White Ruthenia. To this day [i.e. 1990] they have been kept there by the Soviet Union in a kind of captivity."

First of all, it is impossible for *the* (i.e. *all*) deported Jews to have been settled in the eastern part of White Ruthenia, as this was only one of several destinations for these deportees. Furthermore, it is equally impossible that the decrepit Soviet state, which by 1990 had long since discovered *glasnost*, would have been able or even willing to keep hundreds of thousands of people not only "in captivity," but to keep them from establishing any kind of contact with the outside world.

Finally, we cannot accept Werner's hypothesis that the Germans would have let the Jews settle freely in the eastern part of White Ruthenia. Werner tries to prove this assumption by means of maps allegedly showing an inexplicably large increase in the number of localities in this area, but one must assume that the occupying German army would have wanted to exercise strict control over the deportees, something which would only have been possible by means of camps and ghettos.

If the Jews deported to White Ruthenia had really been able to move around freely, they would have rushed to join the partisans – something the Germans had every reason to prevent. Therefore, we must assume that the foreign Jews mentioned above who did join the partisans had

¹⁰⁶⁹ S. Werner believes that these Spaniards were antifascists who had fled to France after Franco's victory and were then extradited to the Germans by the Vichy government and later transferred to Auschwitz. (S. Werner, *op. cit.* (note 1064), p. 89). As there were only relatively few Jews living in Spain, this would mean that non-Jewish detainees as well were moved from Auschwitz into the eastern areas. So far we have not found any evidence for this. We therefore think that these Spaniards were most probably antifascists who had fled to the Soviet Union after Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War.

¹⁰⁷⁰ S. Werner, *op. cit.* (note 1064), p. 5.

escaped from captivity or had even been liberated by these very partisans from their camps or ghettos.

10.4.2. *American Jewish Yearbook*

In 1943 the *American Jewish Yearbook* had the following to say on the subject of the developments in Poland in 1942:¹⁰⁷¹

“Throughout the year under review [1942], as in previous years, scores of thousands of Jews were forcibly deported from their homes in cities and towns. [...] Among the more important of these transfers of population was the expulsion of all but 11,000 of the Jews of Cracow, who were deemed ‘economically useful’ and put into a ghetto; those expelled, over 50,000 in number, were sent to Warsaw, Lublin and other cities. The stay of those sent to Lublin was short, for most of them were sent farther east, those remaining being penned in a ghetto in one of the suburbs of the city. Also sent east were most of the Jews who still remained in the western Polish provinces incorporated into the Reich. [...] There was also an influx of German, Czech, Dutch and French Jews, forcibly sent into Poland, either to the ghettos or the labor camps.”

These details are highly valuable in several ways and confront the representatives of the orthodox version of history with insurmountable problems:

- 1) Orthodox “Holocaust” teaching asserts that the alleged gassing of Jews at Auschwitz began in February of 1942. Why were the Jews deported from Cracow in 1942 not sent to this camp which, after all, was only an hour’s drive away, but were shipped to Warsaw and Lublin instead?
- 2) Likewise, the Jews deported to Lublin were not gassed in one of the available *Aktion Reinhardt* camps, but were in their majority “moved further east.”
- 3) “The Jews who still remained in the western Polish provinces incorporated into the Reich” – except for those assigned to the Łódź ghetto – were allegedly murdered in gas trucks at Chełmno, if we are to believe today’s official version of history. The *American Jewish Yearbook* does not say anything about this, yet asserts instead that the better part of these Jews was “moved to the East.” If they had

¹⁰⁷¹ *American Jewish Yearbook*, No. 44 (1942-1943), p. 244f.

been deported to Chełmno before being moved on, Chełmno must have been a transit camp – to which the revisionists would agree.

- 4) Whereas the deportation of a certain number of German and Czech Jews to Polish ghettos has been recognized by mainstream historians, this does not apply to Dutch and French Jews: these Jews are said to have been sent to Auschwitz and Sobibór as well as – to a lesser extent – to Majdanek, but not to any ghettos.

In its following edition the *American Jewish Yearbook* speaks of the presence of Dutch and other Western Jews in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union in 1943:¹⁰⁷²

“There are reports of Jewish deportees from Holland and other Western countries having been sent to the occupied Soviet territories for military work, but their numbers and their fate are still shrouded in darkness.”

10.4.3. *Judisk Krönika*

In this context certain information about the fate of the deported Jews during the war is of utmost interest which was proffered by the Jewish periodical *Judisk Krönika* appearing in Stockholm. In September of 1942 this Swedish-Jewish magazine told its readers:¹⁰⁷³

“Jewish school children of more than 14 years of age are being deported from the Third Reich as well, mainly to Ukraine, where they are deployed in harvest work. The children are informed about their deportation only a few hours earlier and are allowed to take along only the mere necessities.”

Mainstream Holocaust literature is oblivious about the deportation of German Jews to Ukraine. The only logical conclusion is that these Jewish school children belong to those Jews who were allegedly “gassed” in extermination camps. We remind our readers in this context that, according to eye witness testimonies, the new arrivals at Sobibór were received by an SS man who indicated that they would soon be continuing their journey to Ukraine.¹⁰⁷⁴

In October 1942 *Judisk Krönika* reported:¹⁰⁷⁵

“A large number of Jews who had been interned in German concentration camps have been transported to Poland, where they are

¹⁰⁷² *American Jewish Yearbook*, No. 45 (1943-1944), p. 304.

¹⁰⁷³ *Judisk Krönika*, vol. 11, No. 7, September 1942, p. 91.

¹⁰⁷⁴ See chapters 2.3.19. (p. 54), 4.1. (p. 79, 80), see also 8.2.2. (p. 246).

¹⁰⁷⁵ *Judisk Krönika*, vol. 11, No. 8, Oktober 1942, p. 123.

deployed to drain the swamps of Pinsk. The Dachau camp is now devoid of any Jews. Most Jews from the Rhineland, including those of Cologne, have been transferred to the ghetto of Riga.”

The city of Pinsk did indeed belong to Poland between 1920 and 1939, yet it fell to the Byelorussian Soviet Republic after the division of Poland at the outset of World War II. Other sources confirm that western Jews were assigned to render the swamps of Byelorussia arable.¹⁰⁷⁶ This, too, is in contradiction to the mainstream version about the “Holocaust.”

In the same edition of *Judisk Krönika* we read:¹⁰⁷⁵

“The transport of this tremendous large amount of people [from Western Europe] to Poland was accompanied by the mass expulsion of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto and from other locations. These people were deported farther east, and since they were more or less unfit for labor due to starvation and diseases, one can imagine what fate awaited them there.”

Starting in August of 1942, the Polish-Jewish underground press reported about mass exterminations in Treblinka, although not a Diesel engine was mentioned as the murder weapon (this version was sanctioned by mainstream historiography only some years after the war), but entirely different methods, like for instance a mobile gas chamber moving along the mass graves, a delayed-action gas conveniently permitting the victims to walk from the gas chamber to the mass graves, where they would faint and fall into the graves, or scalding with hot steam.¹⁰⁷⁷ These “insights” had apparently not yet percolated into Sweden by October 1942, or else *Judisk Krönika* would not have disseminated the (doubtlessly true) message that the Jews of Warsaw were being deported farther to the east.

In its issue of May/June 1944 this periodical wrote:¹⁰⁷⁸

“Certain sparse information begin to seep through about the fate of those Jews who have been deported from Western Europe to Eastern Europe. According to a communication from Lithuania, thousands of Jews from Holland, Belgium, and northern France have been deported to Kaunas, where many have been shot to death in the city’s fortress. In Vilnius as well a large number of Jews from Western Europe has been executed. Some 20,000 Jews from Western

¹⁰⁷⁶ See chapter 8.2.2. (p. 246).

¹⁰⁷⁷ Cf. C. Mattoigno, J. Graf, *op. cit.* (note 10, Engl. ed.), Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Judisk Krönika*, vol. 13, No. 5, Mai/Juni 1944, p. 68.

Europe are still in the city's ghetto. The Germans are executing several hundred of them every day, and the Gestapo compiles lists of the next victims. Many Jews managed to escape from the various ghettos and to join partisan groups, and today there is a large number [of Jews] from Western Europe who are fighting together with the Lithuanian partisans."

This report is particularly instructive. It shows that only as late as spring of 1944 did "certain sparse information" began "to seep through" to *Judisk Krönika* "about the fate of those Jews who have been deported from Western Europe to Eastern Europe" – and this information did not speak of said Jews being murdered in "gas chambers"!

Whereas a transport of French Jews in May 1944 to the Lithuanian city of Kaunas (as well as to the Estonian city of Tallinn) is confirmed by mainstream historians,⁷⁵ they do not mention any deportation of Jews from Holland or Belgium to Lithuania. The inescapable conclusion is therefore that these Jews must be a part of those who mainstream historiography claims to have been "gassed" at Auschwitz or Sobibór.

The claim by *Judisk Krönika* that the German authorities executed the Jews present in the Lithuanian ghettos on a massive scale in late spring of 1944 is implausible. In that case the Soviets would certainly have obtained evidence for this crime after their conquest of Lithuania, which they would have exploited for their propaganda. Instead of fictitious mass gassings they would have accused the Germans of real mass executions and would have presented the corpses of those murdered as a *corpus delicti* for an investigation by international commissions – as the Germans had done in 1943 after discovering the massacres of Katyn¹⁰⁷⁹ and in 1944 after discovering the massacres of Winnitsa.¹⁰⁸⁰

10.4.4. Further Evidence for Western Jews in the East

We will now present a number of additional proofs for the deportation of French, Belgian, and Dutch Jews into the occupied territories in the East. Apart from the above-mentioned transport of French Jews to Tallinn and Kaunas in May of 1944, mainstream historians never mention any transports of Jews from these countries into the East.⁷⁵ The irrefutable conclusion is that these deportations concerned a portion of

¹⁰⁷⁹ Dt. Informationsstelle (ed.), *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*, Eher, Berlin 1943.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Dt. Informationsstelle (ed.), *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Winnitsa*, Eher, Berlin 1944.

the French, Belgian, and Dutch Jews who, according to mainstream historiography, were allegedly gassed at Auschwitz, Sobibór, and Majdanek. Some of the cases reported here are due to the efforts of two un-daunted revisionist researchers: Enrique Aynat¹⁰⁸¹ in Spain and the late Jean-Marie Boisdefeu in Belgium.¹⁰⁸²

- 1) On 29 June 1942 Valerio Valeri, the papal ambassador in France, wrote from Vichy to Cardinal Luigi Malone:¹⁰⁸³

“Towards the 20th of this month the occupational administrations, using the French police, have arrested some 12,000 Jews. [...] The majority of them are non-Aryans of foreign origin, primarily Poles, Czechs etc., who are destined to be deported to the Ukraine.”

- 2) A report of the Polish resistance, the date of which is unknown but which undoubtedly stems from the second half of 1942, states:¹⁰⁸⁴

“Recently, a certain number of Jews from Belgium has been transferred to Grodno [in White Ruthenia].”

- 3) On 16 October 1942, the *Israelitisches Wochenblatt für die Schweiz* (the Israelite Weekly for Switzerland) carried the following item:

“Of late, transports of Jews from Belgium and other western European countries were observed in Riga, but they moved on immediately to other destinations.”

Up to March of 1943 the destination of all Jews deported from Belgium was Auschwitz,¹⁰⁸⁵ which means that these Jews necessarily came to Riga via this camp.

- 4) The Jewish author Reuben Ainsztain mentions the presence of Belgian and Dutch Jews in the camp of Janow, near Lvov (Lemberg).¹⁰⁸⁶ It is highly likely that these Jews had been deported to that Ukrainian city via Bełżec, situated some 70 km to the northwest of

¹⁰⁸¹ Enrique Aynat, *Estudios sobre el “holocausto.” La deportación de judíos de Francia y Bélgica en 1942*, Graficas Hurtado, Valencia 1994.

¹⁰⁸² Jean-Marie Boisdefeu, *La controverse sur l’extermination des juifs par les allemands*, vol. 2, “Réalités de la Solution Finale,” V.H.O., Berchem 2003.

¹⁰⁸³ *Actes et Documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Le Saint Siège et les victimes de la guerre. Janvier 1941 – Décembre 1942*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, vol. 8, p. 610.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Maria Tykowska, “Exterminacja Żydów w latach 1941 – 1943,” in: *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, No. 4/1964, p. 49.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Serge Klarsfeld, Maxime Steinberg, *op. cit.* (note 979), pp. 42 ff.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Reuben Ainsztain, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe*, Elek Books, London 1971, quoted after J.-M. Boisdefeu, *op. cit.* (note 1082); Boisdefeu does not indicate a page number in Aynstain’s book where this information can be found.

Lemberg, in spite of the fact that mainstream historiography does not mention the arrival of Belgian or Dutch Jews at Bełżec.

- 5) On 15 June 1943 the *New York Times* reported a communiqué of the Belgian government in exile, according to which most of the Belgian Jews had been sent to concentration camps in Germany, Poland, and in the occupied Russian territories.
- 6) The communist French underground newspaper *Notre Voix* wrote in April of 1944:¹⁰⁸⁷

“Thank you! A news item that will delight all Jews of France was broadcast by Radio Moscow. Which of us does not have a brother, a sister, or relatives among those deported from Paris? And who will not feel profound joy when he thinks about the fact that 8,000 Parisian Jews have been rescued from death by the glorious Red Army! One of them told Radio Moscow how he had been saved from death, and likewise 8,000 other Parisian Jews. They were all in the Ukraine when the last Soviet offensive began, and the SS bandits wanted to shoot them before they left the country. But since they knew what fate was in store for them and since they had learned that the Soviet troops were no longer far away, the deported Jews decided to escape. They were immediately welcomed by the Red Army and are presently all in the Soviet Union. The heroic Red Army has thus once again earned a claim on the gratitude of the Jewish community of France.”

It may be argued that this is a document written by French communists who used a radio broadcast of Radio Moscow and that both the French communists and Radio Moscow could be suspected right away of spreading propaganda. However, it is difficult to see in what way the presence of French Jews in Ukraine could have lent itself to propaganda. Moreover, one cannot see any reason why Radio Moscow or the French underground newspaper should have invented such a story. (What seems to be cooked up in this instance, on the other hand, is the tale that the SS wanted to shoot the Parisian Jews, but that the Jews could all escape and find refuge with the Red Army.)

- 7) In December of 1945 Friedrich Jeckeln, the former head of SS and police *Ostland*, but at that time in Soviet captivity, stated that Jews

¹⁰⁸⁷ Adam Raisky, *La presse antiraciste sous l'occupation hitlérienne*, Paris 1950, p. 179. A photocopy of this text is given by J.-M. Boisdefeu, *op. cit.* (note 1082), chapter V, C.

from Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia, and other countries had been held in the camp of Salaspils in Latvia.¹⁰⁸⁸

10.4.5. The Diary of Herman Kruk

During the German wartime occupation of Lithuania the Jewish librarian Herman Kruk wrote a diary of about 700 pages. After the dissolution of the Vilnius ghetto in September 1943 Kruk was deported to the labor camp Lagedi in Estonia, where he was reportedly killed on 18 September 1944. The Yiddish original of his diary was published in 1961 under the title *Hurbn Vilne* (The Destruction of Vilnius). An English translation followed in 2002.¹⁰⁸⁹ We will now quote several passages which are of particular importance to our topic.

16 April 1943 (p. 518):

“I learned that for the past two weeks two trains have been halted in Vilna, each with 25 cars of objects, apparently from the Dutch Jews. [...] Today a rumor is circulating that there are about 19,000 Dutch Jews in [the small Lithuanian town of] Vievis.”

Since there is no reason whatsoever why Kruk – or anybody else – should have invented this story, we regard this passage as strong evidence for the deportation of reportedly “gassed” Dutch Jews to the occupied Eastern territories. Between 2 March and 6 April 1943 six transports with altogether 7,699 Dutch Jews left Westerbork for Sobibór.¹⁰⁹⁰ (A seventh transport which departed from Westerbork on 13 April could not yet have reached Lithuania by 16 April, the date of the respective entry in Kruk’s diary.) In view of these facts nothing is more logical than the assumption that these Jews were sent to Lithuania via Sobibór.

There are two possible explanations why Kruk mentioned the presence of 19,000 Dutch Jews in Vievis instead of just some seven to eight thousand. First it may be that the information Kruk relied upon was incorrect regarding the number of Jewish deportees from the Netherlands. However, there is another and more probable explanation: In addition to Dutch Jews deported to Vievis via Sobibór there may have been others who had arrived earlier via Auschwitz. Between 17 July 1942 and 25

¹⁰⁸⁸ Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1994, p. 96.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Herman Kruk, *The last days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania. Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the camps 1939-1944*, Yale University Press, New Haven/London 2002.

¹⁰⁹⁰ J. Schelvis, *Vernietigingskamp Sobibór*, *op. cit.* (note 72), p. 246.

February 1943 altogether 42,533 Dutch Jews were sent to Auschwitz. According to mainstream Holocaust historians, 30,413 of them were “gassed upon arrival”¹⁰⁹¹ – which means that they were probably deported east. If the destination of a part of them had been Vievis, it is perfectly possible that the number of Dutch Jews living in that Lithuanian town on 16 April 1943 amounted to 19,000.

On the same date Kruk wrote the following under the heading “More about the Dutch Jews” (p. 519):

“Just now I succeeded in getting a Jewish sign and a copy of the order of the Reichskommissar for the Occupied Netherlands about Jewish property (attached).”

The editor follows this with a remark that “The order is missing.” With “Jewish sign” is no doubt meant the cloth Star of David forcibly worn by Western Jews. In the Netherlands these emblems bore the inscription *Jood* (Dutch for Jew). This passage shows that Kruk had a good reason to believe the rumor about Vievis, since he himself was in possession of items belonging to one or more Dutch Jews.

Several reports exist about the labor camp of Vievis, a town situated between Kovno and Vilnius. A former inmate of the ghetto of Kovno, Avraham Tory, wrote in his diary on 2 July 1943:¹⁰⁹²

“The conditions in the Vievis labor camp are harder than in the ghetto [in Kovno]. [...] Once in a while, patients from the Vievis camp are admitted to our ghetto hospital. The camp inmates also come here quite often to ask for help over some problem or other. We, for our part, extend them whatever assistance we can.”

In a collective volume of “memoirs of Holocaust survivors” published in 2007 we learn the following about a certain “Marie” from the ghetto of Vilnius:¹⁰⁹³

“When they saw that the last days of the ghetto were approaching,^[1094] Adam [Marie’s brother] succeeded to be transferred to the camp Zezmarai, working for the German engineering organization TODT. He was working there as a camp physician, while Marie remained in the ghetto. Just before the great action her brother ar-

¹⁰⁹¹ D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 825), No deportations of Dutch Jews to Auschwitz took place in March and April 1943.

¹⁰⁹² Avraham Tory, *Surviving the Holocaust. The Kovno Ghetto Diary*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge/London 1990, p. 407.

¹⁰⁹³ Joseph Rebhuhn, *“Why me?” Memoirs of Holocaust Survivors*, Wildside Press, Rockville (MD) 2007, p. 173.

¹⁰⁹⁴ The ghetto was dissolved in September 1943.

rived with friendly members of the TODT organization and saved her. She was right now in the camp Vievis. After about a month, she was transferred to Milejgany and from there to the Zezmarai camp.”

This clearly shows that Vievis served not only as a labor camp, but as a transit camp as well.

On 19 April 1943 Kruk confided to his diary (p. 519):

“Europe will be purged of Jews. The Jews of Warsaw are being taken to be killed in Malkinia, near Lwów or near Zamosc.^[1095] The Jews from Western Europe are being taken east, their wandering goes on.”

The last sentence involuntarily reflects a formulation used twice by Oswald Pohl in his report for Himmler from 15 September 1942 where Pohl spoke of “Jews destined for migration to the east.”¹⁰⁹⁶

On 30 April 1943 Kruk again mentioned the Dutch Jews (p. 525):

“We have already written about the packing up of 130,000 Jews from Holland and their transport to the East. We have also mentioned that carloads filled with goods from the Dutch Jews are in the Vilna railroad station. Now an issue that clears all up – beautiful old furniture has been brought here, to our joiner’s workshops, to be repaired. In the drawers people find Dutch documents, including documents from December 1942, which means that ostensibly the Dutch were not taken to the East before January of February. Thus the Jews did not know they were going to be exterminated. The rich Dutch Jews even brought bridge tables with them in case, God forbid, such things wouldn’t be found among the backward Ostjuden. Now it is clear that they were slaughtered. [...] In our area dozens of railroad cars are scattered filled with Jewish junk, remnants of the former Dutch Jewry”

Kruk does not mention why he is convinced that the Dutch Jews were “slaughtered.” The fact that the local population found Dutch documents in the drawers of the furniture removes the last doubts about the origin of these deportees, because the Yiddish-speaking inhabitants of the ghetto could most certainly tell Dutch from German.

On 23 June 1943 Kruk wrote in his diary (p. 570):

“In the Minsk ghetto 3,000 – 4,000 Jews now live. Next to the ghetto is another ghetto. In the first ghetto are Jews from Minsk,

¹⁰⁹⁵ Malkinia was situated near the alleged “extermination camp” of Treblinka.

¹⁰⁹⁶ See chapter 9.2., p. 290.

Slutsk, Baranovitsh etc. In the second, there are altogether 1,500 German and Czech Jews.”

This information is not devoid of interest either. It confirms the deportation of German and Czech Jews to the occupied Soviet territories (a fact not contested by official historiography) and proves that these Jews were by no means exterminated.

Ironically Kruk’s diary was enthusiastically lauded by two renowned Jewish mainstream Holocaust historians. For Yehuda Bauer it is “a unique and extremely valuable diary,”¹⁰⁹⁷ and Saul Friedländer states:¹⁰⁹⁷

“Hermann Kruk’s diary is one of the major sources that we have about the life and death of the Jews of Wilna during the Holocaust.”

Either the two illustrious historians have never read the book they praised so warmly, or they simply did not foresee that Kruk’s diary, which deals a devastating blow to the official version of the events, would ever be read by critical observers.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt whatsoever that an even more famous Jewish Holocaust historian, Yitzhak Arad (who incidentally was a partisan in the Vilnius area in spring 1943),¹⁰⁹⁸ has indeed read Kruk’s diary. In his 1980 book *Ghetto in flames* Arad quotes the Yiddish original *Hurbn Vilne* twice as a sources.¹⁰⁹⁹ As the passages about the presence of Dutch Jews in Lithuania cannot possibly have escaped Arad’s attention, he must have known the real destination of these Jews by 1980 at the latest – which did not prevent this august scholar from rehashing the gas chamber lie in his “standard work” about Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka published in 1987.⁴⁹

10.5. The Fate of Western Jews – a Hypothesis

Whereas Polish Jews present on Soviet territory could easily blend in after the war, the situation was entirely different for Jews from Western Europe who found themselves on Soviet territory after war’s end. The presence of a large number of Jews from countries like Holland, France, or Greece would necessarily be highly noticeable and could not

¹⁰⁹⁷ H. Kruk, *op. cit.* (note 1089), back cover.

¹⁰⁹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Arad

¹⁰⁹⁹ Y. Arad, *Ghetto in flames. The struggle and destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 1980, fn. 25 and 26, p. 369.

remain undetected abroad to the extent that these Jews were present in the border regions of Western Russia.

The mortality among the deportees was undoubtedly very high during the war due to the overly harsh conditions, but the number of those who returned to their countries of origin is so low that it cannot be explained exclusively by the high mortality caused by disease or malnutrition, etc.

For the 105,000 Jews deported from Holland the official statistics report only 4.86% of returnees. Individually, the allocation by camp is as follows:

Camp	Deportees	Returnees
Auschwitz:	60,185	1,052
Theresienstadt:	4,771	1,980
Bergen-Belsen:	3,742	2,050
Sobibór:	34,313	18 ¹¹⁰⁰

As far as the 75,721 Jews deported from France are concerned, only 2,560 returned according to the official count. There were only two returnees¹¹⁰¹ out of the 3,500¹¹⁰² persons deported to Sobibór.

Several explanations present themselves for the small number of returnees. They are not mutually exclusive and may well all apply, each to a greater or lesser degree:

- 1) Many of these Jews remained in the Soviet Union voluntarily.
- 2) Many of the Jews later emigrated to Palestine, the U.S., or other countries, either directly or indirectly after a brief stay in their countries of origin.
- 3) The countries of origin grossly falsified the statistics in order to massively pile blame on the Germans.
- 4) The Germans liquidated the Jews concerned before retreating.
- 5) The Jews concerned were retained in the USSR against their will after the war.

Let us briefly examine the individual arguments:

1) The number of Jews from Western Europe who would have voluntarily chosen to remain in the USSR was probably very small. It is unlikely that Jews from Germany, Holland, or France would have wanted to remain in a totalitarian country devastated by the war – un-

¹¹⁰⁰ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 199.

¹¹⁰¹ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 198.

¹¹⁰² This is the figure given by J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 218. According to S. Klarsfeld, 2,001 Jews from France were deported to Sobibór (*op. cit.*, note 75).

less they had very personal reasons, such as a marriage with a local partner.

2) This hypothesis is much more convincing than the preceding one, especially in the case of France. Only 22,691 Jews from the 67,693 deported from the Drancy camp actually had French citizenship. The remainder consisted of foreign Jews (German, Polish, Russian, Romanian) who had emigrated to France⁷⁵ and had lived there more or less legally. These people probably did not have strong emotional ties to France.

On the other hand, it is impossible that the 8,000 Parisian Jews mentioned above, who had taken refuge with the Red Army, should have belonged exclusively or even largely to this group and then emigrated overseas without exception. There is no mention anywhere in the French literature on this subject concerning the return of even one such French Jew from the USSR, which is at least an indication that there were no (or only very few) such returnees.

Hypothesis 2 breaks down completely when we consider the Jews deported from Holland. They were for the most part Dutch citizens, formed one of the most strongly assimilated groups of Jews in Europe, did not have marked Zionist tendencies, and had not suffered from anti-Semitism in their country before the war. Moreover, Holland had not sustained serious material damage during the conflict and promised to become rapidly the wealthy country it had been before the war. Hence, most Dutch Jews had neither an ideological nor an economic incentive to emigrate.

3) There are no indications in the sense that official western European agencies would have consciously falsified their statistics.

4) We may also exclude the idea that the Germans massacred the Jews before retreating. As A. Butz has rightly remarked, such crimes would not have gone unnoticed, and the victorious powers could have presented at Nuremberg hard evidence for mass murder rather than relying on the nonsensical tale of the “gas chambers.”¹¹⁰³ (We can obviously not exclude excesses by desperate German soldiers under the circumstances they faced.)

5) We believe that this explanation is very convincing for the following reason:

¹¹⁰³ A. Butz, *op. cit.* (note 1038), p. 271.

Soon after the end of the war, the legend of the disappearance of the European Jewry in annihilation camps was declared an official truth. The alleged extermination of the Jews was one of the central pillars of the Nuremberg trial. It is obvious that this legend was extremely useful for the victors: the worse the atrocities that could be laid at the feet of the Third Reich, the more convincing the claim of the Allies of having saved Europe from the claws of Satan.

The governments of the USA and Great-Britain, faced with accusations by right-wingers of having given up half of Europe to Soviet totalitarianism, could easily counter this with the argument that communism certainly was the lesser of two evils by invoking the death camps, the gas chambers, and six million Jewish victims. Furthermore and by so doing, they were easily able to hide their own crimes, especially the carpet bombing of German cities and the massive ethnic cleansing going on in Eastern Europe at that time, behind the smoke-screen of the far more horrible deeds allegedly committed by the vanquished.

What is even more significant in this regard is the fact that the “Holocaust” provided the ideological backing for the justification of the foundation of Israel. In 1948 the United Nations pronounced themselves with 33 votes (against 13) in favor of the partition of Palestine. In line with the USA, the USSR also voted for partition and for the foundation of a Jewish state, cherishing no doubt the (unfounded) hope that such a state would become a bridgehead for the Soviets in the Near East, in view of the sympathies of many Jews for the communist idea.¹¹⁰⁴

The partition of Palestine infringed in an unbelievably brutal way on the rights of the local population. This could be justified by invoking the “Nazi genocide of the Jews” and its “six million victims”: a people that had undergone such indescribable suffering needed a state of its own, even if the rights of another people had to be trampled upon in the process.

If the tale of the gassing of the Jews in “extermination camps” was to be believed world-wide, the deported German, French, Belgian, Greek, and other Jews could not be allowed to return home in droves and tell others about their lives as forced laborers or ghetto inmates in the East. Our hypothesis hence reads as follows:

¹¹⁰⁴ This point of view is confirmed by historian Geoffrey Robert who writes: “After the war a de facto alliance developed between the Soviet Union and the nascent Israeli state. [...] The Soviets did not trust Arab nationalism [...] and they saw Zionism as a useful counter to Western influence in the Middle East.” G. Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars: From World War to Cold War*, Yale University Press, New Haven/London 2006, p. 339.

Stalin's government saw to it that the western Jews who had been deported into the eastern areas and had survived the hardships of war-time were removed without a trace and were unable to communicate with friends or relatives. This meant, first of all, that they had to be moved from the western regions of the USSR into eastern areas of the country which were essentially hidden from the outside world. Such a migration could easily be accomplished within the mass deportations of 1949 described by the *American Jewish Yearbook*. We do not believe that these Jews were killed, but we assume that they disappeared in camps they would never leave.

Such a step allowed Stalin to consolidate the myth of the extermination of Jews in "gas chambers." It thus killed two birds with one stone: Stalin was able to take on the role of a savior who had freed half of Europe from a monstrous dictatorship, while at the same time enabling the foundation of Israel which he – erroneously – regarded as a Soviet outpost in the Near East.¹¹⁰⁵

If this hypothesis were correct, did the leaders of the Zionist movement know about what was happening in the USSR? The only possible answer is "yes," because this organization had enough informants all over the world to be kept abreast of what was going on locally. It would be naïve to argue that the Zionists would surely have decried such an inhumane policy of the Soviets. For these people, the main objective, which dominated all other considerations, was the foundation of a Jewish state in the Near East, and in order to reach that goal they were unhesitatingly prepared to sacrifice tens or hundreds of thousands of their own brethren.

We remind our readers of the fact that the Zionists fired up the anti-Jewish atmosphere in Germany after Hitler's ascent to power by preaching a boycott of German products, in spite of the obvious repercussions such an attitude would have for the Jews in Germany. The Jewish writer Josef Gideon Burg has described the Zionist policy in the following words:¹¹⁰⁶

¹¹⁰⁵ In his book *Fälschung, Dichtung und Wahrheit über Hitler und Stalin* (Olzog, Munich 2004, p. 339), the late German historian Prof. Dr. Werner Maser expressed a similar hypothesis: "It was no topic for many of them [Stalin's propagandists] that Stalin represented the up to two million[!] Jews, who after the war could no longer return to their places of origin from the USSR because they had lost their way of life there, as victims of the National Socialist regime contrary to the truth." Editor's remark.

¹¹⁰⁶ Josef G. Burg, *Schuld und Schicksal. Europas Juden zwischen Henkern und Heuchlern*, Verlag K. W. Schütz, Pr. Oldendorf 1990, p. 75.

“This appears to me like a situation in a circus where a few pranksters would be throwing stones at a lion between whose teeth his tamer has just placed his head. They are quite safe, because there is, after all, an ocean or a cage between them and the danger.”

Burg was right: The Zionist leadership always considered their Jewish foot-soldiers to be expendable.

We believe that our hypothesis is the only one to explain the facts in a convincing way. A decision on its validity, however, will have to wait for the opening of the Russian archives – if that should ever occur. For the time being, though, it seems that this will not take place in the near future.

11. The Demjanjuk Case

11.1. Hunting Down Old Men

The peace agreements signed in Westphalia in 1648 ended the most frightful war Europe had lived through up to that time. Among the conditions the former warring powers had agreed on was a complete amnesty for any and all violent crimes committed during the conflict. Article 2 of the Osnabrück Agreement of 24 October 1648 read as follows:¹¹⁰⁷

“That there shall be on the one side and the other a perpetual Oblivion, Amnesty, or Pardon of all that has been committed since the beginning of these Troubles, in what place, or what manner soever the Hostilities have been practis’d, in such a manner, that no body, under any pretext whatsoever, shall practice any Acts of Hostility, entertain any Enmity, or cause any Trouble to each other; neither as to Persons, Effects and Securitys, neither of themselves or by others, neither privately nor openly, neither directly nor indirectly, neither under the colour of Right, nor by the way of Deed, either within or without the extent of the Empire, notwithstanding all Covenants made before to the contrary: That they shall not act, or permit to be acted, any wrong or injury to any whatsoever; but that all that has pass’d on the one side, and the other, as well before as during the War, in Words, Writings, and Outrageous Actions, in Violences, Hostilities, Damages and Expences, without any respect to Persons or Things, shall be entirely abolish’d in such a manner that all that might be demanded of, or pretended to, by each other on that behalf, shall be bury’d in eternal Oblivion.”

The signatories to the peace treaty of Osnabrück thus did not want to perpetuate the wounds caused during the war, but to heal them. That was a wise thing to do.

When Napoleon had been beaten by a great European coalition, he was not tried and hanged as an “aggressor” or “war criminal,” but simp-

¹¹⁰⁷ See http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp

ly banished to Elba. After he had succeeded in leaving the island and in collecting once again a large army which then lost the decisive battle of Waterloo, he was, once again, not condemned and hanged but merely banished once more – this time, though, to the remote island of St. Helena which made any return impossible. In doing so, the victors made sure that Napoleon could never again constitute a danger – his honor remained untouched. At that time the Occident valued highly such things as chivalry and the respect for a courageous enemy.

All the more so, no one would have dreamed of pursuing a subject of the French emperor for “war crimes” and certainly not decades after the act – be it real or imagined. The thought that a French officer, ninety years of age, could have had to appear before a court in 1874 for having shot Spanish *guerrilleros* in 1809, when he was twenty-five years old, would certainly have been viewed as something completely absurd to a European citizen of the 19th century.

With the triumph of “democracy” and “human rights” in 1945, however, all this changed completely. The sinister farce mounted at Nuremberg, in which the victors who themselves had committed heinous crimes against humanity, hypocritically took on the role of judges over the vanquished, sending the latter to the gallows or behind prison walls on the basis of laws decreed *ex post facto*, amounted to the refusal of any idea of chivalry. We may believe, though, that at the time, in the immediate post war years, few people would have supposed that such trials of men who had unfortunately been on the losing side would still be held over five dozen years later.

John Demjanjuk’s martyrdom is unfortunately not an exception. For 11 years now Erich Priebke, born in 1913, has been under house arrest in Italy, because 65 years ago he had to shoot two hostages close to Rome. In March 1944, after a terrorist attack by communist guerrillas had claimed the lives of 33 German policemen (plus several Italian civilians), Adolf Hitler personally ordered to shoot ten hostages for every policeman killed. The reprisal was carried out the day after the attack. The victims were for the most part men who were already in prison for underground activities. Women or children were not among them.

Sixty men had to take part in the reprisal shootings, among them seven officers. One of them was Erich Priebke. If he had refused to obey, he himself would have been shot.¹¹⁰⁸

¹¹⁰⁸ Erich Priebke, Paolo Giachini, *Vae victis. Autobiografia*, Associazione Uomo e Libertà, Rome 2003, p. 125.

“[Chief of execution SS captain] *Schuetz gathered the entire squad and warned: ‘If anyone believes he doesn’t have to shoot, then he can join the hostages straight away, because he will then be shot as well.’*”

His wife and children would have faced misery. So he did what he was asked to do. We must remember that at the time such reprisals were a common practice and as such condoned by the then rules of warfare, and they were practiced by the Italian army as well.¹¹⁰⁹

In 1948 a trial was held over the officers involved in the reprisal (NCOs and enlisted men had not even been prosecuted by the Italian authorities!). All defendants were acquitted, except for police chief Herbert Kappler who was sentenced for having caused another 10 hostages to be shot after the death of a 34th German policeman. This was considered to have been an excess on his part. At that time Erich Priebke, who had escaped from British captivity some months before, lived in the mountains of Southern Tyrol, unknown to the judicial authorities. This was unfortunate, as it should turn out, because he would otherwise have been acquitted just like his officer comrades, which would have saved himself the tragedy that ensued decades later.

After the war Priebke emigrated with his family to Argentina, where a Jewish journalist hunted him down in 1994. He was extradited to Italy a year later and tried in 1996, but acquitted because of the statute of limitations. A band of mostly Jewish hooligans then occupied the premises and took the judges hostage. After “hectic negotiations with the Jewish community,”¹¹¹⁰ “justice” minister Flick ordered a retrial. In 1998, after a series of appeals, the 85-year-old defendant was sentenced to life imprisonment, in keeping with the demands of the Jewish organizations. Magnanimously he was allowed to serve his time in house arrest. Ever since he has been living in the house of his lawyer and friend Paolo Giacchini and lacks nothing but his freedom. When he goes for a walk, the man, now 96 years old, is always accompanied by two *Carabinieri*.¹¹¹¹

¹¹⁰⁹ For this see the legal expert report by Karl Siegert, “Reprisals and Orders from Higher Up,” in: G. Rudolf (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 34), pp. 530-550.

¹¹¹⁰ *Il Messagero*, 2 August 1996.

¹¹¹¹ For this see E. Priebke, P. Giacchini, *op. cit.* (note 1108); German: *ibid.*, 2005; Pierangelo Maurizio, *Via Rasella, Cinquant’anni di menzogne*, Maurizio Editione, Roma 1996; Mario Spataro, *Repressaglia*, edizione Settimo Sigillo, Roma 1996; Gernot Gysecke, *Der Fall Priebke*, Verlagsgesellschaft Berg, Berg am Starnberger See 1997.

Anyone fighting and killing on the victors' side during the Second World War had nothing to fear, even if he had killed not just two but more than one hundred thousand people. Paul Tibbets, the Hiroshima bomber pilot who killed some 70,000 Japanese civilians by pressing a button – tens of thousands would die later after painful sufferings caused by radioactivity – received any number of medals and continued his career, ending it as a brigadier general.¹¹¹² Just like Erich Priebke, Tibbets had acted under orders, but unlike Priebke he would not have risked his life by refusing to obey the order given to him. He merely would have risked being demoted and a dishonorable discharge from the army. As opposed to Priebke, he never uttered a word of regret for his victims.

The vertiginous moral and civilizing progress assured to the western world by the victory of democracy in 1945 manifests itself in Germany today through the hunt for old men, which continues merrily on its way. To illustrate this, a news item from November 2009 may be quoted:¹¹¹³

“A 90-year-old former member of an elite Waffen SS unit has been charged with killing 58 Hungarian Jews who were forced to kneel beside an open pit before being shot and tumbling into their mass grave.

The man, named in the German press as Adolf Storms, becomes the latest pensioner to be prosecuted for alleged Nazi war crimes as courts rush to secure convictions before the defendants become too infirm and the witness testimony too unreliable.

Mr. Storms was found by accident last year, as part of a research project by Andreas Forster, a 28-year-old student at the University of Vienna.

The case against him was led by Ulrich Maass who is also the prosecutor in the trial of Heinrich Boere, 88, who is accused of shooting three Dutch resistance fighters. [...]

Mr. Storms was a member of the 5th Panzer Wiking Division which fought on the Eastern Front, moving through Ukraine into the Caucasus, taking part in a bloody fight for Grozny and the tank battles of Kharkov and Kursk before wheeling back through Eastern Europe. By most accounts it left a trail of bodies behind.

¹¹¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Tibbets

¹¹¹³ “Ex-SS trooper Adolf Storms charged over mass shooting of Jews,” *The Times*, 18 November 2009 (www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article6920433.ece).

By the spring of 1945 the unit was heading to Austria with the intention of surrendering to the Americans rather than to the Red Army.

But first the Wiking Division, led in the early days by General Felix Steiner, who is still revered among neo-Nazis, decided to clean up the evidence against it and eliminate the slave labourers who had dug its fortifications and defensive lines.

According to a statement issued by the regional court in Duisburg, where Mr. Storms has spent most of his retirement, 57 of the 58 victims were killed near the Austrian village of Deutsch Schuetzen. The mass grave there was excavated in 1995 by the Austrian Jewish association and the bodies given proper funerals.”

For comparison: Winston Churchill, the main responsible for the bombardment of Dresden, which turned a city overflowing with masses of refugees into a sea of flames, was presented the Karl prize of the city of Aachen ten years later!

11.2. The OSI

Jimmy Carter, president of the United States of America from January 1977 through January 1981, stressed again and again that his major goal was the establishment of human rights. We will not deny that Carter, while in office as well as later on, has many achievements to his credit. He also bears the responsibility, however, for a political decision which was to have horrible consequences for many innocent people. In 1979 he approved the establishment of the Office of Special Investigations, which had been requested a year earlier by Elizabeth Holtzmann, a Jewish congresswoman. The task of this office, operating within the U.S. Ministry of Justice, was the detection of “Nazi criminals” on American soil.

The German edition of the internet encyclopedia *Wikipedia* describes the OSI in the following terms:¹¹¹⁴

“The OSI was attributed greater authority than any other department. Its agents could carry out themselves any necessary steps – from the initial investigations up to an eventual trial in court –

¹¹¹⁴ http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_Special_Investigations

they were allowed to negotiate directly with foreign governments and request the support of other U.S. agencies.”

Since its founding this agency has focused on revoking the U.S. citizenship of immigrants of German or east European origin for alleged “Nazi crimes,” although more often than not these crimes are freely invented and even though these immigrants have lived in the U.S. for decades as peaceful and law-abiding citizens. Once these people are no longer U.S. citizens, they can be expelled at will or be extradited to states which want to prosecute them.

It is interesting to note that the OSI seems to be solidly in Jewish hands: ever since 1995, it has been headed by Eli Rosenbaum of Jewish faith, his deputy is Ronnie L. Edelman,¹¹¹⁵ of Jewish faith as well. Rosenbaum’s predecessor was Neal Sher,¹¹¹⁶ likewise a Jew, as was the OSI chief investigator Edwards Stutman who died in 2005 and who had managed to have Demjanjuk stripped once again of his U.S. citizenship after the latter’s acquittal in Israel and return to the United States.¹¹¹⁷ In other words: a revengeful minority within the U.S. government is allowed to further its own political agenda at free will.

11.3. Demjanjuk’s Extradition to Israel and His Trial

First of all we shall offer the reader a few facts concerning Demjanjuk’s biography. For the most part they have been taken from Hans Peter Rullmann’s excellent documentation *Der Fall Demjanjuk* (The Demjanjuk Case).¹¹¹⁸ Born Ivan Demjanjuk in Ukraine in 1920, he joined the Soviet Red Army and was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1942. He was initially assigned to railroad repair work and was later moved to the PoW camp at Chelm in eastern Poland. After the war he lived in Germany for a few years, married a Ukrainian woman, and emigrated to the U.S. in 1952, where he found employment in the automobile industry and was naturalized in 1958.

¹¹¹⁵ www.justice.gov/opa/pr/Pre_96/February95/81.txt.html

¹¹¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neal_Sher

¹¹¹⁷ Obituaries: “Edward Stutman, Prosecuted Nazis in US,” *Washington Post*, 30 September 2005. “His identity as an American Jew was also extremely important.”

¹¹¹⁸ Hans Peter Rullmann, *Der Fall Demjanjuk. Unschuldiger oder Massenmörder?*, Verlag für ganzheitliche Forschung und Kultur, Viöl 1987.

¹¹¹⁸ Hans Peter Rullmann, *Der Fall Demjanjuk. Unschuldiger oder Massenmörder?*, Verlag für ganzheitliche Forschung und Kultur, Viöl 1987.

The fact that Demjanjuk, together with other exiles, became active in an anti-communist Ukrainian movement in his new home state of Ohio would lead to his doom. A certain Emil Hanusiak who worked for the pro-Soviet newspaper *News from Ukraine* habitually published articles in which the Ukrainian exiles were blackened as “Nazi collaborators.” In 1975 Demjanjuk became a target for Hanusiak’s aims. He saw himself accused of having been a guard at the Sobibór camp during the war.

Concerning the background of the campaign against the automobile worker, the Israeli lawyer Yoram Sheftel, who would later prevent Demjanjuk from ending up on the gallows in Jerusalem, had this to say:¹¹¹⁹

“Since 1987, when it became widely known that I had joined Demjanjuk’s defense team, I have been asked often what it was that could possibly have motivated the Soviet Union to malign this man, who in 1976 had been a blue-collar laborer at the Ford plant in Cleveland, and, to all intents and purposes, a perfectly nondescript sort of man. My answer has always been that the objective was not the specific man, John Demjanjuk. The Soviet objective, as far as I was concerned, was to cause a rift between the Jewish and the Ukrainian communities in North America. Because, despite the many difficult and painful memories of strained relations between the Jews and the Ukrainians, these two communities were beginning to cooperate in anti-Soviet activity. And it was causing considerable concern to the Soviet leaders in the Kremlin and their agents in North America, especially a certain Michael Hanusiak [...]. The Soviets, therefore, decided to nip the Jewish-Ukrainian ‘conspiracy’ in the bud. The Soviet success with the Demjanjuk plot was complete. From the very beginning, Demjanjuk had cried out that he had never been a guard in any extermination camp, that all the Soviet accusations were no more than a vicious lie. As a result, much of the Ukrainian community in North America closed ranks around him. Not surprisingly, the Jewish community stood firmly on the other side – Demjanjuk’s plea of innocence were seen as just another anti-Semitic Ukrainian lie. Inevitably, a deep rift between the two communities developed, to the obvious glee of the Soviets.”

¹¹¹⁹ Yoram Sheftel, *Defending ‘Ivan the Terrible.’ The Conspiracy to convict John Demjanjuk*, Regnery Publishing, Washington 1996, pp. ix, x.

This is a most convincing explanation. In 1976, the U.S. Immigration Service started investigating the Demjanjuk case. Gitta Sereny tells us:¹¹²⁰

“In Demjanjuk’s case, the U.S. immigration authorities questioned the 12 survivors of the Sobibór camp, then still living in the U.S., but not one of them was able to identify Demjanjuk. In April of 1976, the authorities sent 17 photos to Israel, including the photo for his 1951 entry visa. [...] While none of the survivors there could identify Demjanjuk, it came as a surprise that several survivors of Treblinka felt that he was Ivan the Terrible, the gas-chamber guard of their nightmares. A few months later, in August of 1976, the Soviet authorities again became involved in the case. A Ukrainian newspaper [the News from Ukraine already mentioned] published a testimony, by then 30 years old, of a former Sobibór guard named Boris Danilchenko which he had given in a Soviet war crimes trial. At the time, Danilchenko had said in court, the man in Sobibór he knew best had been a guard by the name of Ivan Demjanjuk who later served, like himself, as a guard in the concentration camp at Flossenbürg.”

Hanusiak’s proof was an alleged service ID card issued to Demjanjuk in the Trawniki training camp where Ukrainian and other east European volunteers had been trained as concentration camp guards. The document states that Demjanjuk was assigned to Sobibór on 27 March 1943. It did not say anything about Demjanjuk’s alleged assignment to Treblinka. This “original document” was put at the disposal of the Israeli judiciary by the Soviets as late as December 1986, when Demjanjuk had already spent 9 months in a Jerusalem jail.

In an extensive study Dieter Lehner has advanced a number of arguments in favor of a thesis that this document is a gross falsification.² We will limit ourselves to the most important points:

- 1) The ID card contains obvious technical irregularities for this kind of document:¹¹²¹

“1. A combination of different fonts showing diverse characteristics. 2. Missing umlauts and umlauts of the letter ‘ü’ that have obviously been replaced in some other way. 3. The lines, especially those on the first page, are not parallel. 4. The special

¹¹²⁰ Gitta, Sereny, “Die falsche Schuld,” *Die Zeit*, No. 44, 1992, www.zeit.de/1992/44/Die-falsche-Schuld

¹¹²¹ D. Lehner, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 16f.

characters for 'Schutzstaffel' – SS – have different shapes and sizes. 5) The spelling of the word 'Grösse' has 'ss' instead of the correct 'ß.'"

- 2) According to the ID card, Demjanjuk was assigned to the L.G. (farm) at Okzow on 22nd Sept. 1942 and on 27th March 1943 to Sobibór. Lehner stresses that these indications do not show the termination of any of these assignments. A third assignment, either between or after the other two, cannot be found either.

Lehner concludes:¹¹²²

"Thus, it is left to the discretion of the observer, whether the holder of this ID card went directly from Okzow to Sobibór or whether he returned to Trawniki in between. If that was the case, we must ask when the guard came back from Okzow, who included the mention of 'Sobibór,' and why there is no mention of an assignment to 'Treblinka.' If eye witnesses allege to have seen him there, a corresponding entry should show up in the 'assignments' section of the ID card."

In other words, the ID card was, first of all, an obvious falsification and it would, secondly, not have provided any indication for a stay of the holder at Treblinka.

We do not know why the KGB – which certainly had at its disposal a host of experienced forgers – produced such an amateurish falsification, and there is no other suspect than the KGB in this case. We can of course exclude any involvement of the Israelis in this connection, because they would have been sure to produce a document in line with the statements of the witnesses to the effect that Demjanjuk had indeed been stationed at Treblinka rather than at Sobibór.

Although the U.S. judicial authorities at the time had at their disposal only a facsimile and although the ID card, as we have seen, did not prove Demjanjuk's presence at Treblinka, they decided to recognize its validity.

After Demjanjuk had been stripped of his American citizenship in 1981, he was extradited to Israel in February of 1986 – a country which did not even exist at the operational time of Treblinka camp.

The only two prominent U.S. citizens who mustered up enough courage for Demjanjuk's defense were Patrick Buchanan – who compared the Demjanjuk case to the Dreyfus affair¹¹²³ – and the House member

¹¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹¹²³ *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1 October 1986.

James Traficant. The active support Traficant showed for the persecuted man, plus his critical opinion towards the Jewish lobby in the United States, were probably the reasons why Traficant had to go to prison for seven years in 2002 on maybe trumped-up charges of corruption and tax evasion.¹¹²⁴

The trial started in February of 1987, one year after Demjanjuk's extradition. It was originally planned to use a football stadium for this purpose, but in the end the Israeli authorities opted for a movie theater. The media lost no time to fan a general hysteria, and the Israeli schools were compelled to deal with the trial.

It is obvious that the Israelis, just like the Soviets before them, were not interested in Demjanjuk as a person. The trial was primarily meant to feed the persecution psychosis of the Jews both in Israel and abroad and to align them unhesitatingly behind the state of Israel as the only bulwark of the Jews against any renewal of the "Holocaust." It also served as a useful tool for diverting the world's attention from the ruthless Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. Aside from that, the ensuing show trial was an ideal means of fomenting hatred against the Ukrainian people with which, according to Dov Ben-Meir, the Speaker of the Knesseth at the time, the Jews have a long open account to settle.

The account he referred to dates back to the 17th century. At that time the Cossacks under Bogdan Chmelnitzki revolted against Polish domination in western Ukraine and defeated the Poles in two major battles (1648 and 1649). There were also anti-Jewish pogroms during the revolt, primarily because the Polish masters had entrusted the collection of taxes from the local population to Jewish collectors, who subsequently had come to be hated by the Ukrainians. The revisionist Arnulf Neumaier notes:¹¹²⁵

"The circumstance that the Monster of Treblinka had to be a Ukrainian probably has historical roots in the time when the Cossacks liberated the western part of the Ukraine from Jewish oppressors and tax-collectors. Oaths of vengeance and instinctive hatred à la the Old Testament survive for centuries."

Neumaier's view seems to be correct, for when the president of the organization "Americans for Human Rights in Ukraine," Bozhena Olzhaniwsky, in a courteous letter to the Knesseth president dated 18 Sep-

¹¹²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Traficant

¹¹²⁵ Arnulf Neumaier, "The Treblinka Holocaust," in: G. Rudolf (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 34), p. 474.

tember 1986 expressed her unease about the way the Israeli legal authorities had been handling the Demjanjuk case, she received the following reply a few weeks later:¹¹²⁶

“At first I did not want at all to reply, because since the days of Bogdan Chmelnitzky, the Jewish people has a long score to settle with the Ukrainian people. [...] However, on second thought I reached the conclusion that an application such as yours, coming from an American citizen (even though of Ukrainian origin), must not remain without a response. [...] To you and your friends, I suggest that you go to church not only on Sunday but also every day of the week, and that you kneel there until bleeding at the knees in asking forgiveness for what your people has done to ours.”

In defense of Israel we must state, however, that not all of its citizens approved Ben-Meir’s primitive racial slurs. The writer Avraham Shifrin, for example, had some very harsh words to say to the Knesseth president.¹¹²⁷

During the trial, former detainees from Treblinka took the witness stand and recited the most sickening horror stories.¹¹²⁸ The witness Eliyahu Rosenberg stated under oath:¹¹²⁹

“I saw him especially when I was working on the ramp every day, whenever consignments of Jews arrived for extermination. I saw him when he stood next to the gas chambers at the entrance to the corridor with a destructive instrument in his possession, such as a small short iron pipe, and a whip. He also wore a belt with his pistol. This shouldn’t be so, all the destructive instruments together... I also saw that he had a dagger, I saw him with these destructive instruments, and how he would strike, lash, cut... these victims at the entrance to the gas chambers.... [...] They knew how to strike, to strike. We were already there, at that place, and we got used to the beatings. But not to the tortures. God almighty, why tortures? Why cut living flesh from people? Nobody ordered them to do so, no one, he did it alone, on his own initiative. I never heard any German telling him to do that... [...]

I was there on the ramp. We had removed the bodies from the gas chambers, Ivan came out of his cabin, he saw how I was standing

¹¹²⁶ H.P. Rullmann, *op. cit.* (note 1118), pp. 202f.

¹¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 206 ff.

¹¹²⁸ Cf. the introduction to the present book.

¹¹²⁹ Criminal Case No. 373/86, State of Israel vs. Ivan (John) Demjanjuk, Verdict, pp. 184ff.

there, the place was full of corpses, he said to me... lower your trousers... lay down on them... I saw this incident, and in a second I understood: this was it, I was finished, either by the pipe in his hand or in another manner. Lefler (one of the German SS men) was standing there. He was standing and looking. I ran to him, I stood to attention and said to him (in German): Ivan wants me to have sexual relations with a dead woman. So then he went up to him and reprimanded him. Ivan only said to me (in Russian), I'll give it to you. He gave it to me and he found the opportunity."

Eliyahu Rosenberg had a problem, however: it turned out that he had stated in writing in 1947 while in Vienna:¹¹³⁰

"The second of August 1943 was set as the day of the revolt. [...] About three-thirty in the afternoon everything was prepared for the revolt. [...] Then one of the water-carriers right then dashed into the barracks and yelled: 'Revolution in Berlin.' This was the signal. [...] Thereupon some people rushed into the barracks of the Ukrainian guard detachment, where among others also the Ukrainian Ivan was sleeping, and killed the Ukrainians with shovels."

As had been generally expected, the Israeli court pronounced the death sentence in April of 1988, yet it would not be carried out. Even at such an early time too many inconvenient incidents had occurred, and Demjanjuk's lawyer Y. Sheftel used them as much as he could. (A gangster had poured acid into Sheftel's face in late 1988, a few days after another lawyer of the defense, Dov Eitan, had fallen from a sky scraper and died from the consequences of this tragic accident.) Sheftel eventually claimed to have identified the true "Ivan the Terrible," a certain Ivan Marchenko who had somehow disappeared.

The name Marchenko had originally been furnished by a former prostitute from the hamlet of Treblinka, near the camp, who had counted several of the Ukrainian guards among her clients during the war, Marchenko being one of them, but Sheftel found more evidence in the USSR. According to Soviet legal records, a Ukrainian by the name of Nikolai Shelayev – who had been sentenced to death and shot in 1952 for alleged crimes committed at Treblinka – had allegedly identified Marchenko as "the operator of the gas chambers at Treblinka." Shelayev's statements were confirmed by other former Treblinka guards, and an identity card for Marchenko came to light as well.

¹¹³⁰ A photocopy of Rosenberg's statement is given by H.P. Rullmann, *op. cit.* (note 1118), pp. 133ff.

Under these circumstances the Israeli authorities would have been completely unable to justify Demjanjuk's execution. While they did attempt to prosecute him for crimes committed at Sobibór and Flossenbürg, there were no witnesses for such acts. Moreover, according to the U.S.-Israel extradition agreement, Demjanjuk could not even be prosecuted in these matters, as his extradition had been granted solely in connection with his alleged crimes at Treblinka. The incriminating ID card from Sobibór was not even mentioned in the sentence. In the end, John Demjanjuk was acquitted on appeal and was able to return to the U.S. in September of 1993. His citizenship was restored.¹¹³¹

The juicy part of the story was that ever since 1979 the OSI had known of Demjanjuk's innocence. The German *Spiegel* journalist Carlos Widmann wrote in 1993:¹¹³²

“America’s official Nazi hunters owe the fact that they did not burden their conscience with a judicial murder to two groups of people: to the Ukrainian associations which collected millions for Demjanjuk’s defense and to Israel’s supreme court which, in the end, used common sense. This debt will not be repaid. [...] Since 1976 the Nazi hunters within the U.S. Department of Justice, who had been trying to sell Demjanjuk to the Israelis as a sadistic mass murderer, apparently knew all the time what was going on. As early as 1979 they had evidence from the USSR which demonstrated clearly that Ivan Demjanjuk was in no way ‘Ivan the Terrible.’ This evidence had been withheld by the agency from all parties concerned: from the U.S. court which stripped Demjanjuk of his American citizenship, from the Israeli court which sentenced him to death, and, quite naturally, also from the defense lawyers.”

11.4. Demjanjuk's Extradition to Germany

It goes without saying that the OSI was unhappy with its defeat and was soon to start out again to have Demjanjuk, by now nearly 80 years old, once more removed from U.S. soil. The Internet encyclopedia Wikipedia summarizes the events as follows:¹¹³³

¹¹³¹ For our description of the trial we relied upon Y. Sheftel, *op. cit.* (note 1119).

¹¹³² Carlos Widman, “Das Schreckliche an Iwan” (The terrible about Ivan), *Der Spiegel*, no 39/1993.

¹¹³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Demjanjuk

“Demjanjuk was put on trial again in 2001, and on February 21, 2002, Matia ruled that Demjanjuk had not produced any credible evidence of his whereabouts during the war and that the Justice Department had proved its case against him.

On April 30, 2004, a three-judge panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Demjanjuk could be again stripped of his U.S. citizenship because the Justice Department had presented ‘clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence’ of Demjanjuk’s service in Nazi death camps. The United States Supreme Court declined to hear his appeal in November 2004.”

In his 2002 decision judge Paul Matia had written:¹¹³⁴

“In serving at Sobibór, the defendant contributed to the process by which thousands of Jews were murdered by asphyxiation with carbon monoxide.”

We cannot decide whether Demjanjuk did serve at Sobibór or other NS camps. What can be said, though, is that in 1948, when demanding his recognition as a political refugee in Germany, and again during the interrogations preceding his extradition from the U.S. to Israel, he made certain unbelievable and contradictory statements. When he applied in 1948 for the status of a political refugee, he declared to have worked from 1937 (!) until January of 1943 as a farmer in “Sobibór, Chełm, Poland” and to have later been employed as a worker at Pillau, Danzig, and Munich until the end of the war.¹¹³⁴ As there was indeed a farm near Sobibór, it is theoretically possible for Demjanjuk to have worked there (although certainly not from 1937), but it does not strike us as very likely. If, however, he was indeed assigned to the camp at Sobibór as a guard, this is a strong argument against the view of this camp as an “extermination centre,” for in that case Demjanjuk would certainly have been bright enough not to mention this place in his application at all.

In his sentence of 2002, judge Matia claimed to possess documentary evidence proving that Demjanjuk had been stationed not only at Sobibór, but at Majdanek and Flossenbürg as well.¹¹³⁴ Regarding Sobibór, as far as we know, there is no evidence other than the forged ID card issued at the Trawniki training camp. Judge Matia claims that documentary evidence was found in a Lithuanian archive proving Demjanjuk’s presence as a guard at Majdanek in January of 1943. He is said to have been punished at the time for having left the camp to go shopping with-

¹¹³⁴ Judge Paul Matia, United States District Court, Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division, *US of America versus John Demjanjuk*. “Findings of Fact” (2002).

out being authorized to do so and in spite of a camp closure. Even though incriminating evidence from Soviet sources must *a priori* be viewed critically, we cannot exclude that Demjanjuk was actually at Majdanek. His stay at Flossenbürg, according to judge Matia, is confirmed by a German document from that camp.

To the extent that these documents are indeed authentic – something we are not in a position to judge, except for the Trawniki ID card shown decades ago as having been forged – Demjanjuk would indeed have misinformed the U.S. agencies before his emigration by hiding his activity as a guard. If he had owned up to this, not only would his application for a U.S. visa have been rejected, but he would also have run the risk of being extradited to the Soviet Union, which would have been tantamount to a death sentence. It is quite possible that Demjanjuk did not tell the truth during his interrogations by the American judicial authorities in 1976. Who would want to blame him for that? We must not forget that he was still running the risk of being extradited to the Soviet Union. That this fear was not at all unfounded is shown by the case of another Ukrainian, Fyodor Fedorenko, who was also accused by the Soviets of having served as a guard at Treblinka. Fedorenko was extradited to the USSR by the USA in 1984, sentenced to death in 1986, and executed by shooting a year later.¹¹³⁵

Once he had been stripped of his U.S. citizenship one more time, the U.S. authorities decided in 2005 that he was to be deported to Ukraine, to Poland, or to Germany. While both the Ukrainian and the Polish authorities refused to receive him (a sure indication that they did not have the slightest evidence to prosecute him for any crimes committed during the war!), Germany demanded his extradition in 2008, which was eventually accepted.

11.5. The Run-Up to the Munich Trial

The trial of John Demjanjuk opened in Munich at the end of November 2009. In the weeks before it began, some sobering remarks were made in Germany. A press release of 17 November by the *Südwestrundfunk* said:¹¹³⁶

¹¹³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fyodor_Fedorenko

¹¹³⁶ “Der Fall Ivan Demjanjuk,” *Südwestrundfunk*, 17 Nov. 2009 (www.swr.de/presseservice/archiv/2009/-

“Experts doubt [...] that Demjanjuk will be convicted. The Dutch jurist Christiaan Rüter [...] does not believe in a conviction. For years Germany has not prosecuted low-ranking camp guards like Demjanjuk, and if there were trials, they resulted in acquittals. If that has been legal practice for years, the Munich court could not suddenly diverge from it. [...] For its 50th anniversary the Central Agency [for the prosecution of NS crimes] needed something special, a famous name for it to occupy center stage once again – that was his [Rüter’s] provocative thesis. According to this not legal but political arguments would have brought about the investigation and the trial against Demjanjuk.”

How true!

Whether the Munich court will bring itself to pronouncing an acquittal is uncertain. Considering the enormous political pressure exerted on the court, we fear that this will not be the case. Before the trial started, it became known that “close to 40 joint plaintiffs have been accepted, all of them family members of people murdered at Sobibór.”¹¹³⁷ There is no better proof for our thesis that the real purpose of the trial is the promotion of the “Holocaust” hysteria and the further cementation of the legally prescribed view of history, because not a single one of the 40 joint plaintiffs can contribute anything to the questions the court must answer: firstly whether Demjanjuk was ever stationed at Sobibór at all, and more importantly whether he committed any crimes there.

¹¹³⁷ /id=4288020/nid=4288020/did=5628852/11r9xku/index.html)
www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/386/494719/text/

12. Conclusions

12.1. The Moral Responsibility of the Camp Personnel

Our conclusions are absolutely clear: Sobibór was not an extermination camp; it had no “gassing building” and hence no homicidal gas chambers. Some 10,000 people may have died there; such a figure would amount to one twenty-fifth of the figure of 250,000 victims widely quoted in the literature, or to one seventeenth of the figure of 170,000 given by J. Schelvis in the revised edition of his book, or to one fifteenth of the “minimum number” of 150,000 victims assumed by the Hagen court in 1966.

If our thesis is correct – and we are convinced that it is – and if Sobibór was a transit camp for Jews being moved into areas further east, we must obviously reassess the moral responsibility of the camp personnel, from the commanding officer on down to the Ukrainian guards who constituted the lowest echelon of the chain of command. It goes without saying that even in such a case the personnel involved did execute orders that constituted a gross violation of human rights, for no-one can argue against the fact that the deportation and expropriation of people on the sole basis of them being members of an ethnic or religious group and not for any individual wrongdoing is indeed a most serious transgression against human rights. On the other hand, these people were acting under orders, the execution of which they could not refuse without possibly endangering their own lives. It was not up to them to decide whether such orders were lawful or not, but the manner in which they executed them certainly was. Thus, the moral responsibility of the camp personnel hinges on the question as to whether or not they treated the detainees – during their short stay in the camp – as humanely as was possible under the prevailing circumstances, or whether they humiliated them; whether they made things bearable for the working Jews, or whether they did their part to create a little hell of their own for these people.

We cannot answer these questions in an unequivocal manner, as there is no documentary evidence describing the conditions in the Sobibór camp. Witness testimony is totally unreliable; the witnesses have, without exception, lied with respect to the main point of the charges – the alleged mass killing of Jews (by means of a “black fluid,” “chlorine,” or engine exhaust gases) – and we thus have no reason to believe their statements on the subject of any sadistic behavior of the camp personnel.

On the other hand, there are accounts whose veracity can hardly be disputed. Leon Feldhendler, who was interned at Sobibór from early 1943 until the uprising on 14 October of the same year,¹¹³⁸ describes the living conditions of the Jewish artisans in the following words:¹¹³⁹

“In camp I, Jewish tradesmen worked for the Germans – joiners, tailors, cobblers. They had their own barracks for sleeping in. There were 30 Germans and 180 Ukrainians. The tradesmen were living very nicely, in their workshops, they had comfortable quarters. [...] Their daily rations consisted of half a kilogram of bread, soup, horsemeat, groats (from the transports) twice a week. [...] Work: from 6 a.m. through 12 noon, an hour for lunch and then again work until 5 p.m. [...] Time off between 5 and 10 p.m., at their discretion.”

It is a bit difficult to believe that the Jewish inmate Feldhendler would in any way have embellished conditions at Sobibór in order to white-wash the National Socialist system.

In view of these considerations we decide as follows: The camp personnel is to be acquitted of the main point of the indictment – the systematic murder of Jews – for manifest innocence, as well as of the secondary point – of willful ill-treatment of detainees – for lack of evidence.

We assume that euthanasia was practiced at Sobibór on a number of detainees (the feeble-minded or those having contagious diseases). In that case the SS men concerned would be guilty. Any alleged difficulties in providing sufficient food for the bulk of the population could be regarded as mitigating circumstances, but not as a justification. On the other hand, if euthanasia of the feeble-minded is presently considered in Western countries as “Nazi barbarism,” we wish to call this a blatant and repulsive hypocrisy in view of the fact that these same countries al-

¹¹³⁸ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 234.

¹¹³⁹ N. Blumental (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 22), p. 204.

low the piercing, the dismemberment, and the cauterization of an untold number of healthy babies in their mother's womb (some 25% of all pregnancies in the U.S. end with an abortion¹¹⁴⁰) and that in the U.S. many hundreds of abortions occur every year during the third trimester of pregnancy, when the baby is fully viable.¹¹⁴¹ People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

12.2. "I am a Portion of that Force..."

Goethe has Mephistopheles say "I am a portion of that force which ever wills Evil and always creates Good." This also applies to those who, in 2000, entrusted Andrzej Kola, professor of archeology at the University of Torun, with soundings and diggings on the grounds of the Sobibór camp. Professor Kola was obviously aware of the explosive power of whatever he would or would not find. He knew precisely what was expected of him. He consequently paid the required lip service to the Holocaust creed. Irrespective of the enormous pressure exercised upon him, he retained the necessary minimum of professional ethics preventing him from making use of falsifications. Even though he does not say so in so many words, his findings do not leave the least doubt in respect of the fact that the "gassing building" described by the "witnesses" did not exist – and if there was no such building, the whole matter is resolved.

Professor Kola also did not open any mass graves and did not assess the amount of any human remains. This, again, speaks for itself, as does the fact that he carefully avoided to compare the results of his investigations with any witness testimonies. The enormous T-shaped barrack (Object E) with its longitudinal dimension of 60 to 80 meters as well as Object A, a building equipped with a furnace, confront the mainstream "Holocaust"-historians with insurmountable problems and strengthen the revisionist thesis of Sobibór the transit camp.

Up to the year 2001 revisionists were limited to maintaining that the official Sobibór version was absolutely unbelievable. The orthodox thesis involved a load of contradictions which it was unable to resolve: the lack of any documentary evidence in respect of an extermination policy, the absurdities in the witnesses' accounts, the fact that after the liquida-

¹¹⁴⁰ See www.realweb.ifastnet.com/stats.html.

¹¹⁴¹ See www.lifeandlibertyforwomen.org/issues/issues_partial_birth_abortions.html.

tion of the camp the surrounding forests showed no significant decrease in area (where did the fuel for the cremation of the alleged 150,000 to 250,000 corpses come from?).

Ever since the publication of professor Kola's results, however, the story of the gassing of Jews at Sobibór has moved from the realm of the unlikely into the realm of the impossible. Even if professor Kola may not have set out to accomplish this voluntarily, he has earned our gratitude.

12.3. The Emperor's New Clothes

For a naïve observer it would be possible to argue as follows: The Hagen court has accepted a figure of "at least 150,000" for the number of victims at Sobibór, the leading specialist on the camp, Jules Schelvis, opted for 170,000 victims. This figure of 150,000 to 170,000 amounts to a mere 2.5 to 3% of the infamous figure of "six million" and is not really needed to maintain the thesis of the Holocaust. Could not the orthodox historians under the circumstances give up the claim of the Sobibór gas chambers and concede this point to the revisionists?

They cannot. First of all, the existence of gas chambers at Sobibór has been "proved" at three trials in Germany – Berlin in 1950, Frankfurt upon Main in 1950, and Hagen in 1965/66 – and is thus judicially notorious. At these trials, eight men were condemned to prison terms ranging from three years to life imprisonment. Of the latter, one (Erich Bauer) died in prison after 31 years, another (Hubert Gomerski) spent 22 years behind bars before he was pardoned, and the third (Karl Frenzel) remained in prison for 16 years. If the German judiciary were to admit that blatant miscarriage of justice had taken place at all three Sobibór trials, all other cases of such "Nazi crimes" would be up for review, because all trials of camp personnel had followed the same route as these trials: "We have sworn witness testimonies, why do we need forensic or documentary proof?"

Let us take this a step further: If the judiciary and the historians have "made a mistake" on Sobibór, what reason is there to believe the claims made in connection with the other camps of *Aktion Reinhardt*? If Sobibór falls, then so does Bełżec, where professor Kola has also carried out investigations leading to the same conclusions. Who will then believe the claims for Treblinka?

The Majdanek camp – which was attributed 1.5 million victims at Nuremberg¹¹⁴² – can no longer be called an “extermination camp”: the head of the history department of the Majdanek Museum, Tomasz Kranz, brought the number of victims down to 78,000 in 2005¹¹⁴³ – a figure which is still too high by at least 28,000.¹¹⁴⁴

The smallest and least well known of the six “extermination camps,” Chełmno, where 150,000 Jews were allegedly killed in “gas vans,” cannot in any way fill the void caused by the loss of the “Reinhardt camps.” Thus, only Auschwitz remains, the flagship of Holocaust propaganda and its weakest point, its Achilles heel, if there ever was one. In the face of the wide-ranging investigations of the revisionists, which have demonstrated time and again the complete lack of credibility of the official Auschwitz story, these “Holocaust” historians would in any kind of open debate find themselves beating a dead horse.

No, Sobibór cannot be given up, because that would cause a chain reaction bringing down the whole mendacious structure of the Holocaust like a house of cards. Hence, these historians cannot but close their eyes to the results of the archeological diggings and soundings and act like the crowd that praised the emperor’s new clothes in Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale, even though everyone who was able to see saw that his Majesty was naked.

12.4. The Moloch

“Who can stand firm under the pressure and in the face of powerful Jewish organizations and their campaigns? Practically, no one. These institutions’ hold on to the media, their perpetual moaning and recriminations, their systematic recourse to blackmail, their practice of telling lies designed to throw others off the track, the fear that they inspire (metus Judaeorum), their frenzy (be it real or make-believe) and their contempt of those who do not belong to the chosen people end up sweeping aside all obstacles. In order, suddenly, for such organizations not to be strictly obeyed it takes some exceptional historical circumstances. Then the humiliated, maligned, duped or

¹¹⁴² *IMT*, vol. VII, p. 590.

¹¹⁴³ Tomasz Kranz, “Ewidencja zgonów i śmiertelność więźniów KL Lublin,” in: *Zeszyty Majdanka*, no 23 (2005), p. 7-53.

¹¹⁴⁴ <http://juergen-graf.vho.org/articles/zur-revision-der-opferzahl-von-majdanek.html>

colonized goyim take the risk of holding up their heads and, sometimes, go so far as to rebel against their tyrants. The hoax or religion of the 'Holocaust' has progressively built itself up since its beginning with rabbinical lies born in Central Europe; thereafter, with the aid of war propaganda, these inventions were exported to Western Europe (including the neutral countries, the Vatican and bodies like the International Red Cross). Once in place, they spread throughout the United States, where they benefitted from the staging provided by Hollywood and the rest of the media. They came back with all the more force from 1945 onwards to pour into the heart of Europe. They strongly contributed to the creation of the State of Israel, a source of conflicts to come. They poisoned the post war world. The ferment of hatred that an imposture of these dimensions leaves in people's minds infects our society still nowadays. Prodigious financial extortions, grounded in intimidation or blackmail, have for half a century been feeding the trade, the business, the industry of the Shoah. One would almost say that the heads of these Jewish groups had done their best to strengthen, for the anti-Semites' satisfaction, all the stereotypes of the Jew as a liar, a crook, alternately whining and arrogant, crying out for vengeance till the end of time and everywhere demanding his pound of flesh. These Jews have resurrected Shylock." — Robert Faurisson¹¹⁴⁵

The foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 was an anachronism. Great-Britain had just granted independence to India; dozens of Asian and African territories were attempting ever harder to shed the white man's rule. Yet at that very moment of de-colonization, the Jews in Palestine were permitted to launch a colonial venture of their own – with the blessings of both the USA and the Soviet Union. The reason given was the allegedly incomparable suffering of the Jewish people during the Second World War.

When the reputation of the Zionist state had reached a low point in the 1980s because of the terror exercised in Lebanon by the Israeli invaders and their local henchmen, Israel was careful to have its fifth column in the USA stir up the case of John Demjanjuk who was labeled "Ivan the Terrible" and "The super-devil of Treblinka." He was subsequently extradited to Israel where a carefully orchestrated show trial was staged against him. The result was that the world media now spoke

¹¹⁴⁵ Robert Faurisson, *Pope Pius XII's Revisionism*, Historical Review Press, Uckfield 2006, pp. 49f.

of the “Treblinka gassings” rather than about the massacres against Palestinians. Although the trial resulted eventually in Demjanjuk’s acquittal – thanks mainly to the courageous efforts of Yoram Sheftel, his Israeli lawyer – this did not in any way impair the picture of “Treblinka, the extermination camp” that had been implanted in the mind of the public.

When the bloodthirsty terror of the Israeli army in the Gaza strip had caused world-wide disgust in late 2008 and early 2009, John Demjanjuk, now 89 years old, had to be dragged once again onto the propaganda stage. His trial in Germany, which is taking place while this book is prepared for publication, will bring the Holocaust into the limelight one more time.

The zeal of the German authorities to bring an old man to trial, although nothing concrete is there to justify this, cannot be explained solely by the proverbial servility of the German puppet state towards Israel and Zionist organizations. The German ruling class needs the Holocaust more than anything else for its own survival. It needs it to nip in the bud any kind of resurgence of German self-esteem, to block the rise of any national forces and ideas, and hence to remain in power.

In order to demonstrate over and over again to the German people as a whole and to young Germans in particular the abject character of the National Socialist system, the “freest state in German history” has required, ever since it came into being, a never-ending stream of Nazi-monsters as proof of the abominable state of mind of the German generation of WWII.

We will give a striking example of this policy: In 1984 the German magazine *Stern* arranged for a disgusting farce by setting up a meeting between Toivi Blatt and the former SS-*Oberscharführer* Karl Frenzel. The latter, born in 1911, had been arrested in 1962 and sentenced to life imprisonment at the Hagen Sobibór trial of 1966 for his complicity in the murder of at least 150,000 Jews. He had been released from prison in 1976, arrested again in 1980, but released once more after an appeal in 1981. Appeal proceedings had begun in 1982, had gone on for three years, and had ended with the confirmation of the previous sentence. In view of his advanced age and his poor health, Frenzel did not have to return to prison. He died in 1996.¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹⁴⁶ J. Schelvis, *op. cit.* (note 71), p. 253f.

In its edition of 22 March 1984, *Stern* published the verbatim account of the conversation between Frenzel and Blatt.¹¹⁴⁷ Here are a few excerpts:

Blatt: I see you sitting there, drinking your beer. You have a slight smile on your face. You could be anyone's neighbor, anyone's pal from the local sports club. But you are not just anyone. You are Karl Frenzel, SS-Oberscharführer. You were number three in the chain of command of Sobibór, the extermination camp. You were in charge of Lager I. Do you remember me?

Frenzel: Not really well. You were a little boy at the time.

Blatt: I was 15 years old. And I survived because you had me polish your shoes, no one else survived, not my father, not my mother, not my brother, none of the 2000 Jews from my home town of Izbica survived.

Frenzel: That is terrible, really terrible.

Blatt: At least a quarter of a million Jews were murdered at Sobibór. I survived. Why are you ready to talk to me?

Frenzel: I wish to beg your pardon. [...]

Blatt: Philip Bialowitz testified that you caught a 15-year-old friend of his stealing a can of sardines. You took him to Lager III, to the crematorium, and shot him.

Frenzel: That wasn't me.

Blatt: It wasn't you? And what happened to the Dutch Jews?

Frenzel: A Polish kapo told me that some Dutch Jews were organizing a revolt and I reported this to Niemann, the deputy camp commander. He ordered to execute all 72 of them.

Blatt: And you took them to the gas chamber...

Frenzel: No, I didn't. [...]

Blatt: Sobibór – the annihilation of 250,000 Jews – was that your duty?

Frenzel: We had to do our duty. I am sorry about what happened there, but I cannot undo it."

Let us stop for a moment to imagine the scene: After 16 years in prison Frenzel is a broken man who wants only one thing – not to go to prison again, to spend his remaining years as a free man. If there was one way of ruining his chances to have his sentence reduced or to be paroled, it would have been the denial of mass exterminations at Sobibór

¹¹⁴⁷ Ulrich Völklein, "Der Mörder und sein Zeuge" (*The murderer and his witness*), *stern*, No. 13, 22 March 1984.

and to insist that there had been no gas chambers in that camp. What would have been the use of such stubbornness? Not one out of a hundred readers of *Stern* would have believed him. Forty years of brain-washing had done their work.

So, Frenzel does what countless other defendants have done in so many trials of “NS criminals.” He does not deny the accusation as such, the organized mass murder of the Jews, but claims a state of emergency for himself, “we had to do our duty,” denying his own involvement in specific crimes, like the shooting of the 15-year-old boy or the gassing of the 72 Dutch working Jews who had plotted a revolt. He is successful, like so many other “Nazi criminals” – the judges, while confirming the original sentence, grant him parole.

We are sure that hundreds, nay thousands of German schools have dealt with this conversation between Frenzel and Blatt in their history or German language classes. It is an ideal example for implanting the image of the despicable German Nazi who does whatever he is ordered to do, unhesitatingly, regardless of what it is and then, coward at heart, either denies everything or places the responsibility on someone else.

This is the way in which the soul of the young generation of Germans has been poisoned – and an end is not in sight.

“Nazi monsters” becoming an increasingly rare species – for biological reasons – the show trial against John Demjanjuk may be the last chance to present such an ogre to the German public. The fact that this monster is not a German himself but a Ukrainian may be a slight blemish, but even this aspect can be used to advantage: the abject character of the German Nazis was such that these people did not hesitate to make use of the most evil scum of other European nations for the realization of their own murderous aims!

The “Holocaust” Moloch must be fed – with the Ukrainians who faced the execution squads after the arch liar Alexander Aronovitch Pelechsky “convicted” them through his testimony, with the former SS men Erich Bauer, Hubert Gomerski, and Karl Frenzel who withered behind bars for a total of 69 years; with Hermann Julius Höfle who was driven into suicide in a Vienna prison – or, which is much more likely, was simply liquidated; with Hermine Braunsteiner-Ryan who spent 17 years in jail for allegedly having selected Jewish children for the gas chambers at Majdanek, which, according to the findings of the Berlin court in 1950, never existed in the first place; with Gustav Wagner, who was knifed to death by a Jewish squad of killers after he had given him-

self up voluntarily to the Brazilian police; with 89-year-old John Demjanjuk who spent seven years in Israeli prisons and now finds himself again behind bars for freely invented crimes – the Moloch is insatiable.

His victims also include those who rise against the Big Lie. Wolfgang Fröhlich was sentenced in Austria to six years imprisonment, Gerd Honsik to five. In the “freest state in German history” Germar Rudolf spent 44 months behind bars, Ernst Zündel had been in prison since February of 2003, first in the U.S., then in Canada, finally in Germany. He was released on 1 March 2010. Sylvia Stolz, the revisionist lawyer, was sentenced to three years and three months imprisonment by the German Inquisition – nothing to write home about, really, if we compare this verdict to the term of 13 years brought down on the defense lawyer Horst Mahler in the same country.

In August of 2009 Horst Mahler’s Polish wife Elżbieta sent the following message to one of us (JG):

“I agree with you. I, too, admire my husband for his courage, but also for his generosity and his intelligence, which cannot be compared to that of anyone else I have met so far in my life. For myself and for my children who love him as they would their own father, his absence is a great loss. I do hope that he will not be kept in prison the whole time. That would come to thirteen years! That is a punishment fit for a murderer, but not for a man like my husband. I go to see Horst once a month; I cannot do it more often for lack of funds.”

The “Holocaust” rampart of lies cannot be brought down with one stroke. Its occupants are too strong. They control the governments, the judiciary, the media. Their financial means are virtually unlimited. All the revisionists can do is make dents in the walls of this rampart. If our book manages to make yet another breach, it has done its job.

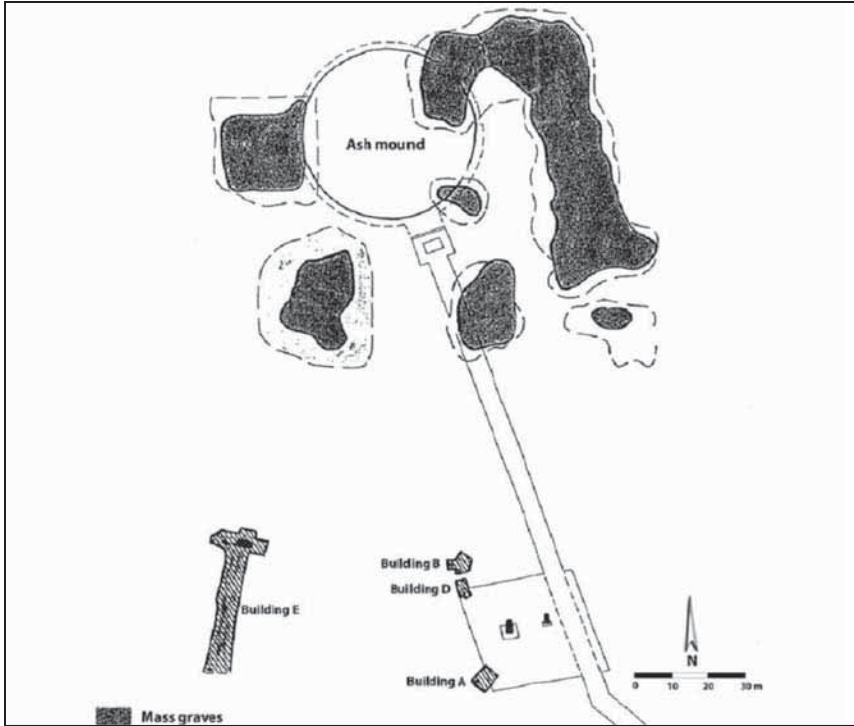
13. Appendix

13.1. Documents and Photographs

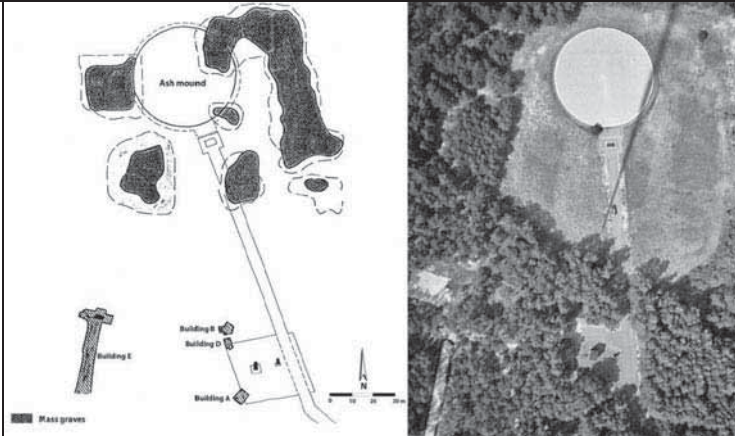


Document 1: The Sobibór area in 1933. The future location of the camp was situated west of the railroad, opposite the Sobibór railway station. Camp III was found some hundred meters west of the chapel (circled) near the railroad. Camp II was located south-east of camp III near the railway line. Source: section of the Opalin map from the *Mapa Taktyczna Polski 1:100,000* drawn up by the Wojskowy Instytut Geograficzny 1933-1937; taken from the Internet at

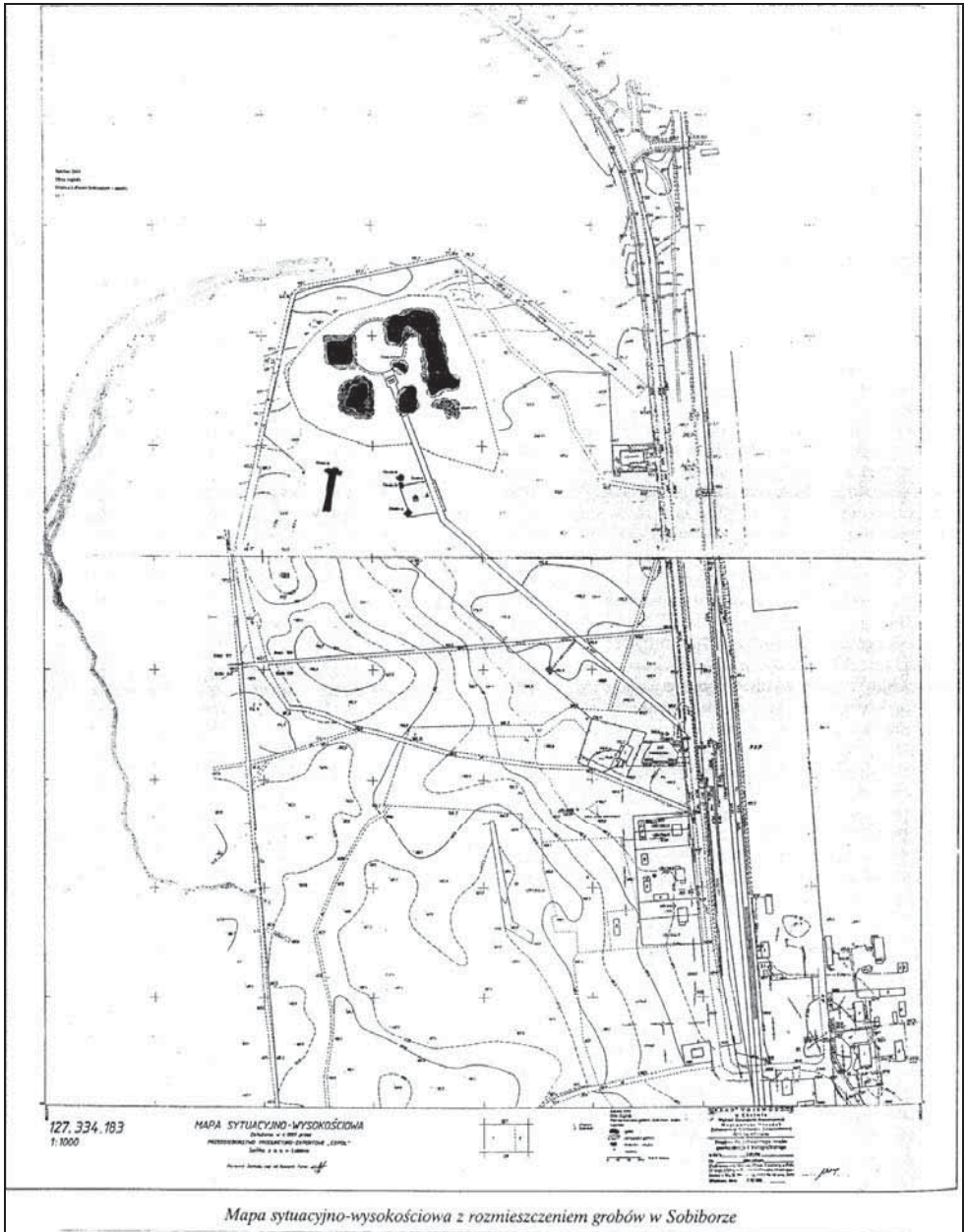
www.mapywig.org/m/WIG100_300DPI/P43_S37_OPALIN_300dpi.jpg



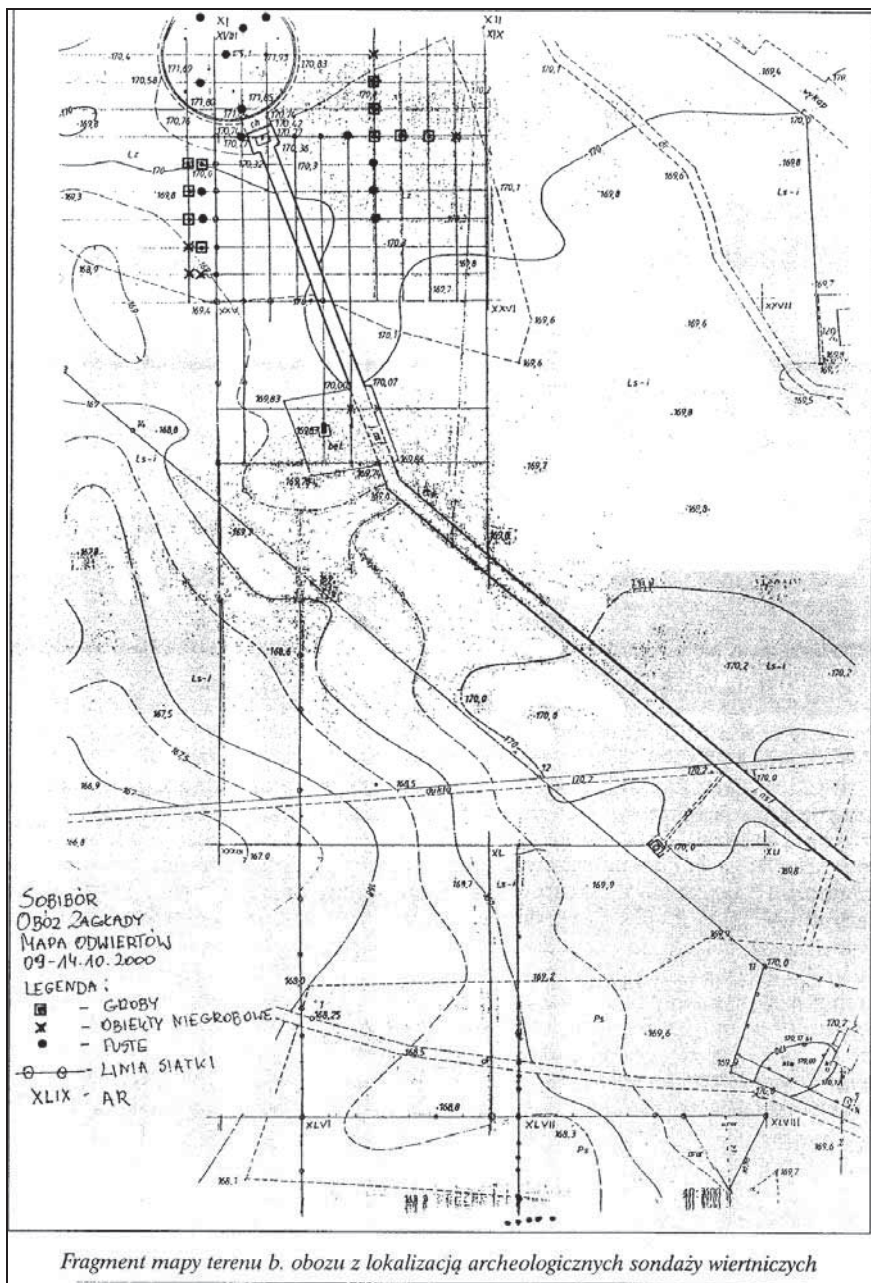
Document 2: Plan of the 2000-2001 excavations at Sobibór based on a map drawn by A. Kola. Black: areas with disturbed soil (mass graves acc. to Kola). Source: Gilead *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 28.



Document 3: Side-by-side comparison of the excavation map and a low-altitude aerial photograph of the former camp III area taken in 2008 (source: Gilead *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 293), p. 31). The scales of the pictures have been made identical on the basis of the diameter of the circular memorial mound, which, although ash-less, is misleadingly called “Ash Mound.” It is concial in shape and some 2 m high.



Document 5: Topographical map of the former Sobibór camp site with identified building remains and mass graves marked black. Source: Andrzej Kola, *op. cit.* (note 300), p. 122.



Document 6: Map showing the former area of camp III with part of the archaeological survey grid. Source: A. Kola, *op. cit.* (note 302), p. 92.



Photograph 1: st. kol. Sobibór = stacja kolejowa Sobibór = railway station Sobibór (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 2: The platform of the Sobibór station viewed from the south. The former camp is located to the left, beyond the railway and the road. (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno

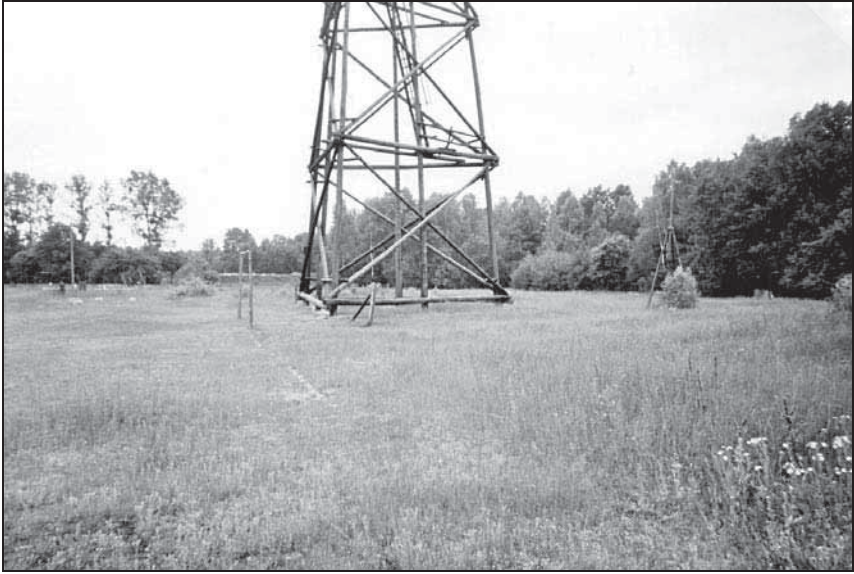


Photograph 3 (top): The final part of the railway station platform, view from south (June 1997).

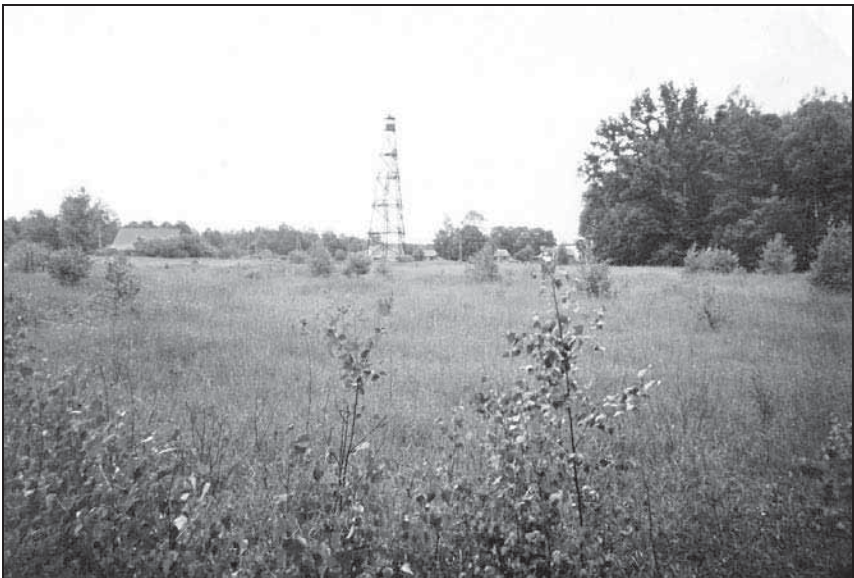
© Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 4 (left): The former area of the Sobibór camp seen from the railway platform, view from the west. In the background: The entrance to the soccer field located on the former area of camp I. Farther beyond is seen the foresters' tower used for spotting fires (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 5: The tower used for spotting forest fires located in the former area of camp I, view from the east (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 6: The former area of camp I viewed from the east (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 7: As Photograph 6, different perspective. © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 8: The former area of camp III viewed from the south. At the time this photograph was taken (June 1997) the circular memorial mound had not yet been constructed. © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 9: The former area of camp III viewed from the south (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 10: The former area of camp III viewed from the southwest (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



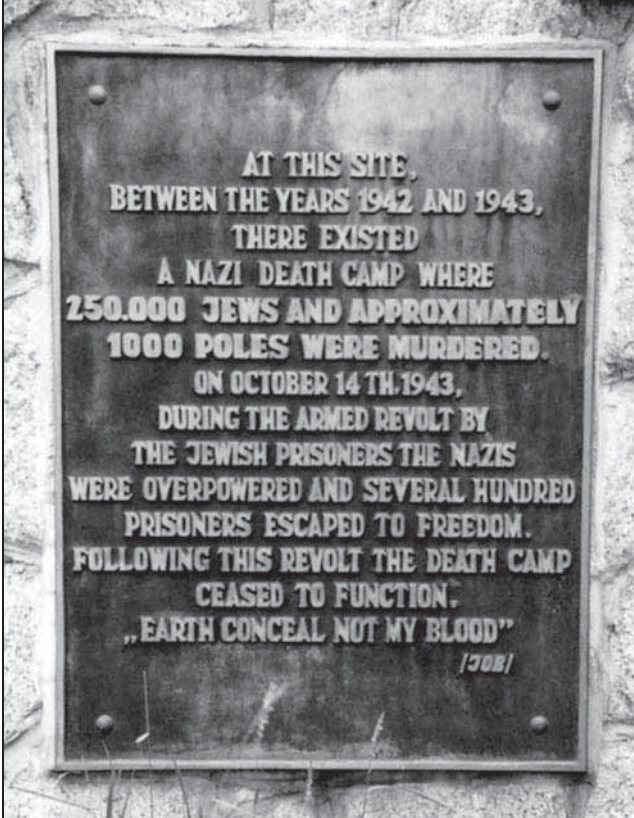
Photograph 11: A group of red pines behind the former area of camp III (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 12: Piles of red pine logs to the south of the former Sobibór camp area. (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno The pile in the center, consisting of red pine logs about 2 meters long with an average diameter of about 12 centimeters, was about 30 meters long and had an average height of approximately 2.5 meters. Its estimated weight is about 100 tons – sufficient for the cremation of about 330 corpses. The cremation of the alleged 169,000 corpses would have required about 500 piles like this, or a stack of the same height but a length of 15 kilometers.



Photograph 13
(top): The memorial at Sobibór (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 14
(left): Bronze plaque commemorating the 250,000 Jews and approximately 1,000 Poles allegedly killed at Sobibór and during the prisoner uprising of October 14, 1943 (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno



Photograph 15: Map of the Sobibór camp found inside the memorial building (June 1997). © Carlo Mattogno

13.2. SS Ranks and U.S. Army Equivalents

SS	U.S. ARMY	SS	U.S. ARMY
SS Mann	Private	Hauptsturmführer	Captain
Sturmmann	Private First Class	Sturmbannführer	Major
Rottenführer	Corporal	Obersturmbannführer	Lieutenant Colonel
Unterscharführer	Sergeant	Standartenführer	Colonel
Scharführer	Staff Sergeant	Oberführer	Colonel
Oberscharführer	Technical Sergeant	Brigadeführer	Brigadier General
Hauptscharführer	Master Sergeant	Gruppenführer	Lieutenant General
Sturmscharführer	First Sergeant	Obergruppenführer	General
Untersturmführer	Second Lieutenant	Oberstgruppenführer	General of the Army
Obersturmführer	First Lieutenant		

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 URSS-170 (IMT)
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13.4. Abbreviations

- | | |
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| BAK | Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Germany |
| CDJC | Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris, France |
| GARF | Gosudarstvenni Archiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow, Russia |
| IMT | International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, Germany |
| NARB | Natsionalni Archiv Respubliki Belarus, Minsk, Byelorussia |
| NMT | Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunal |
| PA | Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, Germany |
| RGVA | Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Vojennii Archiv, Moscow, Russia |
| ROD | Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam, Netherlands |
| StA | Staatsanwaltschaft, German State Prosecution office. |
| WAPL | Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie, Lublin, Poland |
| ZStL | Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen Ludwigsburg, Germany |

13.5. Index of Names

Included are the names of individuals mentioned in the main text.

- **A** —
- Abetz, Otto: 202
 Abrão (Abraham), inmate: 29, 30, 83
 Adam, Uwe Dietrich: 220, 221, 223, 226, 227, 247, 261, 262
 Ainsztain, Reuben: 364
 Aly, Götz: 230, 231
 Andersen, Christian Hans: 395
 Andreyev, Major: 85
 Antokolskij, Pawel: 85, 87
 Arad, Yitzhak: 37-39, 75, 78, 79, 81, 108, 113, 115-117, 121, 127, 128, 149, 151, 160, 161, 165, 259, 263, 264, 269, 270, 275, 283, 284, 369
 Aronson, Shlomo: 229
 Auerbach, Rachel: 59
 Aynat, Enrique: 364
- **B** —
- Bahir, Moshe: 31, 32, 34, 59, 72, 78, 82, 83, 96, 99-101, 115, 187, 188
 Bankier, David: 231
 Barbl, Heinrich: 268
 Barry, dog: 43, 99
 Baruch, inmate: 90
 Bauer, Erich: 27, 51, 52, 59, 60, 72, 73, 82, 83, 103, 104, 110, 114, 151, 172-178, 180, 188, 264, 265, 394, 399
 Bauer, Yehuda: 369
 Bauman, Paul: 162
 Baumert: 128
 Becher, Werner: 116
 Beckmann, Rudolf: 32, 101
 Bem, Marek: 164, 167, 168
 Ben Gurion, David: 162
 Benda, Untersturmführer: 22
 Ben-Meir, Dov: 384, 385
 Benz, Wolfgang: 46, 247
 Berenstein, Tatiana: 298, 321, 324, 325
 Berg, Ernst: 91
 Berg, Friedrich Paul: 29, 258
 Bialowitz, Philip: 398
 Bielakow, B.: 190
 Bielfeld, Harald: 209
 Bischoff, Karl: 241
 Biskovitz, Ya'akov: 73, 77, 78, 82
 Biskubicz, Jacob: see Biskovitz, Ya'akov
 Blatt, Thomas (Toivi): 34, 41-45, 56, 59, 85, 93, 122, 143, 146, 188, 252, 285, 397, 398, 399
 Blaurock or Blaubacke, chemist: 276
 Blobel, Paul: 281
 Blumental, Nachman: 23, 60
 Boere, Heinrich: 378
 Boisdefeu, Jean-Marie: 364
 Bolender, Kurt: 36, 37, 47, 99, 103, 112-114, 116, 151, 182
 Bouhler, Philipp: 269, 270, 271
 Bracher, Karl Dietrich: 223
 Brack, Viktor: 270-275, 277, 278, 281
 Brandt, Karl: 269
 Brandt, Rudolf: 288, 313
 Braunsteiner-Ryan, Hermine: 178, 399
 Brayard, Florent: 232
 Bredow, Paul: 32, 34, 47, 48, 101, 181
 Breitman, Richard D.: 231, 287
 Brieger: 128
 Broad, Pery: 129
 Broszat, Martin: 171, 172, 219, 220, 223, 226, 228, 230
 Browning, Christopher: 105, 106, 220, 222-226, 228, 231, 289, 313, 321
 Brzecki, Polish kapo: 91, 92
 Buchanan, Patrick: 383
 Burg, Josef G.: 373, 374
 Burrin, Philippe: 230
 Butz, Arthur R.: 347, 371
- **C** —
- Carter, Jimmy: 379
 Chmelnitzki, Bogdan: 384, 385
 Chrzanowski, Bogdan: 63
 Churchill, Winston: 231, 379
 Cohen, Elie A.: 31
 Cuckirmann, Hersch: see Zukerman, Hershel
 Cukierman, Hershel: see Zukerman, Hershel
 Czapnik, Dina: 311
 Czech, Danuta: 273, 320
- **D** —
- Daluge, Kurt: 205
 Danilchenko, Boris: 382
 Danilchenko, Ignat T.: 105, 151
 Dannecker, Theodor: 293, 294
 Darlan, Admiral: 202
 Dawidowicz, Lucy: 220, 223
 de Jong, Louis: 28, 115, 150, 332

- Demjanjuk, John: 9-12, 56, 93, 104, 179, 182, 375, 376, 380-390, 396, 397, 399, 400
- Distel, Barbara: 46, 47, 49, 59, 86, 190
- Dreyfus, Alfred: 383
- Dubois, Werner Karl: 183, 186, 272, 277
- Dubost, Charles: 74
- Duniec, Joseph: 328
- E —
- Eberl, Irmfried: 271
- Edelman, Ronnie L.: 380
- Ehrenburg, Ilya: 60, 87
- Eichmann, Adolf: 73, 77, 80, 82, 194, 195, 197, 201, 221, 222, 234, 235, 248, 251, 274, 281, 283, 293, 294, 311
- Eisenbach, Artur: 321, 324, 325
- Eitan, Dov: 386
- Eliazer, Judith: 287
- Engel, Chaim: 60, 71, 78, 102, 180
- Engel-Wijnberg, Selma: 60, 102, 180
- Epstein, Pinchas: 10
- Evans, Richard J.: 166
- F —
- Fedorenko, Fyodor: 389
- Feinberg, Ber: 89
- Feldhändler, Leon: 20, 23, 24, 32, 43, 58, 59, 71, 78, 82, 95, 172, 283, 392
- Felenbaum-Weiss, Hella: 32, 72
- Finkelstein: 11
- Fleming, Gerald: 228
- Flick, Giovanni M.: 377
- Föhl, Walter: 358
- Folman, 'Chawka': 63, 64
- Forster, Andreas: 378
- Frank, Hans: 198, 199, 203, 204, 244, 341
- Frei, Norbert: 12
- Freiberg, Dov (Ber Moiseyevich): 33, 38, 46, 69, 78-80, 82, 94-96, 98, 100, 283-285
- Frenzel, Karl: 32, 34, 40, 60, 151, 181, 183, 188, 394, 397-399
- Freund, Richard: 162
- Frick, Wilhelm: 195
- Friedländer, Saul: 229, 231, 277, 369
- Frischmann, Josef: 305
- Fröhlich, Wolfgang: 400
- Fuchs, Erich: 51, 183-186, 257, 264, 265, 267, 268
- G —
- Ganzenmüller, Albert: 249
- Gerlach, Christian: 232
- Gerstein, Kurt: 52, 74, 76, 84, 103, 150, 259, 260, 262, 277
- Getzinger, Anton: 175, 176
- Giacchini, Paolo: 377
- Gilead, Isaac: 108, 117, 122, 124, 162-167, 402
- Girzig, Hauptscharführer: 305
- Gley, Heinrich: 272
- Globocnik, Odilo: 22, 58, 130, 143, 189, 238, 239, 243, 247, 250, 251, 259, 262, 270, 271, 273, 280, 287, 288, 297, 321
- Glücks, Richard: 238, 242
- Godziszewski, Czeslaw: 75
- Goebbels, Joseph: 199, 203, 207
- Goethe, Johann W.: 393
- Goettinger, Oberscharführer: 91
- Gold, Jack: 84
- Goldstein, Shlomo: 82
- Gomerski, Hubert: 47, 60, 95, 99, 102, 103, 112, 116, 151, 174-176, 178-182, 310, 394, 399
- Göring, Hermann: 194, 195, 197, 200, 201, 203, 206, 209, 210, 222, 230, 248, 249
- Grabher, Michael: 271
- Graf Schwerin von Krosigk, Johann L.: 194
- Graf, Jürgen: 12, 13
- Greiser, Arthur: 203
- Gremlich, Adolf: 193
- Grisha, inmate: 91
- Grossman, Vasily: 60, 87
- Grot(h), SS-man: 47
- Grot, SS-man: 34
- Grubach, Paul: 56, 57
- Günther, Rolf: 295
- Gutkowski, Eliahu: 64
- H —
- Hackenholt, Lorenz: 152, 255, 268, 276-278
- Haffner, Sebastian: 223, 226
- Haimi, Yoram: 162
- Hanel, Salomea: 71, 78, 95
- Hansen, Brad: 162
- Hanusiak, Emil: 381, 382
- Harran, Marilyn J.: 41
- Harster, Wilhelm: 308
- Haulstich, Unterscharführer: 92
- Hecht, Gerhard: 196, 236
- Heim, Obersturmbannführer: 22, 311
- Helm, Erbert: 91
- Heydrich, Reinhardt: 194-198, 200, 201, 203-207, 209, 210, 221, 224, 225, 232, 233, 238, 242, 244, 246-249, 338
- Hilberg, Raul: 29, 47, 60, 165, 220, 223, 226, 227, 233, 234, 251, 253, 260, 289, 290, 313, 350, 357
- Hildebrand, Klaus: 223
- Hildebrand, Richard: 348
- Hillgruber, Andreas: 223, 228
- Himmeler, Heinrich: 19, 21, 32, 36, 58, 59, 65, 89, 101, 130, 144, 187, 188, 197, 203-207, 212, 219, 222, 224, 225, 227, 233-236, 238, 239, 241-243, 248-251, 270-273, 275,

280-282, 288-290, 309, 313, 314, 354, 368
 Hitler, Adolf: 130, 193, 196, 203-205, 207, 208, 210, 219, 221, 223-234, 243, 244, 246, 251, 269, 270, 274, 275, 334, 357, 373, 376
 Hödl, Franz: 149, 150, 160, 268
 Höfle, Hermann Julius: 22, 38, 47, 49, 55, 117, 130, 189, 190, 251, 279, 296, 297, 311, 313, 315, 316, 320-322, 323-325, 327-329, 331, 333, 350, 399
 Hofmann, Otto: 250
 Holtzmann, Elizabeth: 379
 Holzheimer, engineer: 247
 Honsik, Gerd: 400
 Höß, Rudolf: 219, 234, 235, 251, 273, 275
 Hume, David: 57

— I —

Irving, David: 105, 219
 Ittner, Alfred: 103, 183, 186
 Ivan the Terrible: 10, 11, 382, 386, 387, 396

— J —

Jäckel, Eberhard: 220, 223
 Jakub, inmate: 92
 Janetzke, Wilhelm: 214, 215
 Jeckeln, Friedrich: 365
 Jersak, Tobias: 231, 232
 Jührs, Robert: 186
 Juzef, inmate: 91

— K —

Kallmeyer, Helmut: 273, 274, 276, 278
 Kammler, Hans: 239, 241, 252, 253
 Kappler, Herbert: 377
 Katzmann, Fritz: 329
 Kawerin, Wenjamin: 85, 87
 Kempner, Robert: 223
 Kershaw, Ian: 229-233

Kielboń, Janina: 304, 306, 319
 Kladivová, Vlasta: 319
 Klarsfeld, Serge: 50, 131, 320
 Klat, Ukrainian guard: 83
 Klemme, Marvin: 94
 Klier, Johann: 102, 174-176, 178-180
 Koch, Karl: 292
 Koehl, Robert L.: 247
 Koeppen, Werner: 204
 Kogon, Eugen: 35
 Kola, Andrzej: 53, 109-111, 115, 118, 121-125, 127, 145, 148, 152-157, 160-165, 167-169, 254, 286, 287, 331, 393, 394, 402
 Kolb, Eberhard: 227
 Korherr, Richard: 216, 311, 313-317, 319-321, 324, 325, 328-330, 333, 342, 345, 349, 351, 352
 Kozak, Stanisław: 51, 75, 254, 256, 268, 286
 Kranz, Tomasz: 323, 395
 Krausnick, Helmut: 220, 223, 227
 Krüger, Friedrich-Wilhelm: 249
 Kruk, Herman: 366-369
 Kryl, Miroslaw: 305
 Kube, Wilhelm: 215
 Kubica, Helena: 131
 Kues, Thomas: 13, 56
 Kulischer, Eugene M.: 333, 338, 340, 342, 344, 355

— L —

Lächert, Hildegard: 178
 Lachmann, Erich: 185, 186
 Lambert, Erwin: 75, 150, 152, 183, 186, 268, 276-278
 Langbein, Hermann: 35
 Lanzmann, Claude: 79, 84, 95, 253
 Lehner, Dieter: 382, 383
 Leibbrand, Georg: 213

Lenzer, Sturmbannführer: 240
 Lerer, Samuel: 173-178, 181, 188
 Lerner, Yehuda: 33
 Leszczyńska, Zofia: 306, 322
 Lev, Michael: 46
 Lichtman, Ada (Eda): 33, 39, 47, 73, 79-81, 99, 101, 181, 284
 Lichtman, Itzak: 33
 Liebehenschel, Arthur: 292
 Lohse, Heinrich: 213-215, 274
 Longerich, Peter: 232
 Luka, inmate: 89, 90
 Łukasziewicz, Zdzisław: 142
 Lurie, N.: 87
 Luther, Martin: 208-210, 291

— M —

Maass, Ulrich: 378
 Maedel, Walter: 212
 Mahler, Elżbieta: 400
 Mahler, Horst: 400
 Malone, Luigi: 364
 Marchenko, Ivan: 386
 Maršálek, Hans: 257
 Marszałek, Józef: 63, 67, 323
 Matia, Paul: 388, 389
 Mattei, judge: 259
 Mattoigno, Carlo: 12, 13, 136, 147
 Matwijkenko, M.: 190
 Mazor, Michael: 196
 Mazurek, Wojciech: 162
 Mennecke, Fritz: 272
 Metz, Zeld: 23, 24, 32, 57-60, 71, 78, 95, 102, 172, 179, 180
 Meyer-Hetling, Konrad: 236, 239
 Michel, Hermann: 54, 100, 256, 267, 284, 285
 Mommsen, Hans: 228, 231
 Müller, Helmut: 250

— N —

Napoleon Bonaparte: 375, 376
 Nebe, Artur: 281
 Neuffer, Elizabeth: 97
 Neumaier, Arnulf: 384
 Niemann, deputy commander: 398
 Nikfor, I.: 190
 Novak, SS-man: 98
 Novitch, Miriam: 31, 33, 48, 78, 82, 92, 97, 113, 115, 150, 151, 181, 279
 Nowak, Obersturmführer: 294

— O —

O'Neil, Robin: 255
 Oberhauser, Josef: 255, 256, 267, 268, 271, 328
 Olzhaniwsky, Bozhena: 384
 Orth, Karin: 234

— P —

Pankov, Vassily: 104, 149
 Pauly, Max: 128
 Pechersky, Alexander A.: 20, 25, 26, 34, 41, 48-52, 69, 78, 84-92, 95, 172, 190, 283, 399
 Peczkorski, Alexandr: see Pechersky, Alexander A.
 Penha-Blits, Mirjam: 308
 Perl, Shaindy: 45, 173, 174, 175, 177, 192
 Perz, Bertrand: 248
 Pfannenstiel, Wilhelm: 259
 Picker, Henry: 208
 Piper, Franciszek: 281, 318, 320
 Piwonski, Jan: 95, 122, 127, 142, 253, 287
 Plato: 224
 Płotnicka, 'Frumka': 63, 64
 Podienko, W.: 190
 Pohl, Helmut: 301, 305, 330
 Pohl, Oswald: 21, 44, 238, 241-243, 288-290, 368

Poliakov, Léon: 60, 151, 194, 223
 Poppert, Walter: 101, 142
 Pressac, Jean-Claude: 60, 286
 Priebke, Erich: 376-378

— R —

Raab, Esther: 27, 45, 46, 99, 173-178, 180, 181, 188
 Rademacher, Fritz: 198, 209, 294
 Rasch, Otto: 246
 Rashke, Richard L.: 34, 35, 78
 Rau, Johannes: 178
 Razgonayev, Mikhail: 104, 116, 265-267, 283
 Reder, Rudolf: 103, 150, 269
 Reeder, Phillip: 162
 Reichleitner, Franz: 18, 152
 Reichmann, Yehiel: 11
 Reinhardt, Fritz: 247
 Reitlinger, Gerald: 194, 273, 348, 349, 357
 Reuter, Fritz: 189, 296, 299, 326, 328
 Ribbentrop, Joachim: 197-199, 248
 Roosevelt, Franklin D.: 196, 231
 Rosenbaum, Elie M.: 56, 380
 Rosenberg, Alfred: 199, 202-204, 208, 209, 213-215, 246, 337, 357
 Rosenberg, Eliyahu: 385, 386
 Rottenberg, Aizik: 33
 Rudolf, Germar: 40, 400
 Rückler, Adalbert: 31, 35, 38, 113, 115, 116, 150, 151, 171, 184, 185, 252, 262, 263
 Rüter, Christiaan: 390
 Rullmann, Peter Hans: 380
 Rutherford, Bill: 97, 98, 105, 163, 164

Rutkowski, Adam: 26, 27, 28, 51

— S —

Sakowska, Ruta: 63
 Sandkühler, Thomas: 248
 Sawada, Aiko: 80
 Scheffler, Wolfgang: 60, 188, 229, 260, 323
 Schellenberg, Walter: 226
 Schelvis, Jules: 39, 40, 47-56, 59-61, 71, 72, 76, 84, 89, 93, 100-103, 107, 112, 113, 115-117, 126, 130, 131, 141-143, 150-152, 183, 186, 192, 243, 246, 252, 256, 260, 264, 265, 268, 275, 278, 284, 308-310, 319, 326, 328, 350, 351, 391, 394
 Schelvis, Rachel: 48
 Schlesinger, Berek: 46
 Schluch, Karl: 272
 Schnarrenberger-Leutheusser, Sabine: 11
 Schütt, Hans-Heinz: 185, 186
 Schuetz, SS captain: 377
 Schulte, Jan Erik: 238, 241, 242, 245
 Schultz, Emanuel: 190
 Schumann, Horst: 273
 Schwarz, SS-man: 184
 Senie, inmate: 91
 Sereny, Gitta: 126, 191, 192, 256, 263, 269, 382
 Sheftel, Yoram: 381, 386, 397
 Shelayev, Nikolai: 386
 Sher, Neal: 380
 Shifrin, Avraham: 385
 Shloime, inmate: 92
 Shubayev (Kalimal), inmate: 91
 Smirnov, L.N.: 69
 Speer, Albert: 290
 Stahlecker, Franz W.: 214
 Stalin, Joseph V. Dzhugashvili: 86, 87, 373
 Stangl, Franz: 15, 18, 28, 79, 83, 99, 101, 152, 184,

- 188, 191, 192, 256, 257,
263-265, 267-269, 285
Stark, Shaul: 34, 43, 181
Steiner, Andrej: 131
Steiner, Felix: 379
Stern, Ursula: 70, 78, 102
Stolz, Sylvia: 400
Storms, Adolf: 378, 379
Streibel, Karl: 116
Stutman, Edwards: 380
Suchomel, Franz: 125, 126
Suhl, Yuri: 25, 60
Sulimierski, Witold
 Zbigniew: 39, 40
Szmajzner, Stanisław: 28-
 30, 34, 55, 56, 60, 72, 73,
 83, 102, 115, 191, 192
Szrojt, Eugeniusz: 76
- **T** —
Tell, Wilhelm: 187
Tennenbaum, Joseph: 30
Ther, Kuno: 58, 271
Thomalla, Richard: 15,
 184, 252, 262
Thomas, Kurt: see Ticho,
 Kurt
Thumann, Anton: 187
Tibbets, Paul: 378
Ticho, Kurt: 60, 96, 102,
 143, 179
Tichonowski, F.: 190
Tory, Avraham: 367
- Traficant, James: 384
Tregenza, Michael: 75, 255
Trompetter, Lewy: 307
Türk, Richard: 296, 299
Tyas, Stephen: 247, 311,
 313-315, 321, 322, 324,
 325, 327
- **U** —
Unverhau, Heinrich: 185,
 186
- **V** —
Vaispapir, Arkady: 91, 92
Valeri, Valerio: 364
van Pelt, Robert J.: 133,
 296
von Herff, Maximilian: 58,
 271
von Schirmeister, Moritz:
 199
- **W** —
Wagner, Gustav: 28, 34,
 45, 83, 99, 100, 105, 179,
 181, 188, 191, 192, 399
Weise, Gottfried: 187
Weiss, SS-man: 34, 181
Weissbecker, Otto: 310
Wellers, Georges: 314, 315
Werner, Steffen: 357-359
Wetzel, Ehrhard: 196, 215,
 236
- Wetzel, Ernst: 274-276,
 278
Wewryk, Kalmen: 108
Widmann, Albert: 278
Widmann, Carlos: 387
Wiernik, Jankiel: 95
Wilhelm, Hans-Heinrich:
 228
Wirth, Christian: 130, 184,
 251, 255, 257, 259, 262,
 267-269, 271, 280
Wisliceny, Dieter: 234,
 235, 293
Witte, Peter: 247, 311, 313-
 315, 321, 322, 324, 325,
 327
Wolf, Franz: 42, 183, 186
Wolff, Jeannette: 347, 348
Wolff, Karl: 249
Woltersdorf, police
 employee: 292
Wullbrandt, Erich: 93
- **Z** —
Z., Josef and Herz,
 witnesses: 175
Zajcew, J.: 190
Zeitschel, Carltheo: 202,
 205
Zierke, Ernst: 186
Zündel, Ernst: 400
Zukerman, Hershel: 33, 81,
 82, 179

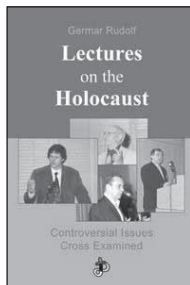
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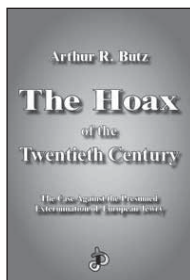
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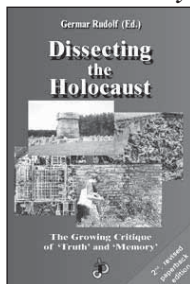
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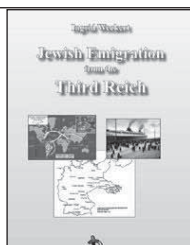
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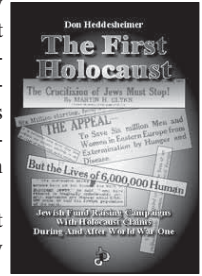
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The First Holocaust is a valuable study of American Jewish institutional operations at a fateful juncture in Jewish and European history, an incisive examination of a cunningly contrived campaign of atrocity and extermination propaganda two decades before the alleged WWII Holocaust – and an indispensable addition to every revisionist's library.

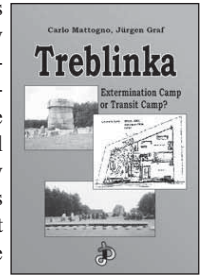
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C. Mattogno, J. Graf: *Treblinka. Extermination Camp or Transit Camp?*

It is alleged that at Treblinka in East Poland between 700,000 and 3,000,000 persons were murdered in 1942 and 1943. The weapons used were said to have been stationary and/or mobile gas chambers, fast-acting or slow-acting poison gas, unslaked lime, superheated steam, electricity, diesel exhaust fumes, etc. Holocaust historians alleged that bodies were piled as high as multi-storied buildings and burned without a trace, using little or no fuel at all. Graf and Mattogno have now analyzed the origins, logic and technical feasibility of the official version of Treblinka. On the basis of numerous documents they reveal Treblinka's true identity: it was a transit camp. Even longtime revisionism buffs will find a lot that is new in this book, while Graf's animated style guarantees a pleasant reading experience. The original testimony of witnesses enlivens the reader, as does the skill with which the authors expose the absurdities of Holocaust historiography.

370 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index



C. Mattogno: *Belzec in Propaganda, Testimonies, Archeological Research, and History*

Witnesses report that at least 600,000, if not as many as three million Jews were murdered in the Belzec camp, located in eastern Poland, between 1941 and 1942. Various murder weapons are claimed to have been used: diesel gas chambers; unslaked lime in trains; high voltage; vacuum chambers. According to witnesses, the corpses were incinerated on huge pyres without leaving any traces. For those who know the stories about Treblinka this all sounds too familiar. The author therefore restricted this study to the aspects which are different and new compared to Treblinka, but otherwise refers the reader to his Treblinka book. The development of the official image portrait about Belzec is explained and subjected to a thorough critique. In contrast to Treblinka, forensic drillings and excavations were performed in the late 1990s in Belzec, the results of which are explained and critically reviewed. These findings, together with the absurd claims by "witnesses," refute the thesis of an extermination camp.

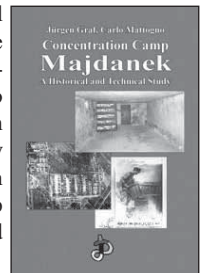
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J. Graf, C. Mattogno: *Concentration Camp Majdanek*

Little research had been directed toward the concentration camp Majdanek in central Poland, even though it is claimed that up to a million Jews were murdered there. The only information available is discredited Polish Communists propaganda. This glaring research gap has finally been filled. After exhaustive research of primary sources, Mattogno and Graf created a monumental study which expertly dissects and repudiates the myth of homicidal gas chambers at Majdanek. They also critically investigated the legendary mass executions of Jews in tank trenches ("Operation Harvest Festival") and prove them groundless. The authors' investigations lead to unambiguous conclusions about the camp which are radically different from the official theses. Again they have produced a standard and methodical investigative work, which authentic historiography cannot ignore.

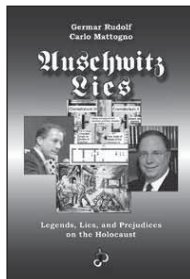
2nd ed., 320 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w & color ill., bibl., index



G. Rudolf, C. Mattogno: *Auschwitz Lies. Legends, Lies, and Prejudices on the Holocaust*

“French biochemist G. Wellers exposed the Leuchter Report as fallacious” – he exposed only his own grotesque incompetence. “Polish researcher Prof. J. Markiewicz proved with analysis that Zyklon B was used in the gas chambers of Auschwitz” – Markiewicz fabricated his results. “Chemist Dr. Richard Green showed that the revisionists’ chemical arguments are flawed” – Green actually had to admit that the revisionists are right. “Prof. Zimmerman proved that the crematories in Auschwitz could cremate all victims of the claimed mass murder.” – as an accountant, Zimmerman proved only his lack of knowledge. “Profs. M. Shermer and A. Grobman refuted the entire array of revisionist arguments” – they merely covered a tiny fraction of revisionist arguments, and botched their attempt at refutation. “Keren, McCarthy, and Mazal found the ‘Holes of Death’ proving the existence of the Auschwitz gas chambers” – they twisted evidence to support their case and suppressed facts refuting it. These and other untruths are treated in this book and exposed for what they really are: political lies created to ostracize dissident historians and to keep the entire western world in merciless Holocaust servitude.

398 pp. pb., 6”x9”, b/w ill., index



F. Leuchter, R. Faurisson: *G. Rudolf, The Leuchter Reports. Critical Edition*

Between 1988 and 1991, American expert on execution technologies Fred Leuchter wrote four expert reports addressing the question whether or not the Third Reich operated homicidal gas chambers. The first report on Auschwitz and Majdanek became world famous. Based on chemical analysis of wall samples and on various technical arguments, Leuchter concluded that the locations investigated “could not have then been, or now, be utilized or seriously considered to function as execution gas chambers.” In subsequent years, this first Leuchter Report was the target of much criticism, some of it justified. This edition republishes the unaltered text of all four reports and accompanies the first one with critical notes and research updates, backing up and supporting those of Leuchter’s claims that are correct, and correcting those that are inaccurate or false.

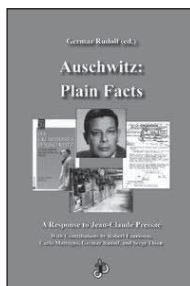
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G. Rudolf (ed.): *Auschwitz: Plain Facts. A Response to Jean-Claude Pressac*

French pharmacist Jean-Claude Pressac tried to refute revisionists with their own technical methods. For this he was praised by the mainstream, and they proclaimed victory over the revisionists. In *Auschwitz: Plain Facts* Pressac’s works are subjected to a detailed critique. Although Pressac deserves credit for having made accessible many hitherto unknown documents, he neither adhered to scientific nor to formal standards when interpreting documents: He made claims that he either could not prove or which contradict the facts; documents do not state what he claims they do; he exhibits massive technical incompetence, and he ignores important arguments. *Auschwitz: Plain Facts* is a must read for all those who want to argue against the lies and half truth of established historiography.

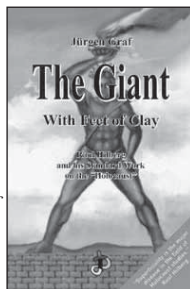
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Jürgen Graf: *The Giant with Feet of Clay. Raul Hilberg and his Standard Work on the “Holocaust”*

Raul Hilberg’s major work *The Destruction of European Jewry* is generally considered the standard work on the Holocaust. The critical reader might ask: what evidence does Hilberg provide to back his thesis that there was a German plan to exterminate Jews, to be carried out in the legendary gas chambers? And what evidence supports his estimate of 5.1 million Jewish victims? Jürgen Graf applies the methods of critical analysis to Hilberg’s evidence and examines the results in the light of revisionist historiography. The results of Graf’s critical analysis are devastating for Hilberg. Graf’s *Giant With Feet of Clay* is the first comprehensive and systematic examination of the leading spokesperson for the orthodox version of the Jewish fate during the Third Reich.

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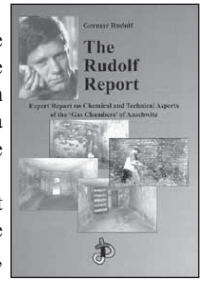


Germar Rudolf: *The Rudolf Report. Expert Report on Chemical and Technical Aspects of the 'Gas Chambers' of Auschwitz*

In 1988, Fred Leuchter, American expert for execution technologies, investigated the alleged gas chambers of Auschwitz and Majdanek and concluded that they could not have functioned as claimed. Ever since, Leuchter's claims have been massively criticized. In 1993, Rudolf, a researcher from a prestigious German Max-Planck-Institute, published a thorough forensic study about the alleged gas chambers of Auschwitz which irons out the deficiencies and discrepancies of the Leuchter Report.

The *Rudolf Report* is the first English edition of this sensational scientific work. It analyzes all existing evidence on the Auschwitz gas chambers. The conclusions are quite clear: The alleged gas chambers of Auschwitz could not have existed. In the appendix, Rudolf describes his unique persecution.

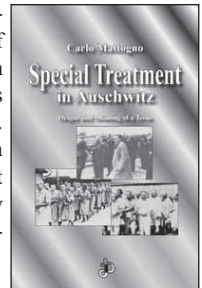
455 pp. 5¼"×8¼", b/w & color ill., bibl., index; pb. or hardcover



Carlo Mattogno: *Special Treatment in Auschwitz. Origin and Meaning of a Term*

When appearing in German wartime documents, terms like "special treatment," "special action," and others have been interpreted as code words signifying the murder of inmates. While the term "special treatment" in many such documents did indeed mean execution, the term need not always have had that meaning in German records. In this book, C. Mattogno has provided the most thorough study of this textual problem to date. Publishing and interpreting numerous such documents about Auschwitz – many of them hitherto unknown – Mattogno is able to show that, while "special" had many different meanings in these documents, not a single one meant "execution." This important study demonstrates that the habitual practice of deciphering an alleged "code language" by assigning homicidal meaning to completely harmless documents is no longer tenable

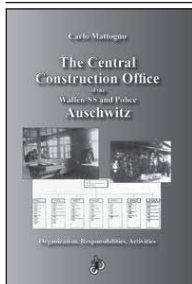
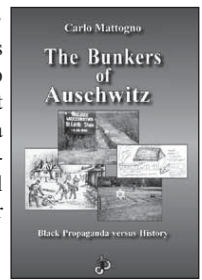
151 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index



C. Mattogno: *The Bunkers of Auschwitz. Black Propaganda vs. History*

The so-called "Bunkers" at Auschwitz are claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz specifically erected for this purpose in early 1942. With the help of original German wartime files, this study shows that these "Bunkers" never existed. It also shows how the rumors of these alleged gas chambers evolved as black propaganda created by resistance groups within the camp. The third part shows how this black propaganda was transformed into 'reality' by historians. The final chapter, dedicated to material evidence (aerial photography and archeological research) confirms the publicity character of the rumors about the "Bunkers."

264 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index



Carlo Mattogno, *Auschwitz: The Central Construction Office*

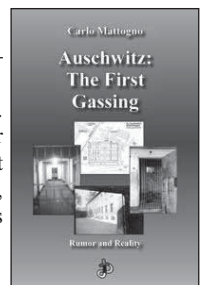
Based upon mostly unpublished German wartime documents from Moscow archives, this study describes the history, organization, tasks, and procedures of the Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz. Despite a huge public interest in the camp, next to nothing was really known about this office, which was responsible for the planning and construction of the Auschwitz camp complex, including those buildings in which horrendous mass slaughter is said to have occurred. This pioneering study is indispensable for all those who wish to avoid misinterpretations of Auschwitz documents, as they are frequently made by many Holocaust historians.

182 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., glossary

Carlo Mattogno: *Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality*

The first gassing of human beings in Auschwitz is claimed to have occurred on Sept. 3, 1941, in a basement room. The accounts reporting it are the archetypes for all later gassing accounts. This study analyzes all available sources about this alleged event. It shows that these sources contradict each other in location, date, preparations, victims, etc., rendering it impossible to extract a consistent story. Original wartime documents inflict a final blow to the tale of the first homicidal gassing.

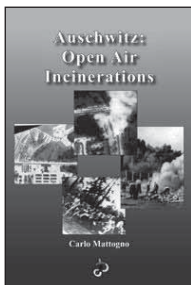
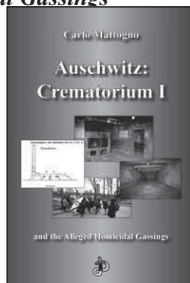
157 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index



Carlo Mattogno: *Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassings*

The morgue of Crematorium I in Auschwitz is claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chamber in that camp. This study thoroughly investigates all accessible statements by witnesses and analyzes hundreds of wartime documents in order to accurately write a history of that building. Mattogno proves that its morgue was never used as a homicidal gas chamber, nor could it have served as such.

138 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index



C. Mattogno: *Auschwitz: Open Air Incinerations*

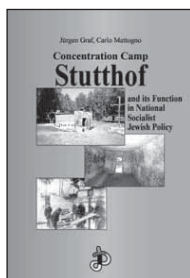
Hundreds of thousands of corpses of murder victims are claimed to have been incinerated in deep ditches in Auschwitz. This book examines the testimonies and establishes whether these claims were technically possible. Using air photo evidence, physical evidence as well as wartime documents, the author shows that these claims are untrue.

132 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index

Jürgen Graf, Carlo Mattogno: *Concentration Camp Stutthof and its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy*

The concentration camp at Stutthof near Danzig in western Prussia is another camp which has never before been scientifically investigated by Western historians. Polish authors officially sanctioned by their Communist government long maintained that in 1944, Stutthof was converted to an "auxiliary extermination camp" with the mission of carrying out the lurid, so-called "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem." In the present book Jürgen Graf and Carlo Mattogno have subjected this concept of Stutthof to rigorous critical investigation based on Polish literature and documents from various archives. It shows that extermination claims are in contradiction to reliable sources. The authors have once more produced a standard and methodical investigative work which authentic historiography cannot ignore.

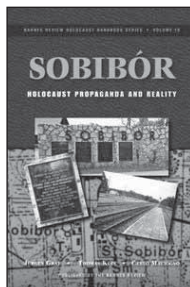
2nd ed., 128 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w & color ill., bibl., index



J. Graf, T. Kues, C. Mattogno: *Sobibor. Holocaust Propaganda and Reality*

Between 25,000 and 2,000,000 Jews are said to have been killed in gas chambers in the Sobibór camp in eastern Poland in 1942 and 1943. The corpses were allegedly buried in mass graves and later incinerated on pyres. This book investigates these claims and shows that they are merely based on the selective use of absurd and contradictory eye-witness testimonies. Archeological surveys of the camp in 2000-2001 are analyzed, with fatal results for the extermination camp hypothesis. The book also thoroughly documents the general NS policy toward Jews, which never included an extermination plan.

440 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index



In Preparation:

Carlo Mattogno: *Auschwitz: The Case for Sanity*

During the trial of David Irving vs. D. Lipstadt in 2000, Prof. Robert van Pelt was sent into the battle against revisionism. This book exposes Prof. van Pelt as an incompetent fanatic whose bunglings are truly embarrassing.

ca. 520 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., glossary, bibl., index

Carlo Mattogno: *Healthcare in Auschwitz*

An overview of the vast measures taken by the Auschwitz camp authorities to save the lives of their inmates. Irrefutably proven facts, incredible only for those who still believe in the establishment version.

ca. 350 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index

Carlo Mattogno: *The Crematory Ovens of Auschwitz*

An exhaustive technical study of the "core" buildings of the alleged "Holocaust" – and a refutation of mass murder claims based upon false concepts of those crematoria.

2 vols., (ca. 400+350 pp.) pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., glossary, bibl., index

Carlo Mattogno: *Chelmno. Myth and Reality*

An overview of the mostly unsubstantiated claims and their juxtaposition to provable facts about this camp were thousands are said to have been murdered mostly by noxious exhaust gases in trucks.

ca. 200 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index