

**Santiago Alvarez**

**Pierre Marais**

# **The Gas Vans**

**A Critical Investigation**



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Cover: Top: truck equipped with a producer-gas generator (see page 102). Left: moving truck found in Poland after the war, for decades falsely claimed to have been a “gas van” (see pages 33f., 275f.). Right: made-up drawing of an alleged “gas van” following testimony (see page 278). Background bottom: section of Document 501-PS (see page 281).





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## Preface

The present study is the result of a confluence of a number of coincidences. As a matter of fact, its author never intended to write a book on the topic. He merely wanted to translate the book written by another author, and maybe edit it and update it a little where required. But that was not meant to be.

At the beginning there was the idea in early 2010 of translating into English Pierre Marais' French study *Les camions à gaz en question* (*The gas trucks scrutinized*), which had been published as early as 1994. This was meant to fill a gap in the *Holocaust Handbooks Series*, which so far did not have a monograph on the topic of the elusive "gas vans." Marais' study had appeared in a slightly revised German edition in 2009, and the current author was supplied with both the German translation as well as the French original. The text part itself had only some 100 generously formatted pages, and together with the recent updates prepared for the German edition, it looked like a project which could be accomplished swiftly, or so I thought.

Although initially by far no expert regarding the "gas vans" of the Third Reich, I had read several papers about this issue in the past permitting me to have a fairly good grasp of the state of the art. Hence, while translating Marais' work, I noticed numerous errors of facts, flawed and missing arguments, and, worse still, so many omissions of important documentary and anecdotal material, a great deal of which had become generally accessible only during the past 15 years, that I decided to give it a complete work over. Well, the more I worked on it, the more material turned up, so I ended up both increasing the book's volume by at least 100%, and rewriting, replacing or even deleting sizeable sections of Pierre's own text, which had become in need of revision and updating due to the added content and the many corrections.

At what I thought was the end of my editing efforts, I had in front of me a book that by 80% of its content was no longer Pierre's, but mine, and in which the parts that still were Pierre's at times read like alien remnants clearly written in the style of a different author and sometimes

awkwardly misplaced by the book's new structure. There could be no doubt that this would have to be smoothed out as well.

Under these circumstances, could the book still be presented to the author – or the public – as a translation of his work? Hardly. Would he accept all the changes made? Well, I was afraid to ask, and when getting in touch with Pierre's literary agent, he balked and suggested to not even submit this typescript to the then 90 year old Monsieur Marais, as he might have a hard time getting over this unscrupulous gutting and rewriting of his work. So the decision was made to make the rewrite complete and publish it under my name instead.

Yet in spite of all the rewriting done, this present book still owes a lot to Pierre's original work. First it is the very reason for its existence. Next, some of the basic structure of this book still follows Pierre's lead, and many of his arguments can still be found in it, even if they have been rearranged, rephrased, and at times reevaluated. And last but not least, Pierre's book was a trail blazer at its time, a foundation upon which the present study erects its larger, more thoroughly argued edifice. Pierre's book has been my stepping stone to the present study; his tome is the giant, the pioneer work of the first hour, without which this present book would not be.

Although this book may be regarded as a clear improvement in comparison to Pierre's work – a natural progress to be expected after almost two decades have passed – it is still far from complete, as much archival material held by the *Zentrale Stelle* in Ludwigsburg, Germany, is currently difficult, if not impossible, to access by critical researchers due to German censorship laws. Hence any of this study's conclusions must necessarily be considered provisional in character, and the discussion will remain open.

In addition to Pierre Marais, the present study owes much to the support by Thomas Kues, who tirelessly supplied me with all kinds of documents, some of them on my requested, but also many which had been hitherto unknown to me.

Carlo Mattogno helped to improve the book as well by critically reading an earlier version of it and indirectly by his own research for his book on the Chelmno camp, from which the present book profited considerably.

I also thank all my other helpers, who for safety reasons will remain unnamed.

## Introduction

When it comes to the “Holocaust,” the alleged mass murder of European Jews by the Third Reich, most people think they “know.” Of course we all “know” that it happened. We “know” that six million died. We “know” that the Nazis pushed the Jews into the gas chambers and gas ovens, that they burned them, dead or alive, in gigantic crematories and on huge pyres. Our knowledge is so certain that anyone uttering disbelief is swiftly ostracized. In many countries people even call the police and have doubters arrested, prosecuted, and sent to prison. He who doubts what everybody knows to be true must be evil, indeed.

Most readers perusing the above sentences might not even notice that it contains a typical error, a falsehood even acknowledged by orthodox historians. This error has to such a degree become a fixed part of the cliché which we consider to be “knowledge” that it passes unnoticed.

There were no gas ovens.

The term makes no sense.

Mainstream historians claim that there were gas chambers on the one hand, designed to quickly asphyxiate hundreds, if not thousands of people at a time within mere minutes.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand everybody agrees that there were crematory ovens, designed to reduce deceased camp inmates to ashes (although the inmates’ cause of death and the crematories’ capacities are disputed<sup>2</sup>). In the mind of the public at large, though, gas chambers and crematory ovens have merged to some ominously sounding “gas ovens.” The public discourse about the Holocaust is replete with that nonsensical term, even though what it describes never existed.

So much about “we know.”

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<sup>1</sup> Revisionists contest that notion, though, see for instance: Mattogno/Graf 2005, Mattogno 2004a&b; Mattogno 2005a&b, Graf/Kues/Mattogno 2010; Rudolf 2011; Mattogno 2010, 2011a.

<sup>2</sup> On the only existing scientific-technical study of the crematories in Auschwitz see Mattogno 2011b.

Listing and explaining all the false clichés prevailing in the public about the “Holocaust” would fill a separate book, so I will abstain from doing it here. The point I was trying to make is that, although we all have some basic grasp about what is meant by “the Holocaust,” most people are quite unfamiliar with even general aspects of the topic.

While gas chambers dominate the public’s mind when the specter of the “Holocaust” is raised, “gas vans” are usually absent from the discourse. What percentage of the general populace has ever heard that the Nazis are said to have deployed mobile gas chambers as well, which historians usually call “gas vans”?

This lack of knowledge is excusable, because even in orthodox historiography the “gas vans” have played only a minor role. To this date no monograph has appeared on the topic written by a mainstream historian. Mere articles published in journals or anthologies exist, and most of them do not even focus on the gas vans themselves but instead on some location like the Chelmno camp in Poland or the Semlin camp in Serbia, on certain German armed units, in particular the German anti-partisan *Einsatzgruppen* behind the Russian front, or events where they are said to have been used, like the euthanasia action, to name a few. We will encounter many of these papers in the present study. But before doing this, I want to discuss the one mainstream paper which comes closest to a study of the gas vans as such. By so doing we will recognize the dire need for a much more thorough and critical study.

In 1987 German historian Mathias Beer published a paper whose German title translates to “The development of the gas vans for the murder of the Jews.” In it he tries to describe, based on 14 documents and many more testimonies, how National Socialist Germany developed this murder weapon. Right at the beginning of his paper he admits that all extant documents are from a late phase of these vans’ deployment, hence could elucidate little about their development. To remedy this, he resorts to verbal claims made by various persons asserting to have witnessed something, most of whom were interrogated during some criminal investigation or trial. Knowing that by relying on such statements Beer enters shaky territory, he declares that “due to their peculiarities testimonies” need to always be linked to, that is to say, supported by some documents, and that those documents themselves need to be “subject to thorough source criticism” (all on p. 404).

I agree with this, as this is a standard method of historiography. Yet Beer has missed two important issues here: first of all, each testimony,

whether supported by a document or not, needs to be subjected to criticism as well. A medieval testimony claiming that the devil rode by on a broom stick having sex with a witch, supported by a medieval document claiming to document that very “fact,” might fulfill Beer’s criteria, but it does not constitute truth. The creator of a document can err and lie just as much as a witness. Next, Beer completely omits the most important group of evidence: physical, tangible evidence. Where is the flying broomstick? Where is the devil? Did the devil leave his semen in the witch?, etc. are all very important questions to be asked.

In our context these questions would be: Where are the vans? Where are the corpses? Where is the poison in their body?

Beer is completely mute on all accounts: no scrutiny of the witness testimony performed, no material traces requested, no questions asked about the construction and operational mode of these vehicles. And worse still: he fails his own criterion that document criticism is pivotal, because his paper does not contain any critical discussion of any of the documents he cites or at least a reference to such a discussion (which does not exist among orthodox historians, I may add).

Hence Beer’s paper is a complete failure already on formal grounds. But that is not the end. His self-defined goal to trace the development of the gas vans within the framework of documents falls flat as well. As Mattogno has shown (2011a, chapter 1), Beer’s lengthy “reconstruction” of how the gas vans allegedly came into being is not based on any documents, as Beer himself admitted. What remains are the testimonies on which Beer relies heavily. We will encounter most of them in this study, where we will subject their statements to critical scrutiny. The result is shocking: many of the important witness statements used by Beer can be demonstrated to be highly implausible (see, for instance, two of the persons allegedly responsible for the vans’ development: August Becker, chapter 3.7.3.3., and Albert Widmann, chapter 3.7.4.7).

While doing his research for his own 1994 study on the gas vans, Pierre Marais had noticed Beer’s complete lack of a critical attitude, as a result of which he wrote him a letter with several questions, to which Beer responded accordingly. I have reproduced this exchange with Marais’ comments in Appendix 10 (p. 362). Although Marais’s questions to Beer weren’t as hard-hitting as I would have formulated them, Beer’s subsequent refusal to continue the exchange shows who of the two is a dogmatic ideologue and who a critical freethinker.

Any decent researcher would have taken such critical inquiry as a reason to look into his own research again and to amend it where necessary. But such an open-minded approach does not seem to be Beer's cup of tea, for when he had a slightly abridged and updated version of his 1987 paper published in a 2011 anthology (Morsch/Perz/Ley, pp. 154-165), it exhibited the same deficiencies of superficiality. Here again, Beer's references to documents and witness accounts serve only to once more uncritically repeat what he has read. In addition, this new version of Beer's paper also lacks any reference to – and discussion of – any topical criticism made during the past two decades (mainly Marais 1994 and Weckert 2003). Hence Beer, like most mainstream Holocaust authors, has proved to be impervious to critique, which means that he is unsusceptible to the scientific method.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the total failure of orthodox historiography to appropriately address the issue of the “gas vans,” Pierre Marais 1994 monograph on the “gas vans” was a sorely needed study indeed. Unfortunately it remained without any reaction from the historiographic establishment.

The present study will start by including and summarizing what Marais has already revealed and by carrying the topic farther and deeper.

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<sup>3</sup> Beer has added an inconspicuous deception to this paper which is common among mainstream Holocaust authors: He quoted Becker's letter to Rauff with “since December 1941, for example, 97,000 were processed with 3 deployed vehicles” (Morsch/Perz/Ley, p. 164), *i.e.* with a lower case “since,” thus giving the false impression that this statement is to be found somewhere in the middle of the letter, whereas it is actually its very (absurd) beginning. See chapter 2.2.4.1.

# 1. Material and Forensic Evidence

## 1.1. Material Traces of the Weapon of Crime

When there is sufficient reason to suspect that a murder has been committed, finding the murder weapon and at least traces of the victim are key issues during the investigation of what has happened. This is so for court proceedings in a state under the rule of law, but this ought to be also a pivotal point for any independent scientific investigation. After all, one of the most important tenets of science is that a claim must be substantiated, or else it is not much more than mere hot air. To be more precise: substantiating a person's claim requires more than coming up with more individuals making the same or a similar claim. If we merely collect claims, we may thus obtain a number, maybe even a great number of identical or similar claims, but they are still mere claims. Substantiation requires most of all substance: hard, physical, tangible evidence beyond mere statements.

In the case investigated here the allegation is made that during the Second World War a huge amount of individuals was killed at various points in time and at numerous locations by means of "gas vans" deployed by German units. Some of the killings are said to have happened in the course of fighting partisans in the Soviet territories temporarily occupied by the Germans; others ostensibly happened in the context of the implementation of the so-called "Final Solution to the Jewish question," which, according to orthodox historiography, meant the physical annihilation of many Jews within the German realm of influence during World War Two.

The partisan warfare during World War Two followed its own, at times cruel, rules. In this context, summarily killing partisans was not an illegal activity, if judged by international law as in effect at that time.<sup>4</sup> Even West German courts of law dealing with partisan killings allegedly committed with "gas vans" did not sentence any defendant on

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<sup>4</sup> On the sometimes cruel but, during World War II, generally accepted customs of warfare – when it comes to killing civilians – see Siegert 2003; on partisan warfare see Seidler 1998.

this ground alone, as killing partisans by whatever means, as long as it was not excessively cruel, was considered a legal act of war.<sup>5</sup> Communist East German trials, on the other hands, always considered the killing of partisans a crime (see chapter 3.8.1.). Since the present study is not about legal considerations but rather about the evaluation of evidence presented, the legal aspects will not be discussed any further.

Although most of the killings said to have been perpetrated with “gas vans” are claimed to have occurred within the so-called “Final Solution,” I will not enter into a discussion of this term and its historical interpretation either, as this would lead us far astray from our actual topic and because both orthodox and revisionist literature about the “Final Solution” are replete with considerations on this topic.

In these “gas vans” the Germans are said to have used the vehicles’ exhaust gases for homicides, the most toxic component of which is carbon monoxide (CO, sometimes also referred to as carbon oxide). This gas is a result of an incomplete combustion of the carbon component of fuels consisting of hydrocarbons, like gasoline and Diesel fuel. Complete combustion leads to carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which is much less toxic than CO. I will elaborate on this a little more in chapter 1.3. Suffice it here to say that the claimed weapon of crime in a more narrow sense is said to have been a standard truck or van engine as it was mounted into the vehicle by the manufacturer without any modification. The truck itself, however, is said to have been retrofitted with certain additional equipment permitting the actual homicide. What exactly these changes to the serial trucks and vans were is one of the central questions to be elucidated by the present study, next to determining the make and model of the trucks themselves as well as the engines used.

German documents from 1942 prove the order of thirty special cargo boxes mounted onto the chassis of Austrian Saurer trucks sporting Diesel engines.<sup>6</sup> The vehicles thusly equipped are claimed to have been used as “gas vans” especially by the so-called *Einsatzgruppen*, German armed forces officially in charge of combating partisans operating behind the German lines at the eastern front. One would therefore have to expect that one or several of these vehicles were captured by the Soviets during their counter-offensives, but this is apparently not the case. In

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<sup>5</sup> Many defendants in West German trials claimed that they had only killed (or known about the killing of) partisans, but the judges usually did not believe them; see chapters 3.7.4.3. to 5., 3.7.4.9. & 3.7.6.11. In one case, however, the defendant’s claim was accepted, resulting in his acquittal, see chapter 3.7.5.5.

<sup>6</sup> See the “Dossier R 58/871 f° 1” in Appendix 4.

fact, no information exists about a location where one could investigate a wreck of such a gas van or even only some instructive traces of the special retrofitting which inevitably would have been required for the deployment of these vehicles for homicidal purposes. The Soviets, however, are said to have captured some of those responsible for the homicides in gas vans, which they put on trial in 1943 (see chapters 3.2. and 3.3.). How do they explain the fact that they managed to catch some of those who had operated the trucks, but that the vehicles themselves simply vanished?

Mainstream historians, like Mathias Beer, are wont to respond to this glaring lack of any material trace of these elusive vans by coming up with a pseudo-explanation (see Beer's letter to P. Marais, p. 365):

*"It would not be surprising if no gas vans had been found after the war, because the gas vans, like all other traces left by the extermination of people, were destroyed as best as possible in the rush."*

This does, however, render Beer's position even worse, as this claim also requires supportive evidence – this time to prove that the Nazis did indeed manage to erase all those traces, and how this was possible. After all, the lack of evidence does not prove a claim to be true, which is what Beer tries to argue here. If anything, the lack of evidence refutes the claim.

As we will see, the operation of a truck suffocating humans locked inside of it is rather easy. There are no difficulties constructing it, and its production *a posteriori* would doubtlessly have been quite easy. That no such attempt was ever made makes the whole issue even more mysterious.

The claim that thirty vehicles retrofitted for mass gassings, which would have served as a vivid example of the "Nazi barbarity," have simply disappeared tracelessly ineluctably had to raise certain doubts about their very existence. Unless new information surfaces, one cannot but conclude that the "murder weapon" in form of these infamous "gas vans" could not be produced to this very day. There are absolutely no tangible material items: no truck, no part of a truck, no drawing or blueprint of a truck.<sup>7</sup> As we will see during the analysis of the existing documents, not even a technical study of these ostensible gassing vehi-

<sup>7</sup> In the above-mentioned letter Beer claimed that a gas van wreck actually exists as a memorial in the town of Konin, Poland, near the former Chelmno camp. But an inquiry by P. Marais with that town's authorities exposed this claim as false; see Appendix 10, page 370.

cles exists, and it is incomprehensible how such a vehicle could have been constructed without a corresponding technical drawing.

## 1.2. Material Traces of the Victims

Both the Serbs and the Soviets conducted forensic investigations by exhuming mass graves allegedly containing victims of “gas van” mass gassings.

The Soviets conducted their investigations right after they had reconquered territories from the Germans in early 1943. A summary of the findings were published during the war in a booklet containing a summary of two trials staged in 1943, where the defendants had been accused, among other things, to have participated in the mass murder of Soviet citizens with “murder vans.”<sup>8</sup> I will analyze the horrific circumstances of these Soviet wartime show trials in chapters 3.2. and 3.3. Here I will address only the forensic findings of the Soviet investigating committee, which were quoted as follows in the booklet *The People’s Verdict* (1944, p. 13; similar on p. 32):

“[...] 623 [exhumed corpses] were examined by medical experts [...].

*On the basis of the thorough medical, chemical and spectroscopic investigation which was carried out, a Committee of Experts consisting of Dr. V. I. Prolorovsky [...] arrived at the conclusion that the cause of death in 523 of the cases examined was carbon monoxide poisoning. [...] In their report the Committee of Experts stated that the carbon monoxide could undoubtedly have had lethal effect if the waste gases from the Diesel engine penetrated the closed van.*

*The Commission stated:*

*‘If the outlet for the carbon monoxide (including waste gases) is in closed premises, the concentration of carbon monoxide in those premises increases very rapidly and may cause death even in the course of a few minutes (from five to ten).’*

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<sup>8</sup> There exists another instance of a claimed Soviet forensic investigation: 214 exhumed, former mentally sick children who are said to have been killed in a gas van. This forensic expert report, also dating from 1943, was introduced as evidence for the prosecution during a West-German court of law in 1972 (see chapter 3.7.5.3.). I have so far not been able to obtain a copy or even a summary of this expert report. Maybe the exhumed children shown in Illustration 1 are from that source.



months, if not more than a year, by using a method that is unsuitable for this to begin with? How decomposed the corpses were can be gleaned from a photo added to one of the reports, see Illustration 1.<sup>10</sup>

Another indicator that this commission most certainly was not expert at what it stated is the fact that they claimed that, due to the “Diesel engine” exhaust gases piped into the cargo box, “the concentration of carbon monoxide in those premises increases very rapidly and may cause death even in the course of a few minutes (from five to ten).” As I will show in the next chapter, this is simply not possible with Diesel exhaust gases.

In addition to the Soviets, their loyal communist allies in Yugoslavia also performed an investigation by having a War Crimes Commission exhume two mass graves after the liberation of Serbia. They presented their results in March 1945. Orthodox historian Byford writes about this (2010, p. 25):

*“In fact, the [Commission’s] approach to evidence was determined primarily by political concerns. [...] For instance, in the winter of 1944/1945, the War Crimes Commission, acting upon reliable evidence, unearthed approximately 11,000 bodies at two sites where victims of the Semlin<sup>[11]</sup> Anhaltelager were said to have been buried. And yet its report, published a year later, stated that the total number of casualties was as high as 40,000. This figure was arrived at by adding up the various unverifiable approximations offered by a relatively small number of witnesses and former inmates whose statements were collected in the course of the investigation. Similarly, in the case of Banjica, although log books discovered after the war suggested that the total number of inmates was 23,637, of whom 4,286 were executed, the War Crimes Commission dismissed both figures as too low and stated that the actual number might be as high as 80,000 dead.”*

Hence we face the problem that here, too, propaganda and political purposes irreparably corrupted the record. If the commission did indeed find 11,000 corpses – who guarantees us that this number was not already exaggerated? – but they lied about that, then how can we trust them about anything we can find in their report?

<sup>10</sup> This Soviet medical expert report is available in the Central Archives of the Federal Security Service (former KGB) of the Russian Federation in Moscow, file H-16708 (Krasnodar trial), vol. 1, part 1, p. 32; quoted acc. to Bourtman 2008, p. 254.

<sup>11</sup> Serbian name: Sajmište.

In early 1942, the Semlin *Anhaltelager* was called *Judenlager* (camp for Jews), as almost exclusively Jews were interned there, until they were allegedly killed with gas vans in the spring of 1942. The number of Jews killed in gas vans is supposed to have been around 7,000 to 7,500 (Byford 2010, p. 6; Manoschek 1998, p. 229f.; Browning 1983, p. 61). After all Jews had been removed from the camp by May 1942, the camp changed its function and was renamed to *Anhaltelager*. Byford writes about this phase of the camp (*ibid.*):

“[...] *Semlin became an Anhaltelager, a temporary detention camp for political prisoners, captured partisans and forced laborers, most of whom were subsequently transported to various labor camps in Germany and Norway. Between May 1942 and July 1944, 32,000 inmates (mainly Serbs) passed through the camp, of whom 10,600 died of starvation, exposure and disease or were killed.*”

Hence it seems that the 11,000 victims allegedly found by the Yugoslav investigation commission were exclusively victims of this later phase of the camp, when no Jews were held in it anymore. There does therefore not seem to be any forensic proof that even a single person had died in a gas van. If they did, where are their bodies?

Christopher Browning has the following answer to that question (1983, p. 85):

“*In December 1943, Paul Blobel’s Kommando 1005, charged with digging up and burning the bodies from the mass graves left behind by the Einsatzgruppen in Russia, arrived in Yugoslavia, and liquidated the mass graves near Avala [where, it is said, the gassed victims were buried] among others.*”

We’ve heard that before: the evil Germans saw to it that all the remnants of these 7,000+ victims disappeared tracelessly, and the traces of the former mass graves along with them. Dare I say that this would have been an impossible feat? But if I am wrong, I wonder why the Germans did not perform this same miracle again on those 11,000 victims of the later phase of the camp.

## 1.3. Forensic and Technical Considerations

### 1.3.1. The Toxicity of Diesel Exhaust Gas

During this study we will encounter over and over again the claim that the alleged mass murder with “gas vans” is said to have been conducted with the exhaust gases of Diesel engines, either expressly or implied by the vehicle make used (Saurer). It is important to know that by the mid-1930s the Diesel engine had displaced the gasoline engine almost completely on the heavy utility vehicle market in Europe.<sup>12</sup> This is particularly true for the Swiss-Austrian truck manufacturer Saurer, who equipped their trucks only with Diesel engines<sup>13</sup> – in fact, Saurer had been a Diesel engine pioneer for decades.<sup>14</sup> This is an important observation, because from wartime documents we will learn that Saurer delivered the chassis and engines for the thirty ordered gas vans which are said to have been the vast majority of vehicles allegedly used as gas vans, in particular for what Mathias Beer calls the “perfected” “second generation” of gas vans (Beer 2011, p. 159).

Whether one can commit murder with Diesel engine exhaust within the time spans claimed is a forensic question. U.S. engineer Friedrich P. Berg has done thorough research about this, which he first published in 1984 and, in his latest revised and expanded form, in 2003 (in Rudolf 2003, pp. 435-469). Berg also elaborated in detail about the toxic effects of carbon monoxide and other constituents of Diesel engine exhaust gases. I will not repeat any of this here, as it would be repetitive and would lead us too far afield. The interested reader might either consult Berg’s paper or any handbook of toxicology from any library directly.

Whereas gasoline engines operate with a dearth of oxygen and therefore produce rather high amounts of toxic carbon monoxide, Diesel engines always operate with a huge excess of oxygen, as a result of which its exhaust gases contain only minor amounts of carbon monoxide, the lethal compound in engine exhaust gases.<sup>15</sup> Although not impossible, it is rather difficult to increase the amount of carbon monoxide in Diesel exhaust gases. If a Diesel engine runs idly or with only a minor load, it

<sup>12</sup> See [www.flambino.ch/truck/uebersaurer/geschichte\\_saurer/geschichte\\_saurer.htm](http://www.flambino.ch/truck/uebersaurer/geschichte_saurer/geschichte_saurer.htm).

<sup>13</sup> [www.saureroldtimer.ch/5000geschichte/5200chronosaurer/index.html](http://www.saureroldtimer.ch/5000geschichte/5200chronosaurer/index.html).

<sup>14</sup> See [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolph\\_Saurer\\_AG](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolph_Saurer_AG);  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diesel\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diesel_engine); cf. Wipf/König/Knoepfli 2003.

<sup>15</sup> It must be kept in mind that the CO contained in the exhaust gases is an incompletely combusted item resulting from a lack of oxygen.

must even be considered impossible to produce an exhaust gas whose composition can become acutely dangerous to persons with an average health within the time span of interest here (up to half an hour).

In contrast to this stands the drastically larger carbon monoxide content in the exhaust gases of gasoline engines, which can be manipulated in various ways to increase it even more, for instance by closing the idle-mixture adjustment screw of the carburetor. For this reason gasoline engines would have imposed themselves to be used for the construction of “gas vans” (but also for the generation of carbon monoxide for the stationary “gas chambers”).

Did the Germans know about the difference between Diesel and gasoline engine exhaust? Both engines had been invented in Germany,<sup>16</sup> and the record shows that German engineers and scientists were very well aware of that difference long before World War Two. Once again it was Berg who has documented the use of Diesel engines early on in coal mines in Germany exactly because their exhaust gases were relatively harmless (in Rudolf 2003, pp. 452ff). Mattogno and Graf have shown in turn that German scientists had made thorough exhaust gas composition analysis of a broad variety of gasoline engines, which was for instance published in a 1930 book dedicated to the toxicology of gasoline engine exhaust gases (Mattogno/Graf 2005, pp. 123-125; cf. Keeser/Froboese/Turnau 1930).

In 1994 Berg drew attention to a forensic study conducted by British scientists who had conducted a test gassing of rabbits, mice, and guinea pigs with Diesel engine exhaust gases. They “succeeded” to kill all their animals only after going to the engine’s limit and after more than three hours of exposure (Pattle *et al.* 1957). In this context it deserves emphasis that Diesel exhaust gases have other features than delivering small amounts of carbon monoxide which need to be considered. In particular old engines produced a lot of smoke (particulate matter; see Berg, in Rudolf 2003, pp. 451f.), which consisted not only of soot but also of a mixture of highly irritating, smelly chemicals. And like all exhaust gases, Diesel exhaust gases are hot when exiting the tail pipe: well beyond

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<sup>16</sup> The four-stroke gasoline engine was first patented by the German watchmaker Christian Reithmann on 26 October 1860 ([http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_Reithmann](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Reithmann)); today these engines are frequently called Otto engines due to the first car engine built by Nikolaus Otto of the Deutz engine factory in Cologne, employing as technical directors for engine construction Gottlieb Daimler (later of Daimler-Benz) and Wilhelm Maybach; the Diesel engine was patented in 1893 by German engineer Rudolf Diesel ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diesel\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diesel_engine))

100°C (200°F). Although the toxic effect of Diesel exhaust gas is moderate at worst, the combined effect of irritating chemicals, smoke, heat, noxious gases and oxygen deprivation will kill most people locked up in an enclosed space filled with such gases after an extended period of time. But as the above experiment shows, it would take hours of horrific suffering.

This proves that attempts at mass gassings with Diesel engines would have been a disaster at best.

Friedrich Paul Berg has not only pointed out that the use of Diesel engine exhaust gases for mass murder would have been absurd, but that the use of *any* exhaust gas is absurd when considering that the Germans, suffering from lack of petroleum during WWII, had retrofitted almost their entire truck fleet during the war with so-called producer gas generators. I will elaborate on this more in chapter 2.4. when discussing wartime documents, as the extant documentation about this technology stems primarily from that era.

Surprisingly, this finding of the general unsuitability of Diesel engines for a swift and efficient mass murder was recently confirmed by an orthodox anthology on the Holocaust, where the toxicologist Achim Trunk writes in a paper entitled “The lethal gases” (Morsch/Perz/Ley 2011, pp. 35f.):

*“It can be derived from the animal experiments that it is possible in principle to murder human beings with Diesel exhaust gases – even many simultaneously. In order to generate highly toxic exhaust gases which kill within a maximum of 20 minutes, however, Diesel engines in the facilities for gas murder would have had to be operated under heavy load, i.e., they had to be slowed down. Such a slowing, power-consuming device (such as a dynamometer) was much less simple and cheap to obtain than the large engine from a destroyed vehicle wreck. Slowing down a powerful Diesel inside a gas murder facility would have meant moreover that the engine would have become much noisier and would have vibrated much more intensively. Its exhaust gases would have contained a lot of soot. Whether such features have been observed (or whether clues to power consuming devices exist) is no longer a question to toxicology but rather to the sources and source criticism. According to this author’s knowledge, no clues in that direction exist.*

*A different explanation is more likely, according to which the murder weapons were all gasoline engines. [...] That gasoline en-*

*gines were indeed deployed in the extermination camps of the 'Aktion Reinhardt' derives from reliable sources. Rudolf Reder, for instance, one of the very few survivors of the Belzec extermination camp, spoke of an engine fueled with gasoline located in a small room next to the gas chamber. It is said to have consumed 80 to 100 liters of gasoline daily. For the later-day extermination camp Sobibór, where one could apply the experiences gained in Belzec, exact statements by the perpetrators exist that the murder device was a gasoline engine; [...] In the case of Treblinka, which was the latest of the extermination camps of the 'Aktion Reinhardt' to be built (and the biggest), science has so far assumed that a Diesel engine was used. This raises the question why, from the point of view of the murdering institution, a successful method should have been replaced by a different, technically much more difficult."*

It is worth noting in this context that Reder, in his testimony about Belzec, expressly and in various ways stated that the engine's exhaust gases were *not* used for murdering the victims. The other crown witness of orthodox historiography for the alleged exhaust gas mass murders in Belzec, the mining engineer Kurt Gerstein, speaks repeatedly of a Diesel engine providing the poisonous gas.<sup>17</sup> He as a mining engineer certainly knew to tell a Diesel from a gasoline engine. However, contrary to what Trunk wants us to believe, neither Reder nor Gerstein are reliable witnesses, as both their testimonies are riddled with absurdities and impossibilities (for details see Mattogno 2004a). I may mention in passing that it is not at all trivial to run a stationary gasoline engine, as they – in contrast to Diesel engines – tend to overheat quickly. They require special cooling devices to be kept operational.

Trunk's last sentence quoted above about the anachronistic reversal to an imperfect method is of course valid. It also applies to the gas van issue. Here the first generation of gas vans consisting of a mixture of makes, models and equipments with usually undefined engine types, some of which may have been gasoline engines, are said to have been replaced with a more sophisticated "second generation" of vans driven by – Diesel engines. This fact is glossed over by Trunk who erroneously or deceptively writes (Morsch/Perz/Ley 2011, p. 37):

*"Reports about the killings with gas vans explicitly give gasoline engines as the source of the lethal gas."*

<sup>17</sup> On this see the doctoral dissertation by Roques 1985, two volumes, plus: Roques 1986, Chelain 1989.

Trunk is definitely disingenuous when he writes (*ibid.*, p. 37):

*“The claim by revisionists is wrong that it is impossible in principle to commit mass murder with Diesel engines.”*

Trunk, who quotes Fritz Berg’s 1984 paper on Diesel gas chambers (his footnote 27, p. 33), hence knows about Berg’s work, has used many of the sources and arguments from Berg’s various papers, yet he has failed to acknowledge that Berg’s claim is *not* that mass murder with Diesel exhaust engines is impossible, but rather that it is extremely cumbersome and absurd, especially when considering the available alternatives – just as Trunk has concluded.

### 1.3.2. Hermetically Sealed Gassing Boxes

When studying pertinent documents and witness testimonies about “gas vans” in subsequent chapters, we will frequently encounter the claim that the gassing box used to kill the victims was hermetically sealed, hence that the exhaust gases piped into it had no way of escaping but were accumulating inside the box. I will deliberate about this already now, while discussing forensic and technical matters.

The questions raised by this claim are as follows:

1. How quickly does the gas pressure rise inside the alleged hermetically sealed gassing box?
2. What is the effect of this steady rise in internal pressure on the gassing box and on the engine?

Question two has basically two possible answers:

2.a) Either the gassing box bursts, as it can no longer withstand the internal pressure, or

2.b) the engine stalls, as it can no longer expel its exhaust gases into the pressurized gassing box.

Which of the two events happens depends on the stability of the gassing box and on the capability of the engine to overcome an external pressure, which is called exhaust gas back pressure. We will investigate both next.

With the advent of turbochargers and catalytic converters, exhaust gas back pressure has become an important feature of combustion engines. There exists therefore a plethora of data about it, although none of it reaches back pressures anywhere close to where an engine would stall. Under normal operational conditions, engines running on high rpms can produce a back pressure of up to one atmosphere in extreme

cases with no sign of stalling.<sup>18</sup> The exhaust back pressure required to stall an engine would therefore be considerably higher, yet of course also noticeably below the engine's compression rate. The actual value depends primarily on the engine's compression rate, which was somewhat lower for engines during the 1940s than it is today, although Diesel engines have always used higher compression rates than gasoline engines, as they have to compress the fuel/air mixture to the point where it self-ignites. They will therefore stall later than gasoline engines.

If the exhaust pipe of a running engine is connected to a hermetically sealed container, the gas pressure in the latter will rise to the point where either the engine stalls or the container fractures or bursts due to its internal pressure. If the container resists the steadily increasing pressure, the engine will stall as soon as the engine's threshold value for tolerable exhaust gas back pressure has been reached.

For the sake of the argument we may assume that a wartime Diesel engine could still be operated at an exhaust back pressure of two atmospheres (ca. 2 bar). We will now calculate the amount of gas produced by such an engine.

For lack of better data, let us assume a moderate truck engine volume of five liters<sup>19</sup> and an engine speed of only marginally above idle – say 1,000 revolutions per minute. A four-stroke engine discharges its exhaust gases only after every second revolution, so we would have 500 times five liters of exhaust gases produced in a minute, which equals 2.5 m<sup>3</sup> of exhaust gas. Although it is true that the exhaust gas is slightly pressurized when exiting the cylinder, it cools down considerably afterwards and hence contracts. Within the error margins of our rough calculations, both effects can be considered to compensate each other, so we will ignore them here.

The cuboid cargo boxes claimed to have been used are said to have had a free volume of some 15 to 20 m<sup>3</sup>.<sup>20</sup> This means that the pressure

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.aalcar.com/library/exhaust\\_backpressure.htm](http://www.aalcar.com/library/exhaust_backpressure.htm).

<sup>19</sup> One of the vans found after the war which was initially speculated to have been used as a gas van had a 7.4 liter Diesel engine; see <http://dss.ucsd.edu/~lzamosc/chelm00.htm>. But for the sake of the argument I reduce it to a smaller size.

<sup>20</sup> The cargo boxes manufactured for Saurer trucks were 5.8 m long, 1.7 m high (see the document on p. 306) and probably some 2.3 m wide (the documents do not mention a width, but the width of trucks varies usually between 2.30 and 2.50 m. A standard container today has a width of 2.44 m). This amounts to some 22.7 m<sup>3</sup>, of which the body volume of the victims has to be deducted. Some 50 to 130 victims are claimed (see chapter 4.2.4.), which, with an average weight of 60 kg  $\approx$  (60 liters) amounts to ca. 3 to 8 m<sup>3</sup> of filled space. Hence I subsequently calculate with some 15 to 20 m<sup>3</sup>.

in such a cargo box, if closed hermetically, would have doubled within some six to eight minutes. Although such an overpressure is unlikely to make the engine stall, as Diesel engines run on high compression rates, the pressure exerted on the walls of the cargo box would have been immense: 1 atmosphere ( $\approx 1$  bar) of overpressure equals by definition the effect of a weight of one kilogram per square centimeter, or ten metric tons per square meter. Since the long wall of the cuboid cargo box under scrutiny was 5.8 meters long and 1.7 meters high,<sup>21</sup> hence had a surface area of almost 10 square meters, 1 atmosphere of overpressure would have been equal to a load of 100 metric tons! There is no way such a cargo box could have withstood such a force. Already with a tenth of that load – and at a tenth of the time (less than a minute) – the cargo box would have been bound to burst or even explode, had it really been sealed hermetically.

For this reason truck containers designed to withstand any kind of pressure have cylindrical shapes with convex or semi-spherical bases, as can be gleaned from tank cars and generally with containers holding liquids or gases under pressure, for the circular shape distributes the forces exerted by the pressure equally over the entire structure.

It is therefore impossible that any gas van which is said to have piped engine exhaust gases into its cargo box was equipped with a hermetically sealed cargo box. The box had to have some excess pressure release valve or opening in its coachwork somewhere.

This will become a most important point when discussion the so-called Just document (chapter 2.2.4.), which insists on the alleged fact that the gassing box needed to be hermetically sealed in order to function, but at once states that “97,000” persons “were processed” “without any defects in the vehicles becoming apparent.” This is technically impossible, plain and simple.

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<sup>21</sup> This is valid for the Saurer trucks. The dimensions of the cargo boxes of the other claimed truck models from Diamond/Renault/Opel/Mercedes/... are unknown, but as they are frequently referred to as the “small vans,” they must have been considerably smaller. This does, of course, not have any effect on the pressure exerted per square meter of surface area.