

Auschwitz: The First Gassing

Rumor and Reality

Carlo Mattogno



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Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality

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Cover Illustrations: Bottom: Part of a 1944 photo shows high-ranking SS officers gathered at Solahütte, the SS retreat outside of Auschwitz. Other photos (left to right; all © Carlo Mattogno): Block 11, inside, right side, door to cell no. 25; Block 11, outside, wall facing NE, entry door; Block 11, inside, Bunker, right side, cell no. 21.

Table of Contents

	Page
Preface to the Third Edition	7
Introduction	9
Chapter I: Genesis and Significance of the First Gassing	17
Chapter II: The Setting of the First Gassing: Block 11	31
Chapter III: The Sources of the First-Gassing Accounts	35
1. Wartime Sources (1941 – 1943).....	35
2. Post-War Sources	41
3. Testimonies of the SS Personnel.....	75
Chapter IV: Critical and Comparative Source Analysis	81
1. The Location of the First Gassing	81
2. The Date of the First Gassing.....	83
3. The Preparations for the First Gassing	85
4. The Victims of the First Gassing.....	86
5. The Removal of the Gassed	87
5.1. Persons Who Did the Work	87
5.2. Beginning of the Removal	88
5.3. Duration of the Removal.....	88
5.4. Disposition of the Bodies Removed.....	89
6. The Gassing.....	89
6.1. Location of the Gassing	89
6.2. Gassing Technique.....	90
6.3. Duration of the Victims' Agony	92
6.4. Test for Residual Gases	95
6.5. Have the Witnesses Ever Seen HCN Victims?.....	96
7. Conclusion: Critical Assessment of the Testimonies	97
8. The Value of the Testimonies	98
9. Danuta Czech's Historiographic Method.....	101
10. Historical Reconstruction of the First Gassing	104

Chapter V: Sources Not Speaking of the First Gassing	107
1. Testimonies	107
2. Documents.....	120
3. Chemical Considerations.....	130
Conclusion	133
Appendix	135
Documents.....	135
Photographs	153
Abbreviations	174
Note on Polish Sources.....	174
Bibliography	175
Index of Names	179

Preface to the Third Edition

This work is the first of a set of four studies which were prepared at different times yet which lay out the same general theme in a chronological and logical sequence: the genesis and development of the alleged homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The orthodox history of Auschwitz¹ is known to be based on an order to exterminate the Jews of Europe – allegedly sent by Hitler to Himmler in the spring of 1941 and from there to the Auschwitz camp commander Rudolf Höss. This order is said to have materialized in the construction of the alleged extermination camp of Birkenau. This order, according to the interpretation that has become canonical, was implemented progressively in four stages:

1. In September 1941 the first experimental homicidal gassing was allegedly carried out at Auschwitz using Zyklon B, which is said to represent the “discovery” of the chemical weapon for the subsequent mass extermination.
2. At the beginning of 1942 the activity of homicidal gassing is said to have been transferred to the morgue of the crematorium at the Auschwitz Main Camp.
3. In the following months, two houses located outside the Birkenau camp were purportedly converted into homicidal gas chambers (the so-called “Bunkers”) and began the mass extermination of Jews and sick prisoners.
4. In March 1943, finally, the extermination activities are claimed to have been moved into the four crematoria of Birkenau, all allegedly equipped with gas chambers.

I have investigated these four stages in four extensive studies as mentioned above, namely:

- *Auschwitz: The First Gassing*, the present study (the first Italian edition by Edizioni di Ar, Padua, 1992)

¹ By this I mean the version disseminated by the Auschwitz Museum, which is the repository of orthodox historiography on Auschwitz.

- *Auschwitz: Crematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassing*. Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, December 2005
- *Debunking the Bunkers of Auschwitz: Black Propaganda versus History*. 2nd ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield, February 2016 (the first edition had appeared with the title *The Bunkers of Auschwitz*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, December 2004)
- *The Real Case for Auschwitz: Robert van Pelt's Evidence from the Irving Trial Critically Reviewed*," Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield, April 2015 (the first edition had appeared in two volumes with the title *Auschwitz: The Case for Sanity: A Historical and Technical Study of Jean-Claude Pressac's "Criminal Traces" and Robert Jan van Pelt's "Convergence of Evidence*, The Barnes Review, Washington, D.C., September 2010)

The last entry in this list has 758 pages, which is five times as voluminous as any of the other three books, as it deals with the fourth, best documented and most important stage, the alleged gassings in the crematoria of Birkenau.

The first entry is herewith published in a third, slightly corrected edition.

Introduction

Since the original Italian version of this book was published in 1992, there have been numerous new developments in the subject's historiography, although none of them has been important enough to mandate a change of this book's conclusions.

Even today, 24 years later, official historiography has not only failed to produce a reply to this study, although it has been translated into French,² English³ and German,⁴ but in its obdurate historical dogmatism has not even found it necessary to address the topic in greater depth.⁵ It is, however, more important than ever before.

The first homicidal gassing in the Auschwitz concentration camp was allegedly carried out between September 3 and 5, 1941, in the basement of Building (Block) 13. This building was later named Block 11 because of an administrative change in the numbering of the buildings. This first gassing is said to have been the starting point of the alleged mass extermination process at Auschwitz. After having gone through the intermediate stages of the mortuary in Crematorium I of the *Stammlager* (Auschwitz Main Camp) and the so-called "Bunkers" at Birkenau, this claimed extermination process later led to the alleged homicidal gas chambers of the Birkenau Crematoria II through V. As such, the first homicidal gassing would therefore constitute the birth of the homicidal gas chambers and mark the "official" introduction of Zyklon B into the Auschwitz holocaust history. Moreover, it would also constitute the archetype of the alleged "selections" of registered detainees in the camp hospitals for the "gas chambers."

² *Auschwitz: le premier gazage*, Stiftung Vrij Historisch Onderzoek, Berchem, 1999.

³ *Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality*, 1st ed., Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, 2005; 2nd ed., The Barnes Review, Washington, DC, 2012.

⁴ *Auschwitz: Die Erste Vergasung. Gerüchte und Wirklichkeit*, Castle Hill Publishers, Hastings, 2007; 2nd ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2014.

⁵ This includes Sandra Holtermann's seminar paper, *Die erste Vergasung in Auschwitz im September 1941*, GRIN Verlag, Munich 2005, which, if printed, would hardly reach 20 pages of text (it is available only as an eBook). It thus had to remain superficial.

A book published in 2005 underlines the importance which this presumed event has for orthodox historiography:⁶

“This first mass gassing was no longer just a mere experiment in order to find out whether Zyklon B was really suited for the systematic mass murder of humans. During those September days the basic test run took place for mass extermination with gas in Auschwitz. During those moments the killing procedure was established, which was later refined and adjusted as needed.”

From this event the principle of the division of labor during the alleged mass extermination process is also claimed to have originated – that is, assigning specific tasks to various teams of prisoners – and the tactics of using a code language.⁷

The consequence of this notable inertia on the part of official historiography is that any scholarly literature on this topic is, as yet, practically non-existent. Up until 1992, only a single Polish article of 1972 had been dedicated to this subject,⁸ aside from my own contribution presented at the “Ninth International Revisionist Conference” of 1989,⁹ which I later expanded to the present study. Because the Polish article mentioned above had appeared in a Polish journal, it remained practically unnoticed by western specialists on Auschwitz until 1987, when an abridged translation became available in German.¹⁰ Hence, for decades – and practically even today – the main and almost sole historical source for this topic has been Danuta Czech’s *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau*.

Only an exceedingly small number of specialists of the camp’s history later looked into the first gassing at Auschwitz, and then only in a very perfunctory way, although the enormous documentation contained in the archives of the *Zentralbauleitung* (Central Construction Office) as preserved

⁶ Eric Friedler, Barbara Siebert, Andreas Kilian, *Zeugen aus der Todeszone. Das jüdische Sonderkommando in Auschwitz*. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich, 2005, p. 24.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁸ Stanisław Kłodziński, “Pierwsze zagazowanie więźniów i jeńców w obozie oświęcimskim” (The first gassing of detainees and prisoners of war in the Auschwitz camp), *Przegląd Lekarski* (Medical review), No. 1, 1972.

⁹ C. Mattogno, “The First Gassing at Auschwitz: Genesis of a Myth,” *The Journal of Historical Review*, 9(2) (1989), pp. 193-222.

¹⁰ S. Kłodziński, “Die erste Vergasung von Häftlingen und Kriegsgefangenen im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz,” Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung (ed.), *Die Auschwitz-Hefte. Texte der polnischen Zeitschrift ‘Przegląd Lekarski’ über historische, psychische und medizinische Aspekte des Lebens in Auschwitz.*, Beltz-Verlag, Weinheim/Basel 1987, Vol. 1, pp. 261-275.

in Moscow has meanwhile been studied extensively. There is a very simple explanation for this: this documentation does not contain even the vaguest indication in support of an alleged homicidal gassing in the basement of Block 11.

Having searched those archives, Jean-Claude Pressac devoted half a page to the topic in 1993, writing:¹¹

“Today, the first homicidal gassing in the Auschwitz camp is considered to have taken place in the basement of Block 11 between December 5 and the end of that month (earlier on, it was dated September 3 to 5).

Witnesses claim that it concerned 250 inmates judged to be terminally ill and some 600 Soviet prisoners who arrived at the camp on October 7. During the month of November, a special Gestapo commission from Kattowitz was in session in the concentration camp aiming to identify among the prisoners ‘fanatical’ communists for liquidation; by the end of November, 300 had been selected.

The openings of the basement having been covered with dirt, Zyklon B was introduced and the door was closed. According to Höss (who was not present) death is said to have occurred immediately. Others speak of a gassing that took two days, involving a second load of toxic [gas], the first not having killed all victims.

The fact that hydrogen cyanide has a vaporization point of 27°C, that it was used in an as yet unheated basement in the middle of the Silesian winter, and a lack of knowledge concerning the lethal dose might explain the overly long duration of this gassing.

The victims, somewhere between 550 and 850, were incinerated in the two double-muffle ovens of the crematorium over a period of one to two weeks of intensive work, which damaged the second oven.”

The change of date proposed by Jean-Claude Pressac has no foundation in documents. He has simply taken as a historical fact a hypothesis of mine, which appears on p. 159 of the Italian edition of the present study (cf. below, Chapter V.1.). The sources Pressac cites in note 110 on p. 101 – Jan Sehn and Kazimierz Smoleń – are the very sources from which I drew the said conclusion.

Concerning the “overly long duration” of the gassing, I refer the reader to what I have written in Chapter IV.6.3. Here, I must point out another error of J.-C. Pressac’s which will deliver the *coup de grâce* to his explanation: it is not true that Block 11 was unheated in December 1941. In fact, a

¹¹ Jean-Claude Pressac, *Les crématoires d’Auschwitz. La machinerie du meurtre de masse*. CNRS Editions, Paris 1993, p. 34.

heating device had been installed in this building by the end of May 1941.¹²

Pressac's reference to the damage to the second furnace has no provable relationship with the cremation of the corpses of those allegedly gassed. In fact, in the letter of January 31, 1942, quoted by Pressac, Maximilian Grabner, the head of the Political Department at Auschwitz, did not mention in any way an "intensive load" on the oven. He merely requests the Construction Office to repair the second oven by making use of the presence of a Topf engineer, who was at that time installing the third oven.¹³

I will address the question of the "lack of knowledge about the lethal dose" of hydrogen cyanide in Chapter I.

J.-C. Pressac returned to the argument in an interview given by him in 1995, which, however, was obviously edited prior to its publication. Referring specifically to my study, he expressed a reasonable skepticism:¹⁴

"Mattogno has also looked into the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz, which the Poles claim to have taken place between September 3 and 5 in the basement of Block 11 of the Main Camp. According to the Poles, this gassing is the direct consequence of the order given to commander Höss by Himmler himself in Berlin; in the summer of 1941 to be precise. Except that [the gassing] involved Russian prisoners and terminally ill patients, but not Jews. Initially, Mattogno concluded that this was a simple invention, later, that this incident did not have a historical basis. I have talked to the Poles about this question. Here is the somewhat off-handed reply: 'This gassing began on the anniversary of an inmate who was present and who therefore remembers the date precisely.' The inmate in question by the name of Michał Kula had declared to remember it very well, because it was the day of his arrival at the camp, August 15 ... and not September 3. It is now known that Höss did not receive the order to kill the Jews in the summer of 1941, but at the beginning of June, 1942.

If this gassing did take place, it was in December of 1941 or even in January of 1942 and had nothing to do with the massacre of the Jews." (Emp. added)

¹² "Block 13 (Zellengebäude) Heizungsanlage fertiggestellt," (Block 13 (cell building) heating installation completed). "Tätigkeitsbericht vom 5. bis 10. Mai 1941," RGVA, 502-1-214, p. 52. The numbering of the Blocks was later changed (Block 13 became Block 11).

¹³ RGVA, 512-1-312, p. 77.

¹⁴ "Entretien avec Jean-Claude Pressac réalisé par Valérie Igounet, à la Ville du Bois, le jeudi 15 juin 1995," in: V. Igounet, *Histoire du négationnisme en France*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 2000, p. 644.

In the five-volume anthology *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Fundamental problems of the history of the camp*, which appeared in 1995 and which represents the authoritative history of the Auschwitz Museum, little more than four pages are devoted to the first homicidal gassing in the section written by Franciszek Piper titled “Gas chambers and crematoria.”¹⁵

An abridged version of this section, published a year earlier in English, deals with the question in half a page.¹⁶

The year 1995 also saw the publication of the three volumes of the *Sterbebücher von Auschwitz* (death books of A.),¹⁷ which made possible a more accurate analysis of the fate of those 135 inmates of Block 28 who are said to have been gassed in Block 11 (cf. below, Chapter V.2), but the historicity of the first homicidal gassing has not been strengthened in any appreciable way by this token. The first volume of this work contains, in fact, a long article by Kazimierz Smoleń on the “Soviet prisoners of war in concentration camp Auschwitz,”¹⁸ which also deals with the first homicidal gassing in Block 11, but without contributing an original idea – let alone new documents – to this topic. The author limits himself to the well-known sources of Danuta Czech’s *Kalendarium*, Rudolf Höss, and Wiesław Kielar.¹⁹

In his *summa holocaustica* on Auschwitz, Robert Jan van Pelt has treated the question of the first gassing with conspicuous brevity, making use only of an article dated July 1st, 1942, of a single eyewitness, Wojciech Barcz, and of a pamphlet published in 1943.²⁰ I shall analyze these sources in Chapter III.

As I have underlined above, the principal historiographic source for the topic of the first homicidal gassing is still the Auschwitz *Kalendarium*. In the first German edition of this work, its author Danuta Czech described the event as follows:²¹

¹⁵ W. Długoborski, F. Piper (eds.), *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Węzłowe zagadnienia z dziejów obozu*. Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 1995, Vol. III, pp. 97-102.

¹⁶ F. Piper, “Gas Chambers and Crematoria,” in: Israel Gutman, Michael Berenbaum (eds.), *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 1994, pp. 157f.

¹⁷ Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (ed.), *Sterbebücher von Auschwitz*, K.G. Saur, Munich/New Providence/London/Paris 1995, 3 volumes.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, “Sowjetische Kriegsgefangene im KL Auschwitz,” Vol. I, pp. 127-161.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 132f.

²⁰ Robert Jan van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz. Evidence from the Irving Trial*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington/Indianapolis 2002, pp. 88, 144, 146.

²¹ D. Czech, “Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau,”

“September 3. For the first time tests were done at concentration camp Auschwitz for the mass killing of human beings by means of gas – Zyklon B. Ordered to do so by the SS, paramedics moved 250 sick inmates from the inmate hospital into the basement cells of Block 11. Some 600 Soviet prisoners of war were herded into these cells as well. (In the POW camps, officers and political commissars had been singled out in accordance with order No. 8 of July 17, 1941). Once they had been lodged in the cells of the Bunker, the basement windows were closed by means of dirt, SS-men poured in the Zyklon-gas, and the doors were shut.

September 4. Section leader Palitzsch, wearing a gas mask, opened the doors of the Bunker cells and discovered that a number of inmates were still alive. Another load of Zyklon B was therefore introduced and the doors were shut once again.

September 5. In the evening, 20 inmates from the penal company (Block 5a) and paramedics from the inmate hospital were led to the yard of Block 11. Previously, they had been told that they were to do a special type of work and were not to speak to anyone about what they would see, under threat of death. They were also promised a suitably increased food ration once the work was done. The officers Fritzsich, Mayer, Palitzsch, camp surgeon Entress, and others were present in the yard of Block 11. The inmates were issued gas masks and were ordered to go into the basement and to carry the corpses of the gassed into the yard. The uniforms of the gassed Soviet prisoners were removed and the corpses thrown on wagons. The gassed inmates wore camp uniforms. The transfer of the corpses to the crematorium lasted well into the night. Among those gassed were the 10 inmates moved into the Bunker on account of the escape of detainee Nowaczyk.”

In the second German edition of the *Kalendarium*, Danuta Czech added new details to the account – many contradicting those of the previous edition – and indicated also the archive references (mostly testimony from the Höss trial):²²

“September 3. Now that the killing by gas, ordered a few days ago by Karl Fritzsich to be tested on a small group of Russian POWs, has succeeded, the camp directorate decides to repeat this test in the basement of Block 11. In all likelihood, this is linked to the news that the Gestapo was planning to bring in a major transport of officers, people’s commissars, and prisoners of war for liquidation. In this connection, camp surgeon SS-Hauptsturm-

Hefte von Auschwitz, Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum w Oświęcimiu, no. 2, 1959, p. 109.

²² D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*. Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbek 1989, pp. 117-119.

führer Dr. Siegfried Schwela orders a selection to be carried out in the inmate hospital, resulting in the singling out of some 250 inmates. The paramedics are ordered to take the selected inmates into the Bunker of Block 11, by means of stretchers if necessary. In the Bunker, they are herded into a few cells. The basement windows are closed by means of dirt. Then 600 Russian POWs, officers and people's commissars, are herded into the cells, they have been selected by a special Gestapo command in the POW camps. Once the POWs have been lodged in the cells and the SS-men have thrown in the Zyklon B gas, the doors are shut and made gas-tight. This action takes place after the evening roll-call, during the curfew, i.e., the inmates are prohibited from leaving their blocks and moving around in the camp. September 4. In the morning, section leader Gerhard Palitzsch, protected by a gas mask, opens the cell doors and notes that some of the POWs are still alive. As a consequence, more Zyklon B is thrown in and the doors are closed once more.

In the afternoon, all doors of Bunker 11 are opened and the gaskets are removed, as it has been ascertained that the second dose of Zyklon B has killed the Russian POWs and the Polish inmates. One waits for the gas to dissipate. After the evening roll call, curfew is again ordered.

During the night, section leader Palitzsch calls in 20 inmates from the penal company, as well as all the paramedics from the sickbay and the inmates Eugeniusz Obojski and Teofil Banasiuk, who are corpse carriers operating two carts for the transportation of corpses in the mortuary and the crematorium. All of them are taken to the yard of Block 11. Prior to that they have been told that they are to do special work and have been informed not to mention to anyone what they would get to see, under pain of death. At the same time they are promised better food rations once the work is done. SS officers Fritzsich, Maier, Palitzsch, as well as SS-surgeon Schwela and SS personnel acting as block leaders in the camp are already waiting in the yard of Block 11. Inmates Obojski and Banasiuk are issued gas masks and accompany Palitzsch and other SS personnel, also wearing gas masks, down into the cellars of Block 11.

They return from the cellars without gas masks, thus showing that the gas has dissipated. The inmates are divided into four groups. One group, with gas masks, brings the corpses of those killed from the cellars up to the ground floor, a second one removes the clothing of those killed. A third group carries the corpses into the yard of Block 11 where they are loaded onto carts by the fourth group. The dead Russian POWs are in uniform; their pockets contain documents, family photographs, money, miscellaneous objects, and cigarettes. In the yard, dental surgeons supervised by SS personnel remove gold crowns and gold teeth. The inmates drag the carts, fully loaded with the corpses of the POWs and the Polish inmates, from the yard of Block 11 to the crematorium; they are led by Obojski and Banasiuk

and supervised by SS personnel. Among the dead are the corpses of ten inmates, who had been sent to the Bunker on September 1st as punishment for the escape of the inmate Jan Nowaczek and condemned to death by camp commander Fritzsch. The corpses of those selected in the camp hospital are in their underwear. Bringing up the corpses, undressing them, searching them, and removing them takes until morning and is not yet finished by then.

September 5. After the evening roll-call, curfew is ordered. The same group of inmates active the night before marches into the yard of Block 11 in order to finish removing the corpses to the crematorium. Once there, the corpses are placed into a large and long hall, which is already half full. The crematorium command cannot keep up with the incineration of the corpses. Several more days are needed for the incineration of all corpses.”

As we will see in the following chapters, this version was produced by the investigating judge Jan Sehn in 1946 on the basis of Michał Kula's testimony.

The aim of this study is to verify the historiographical soundness and historical reliability of this account and, in so doing, to verify the reality of the first homicidal gassing in the basement of Block 11 of Auschwitz.

The text presented here in English is an updated, corrected and enhanced version of the original Italian edition, augmented by new sources, which I have discovered over the last 24 years.

Some arguments, which had a novel character in 1992 (in particular the critique of Rudolf Höss's declarations), can now be regarded as having been accepted at least by revisionist historiography and known to all. I have therefore decided to leave them aside.²³

In addition, several hypothetical arguments have been omitted in this revised text that have not been sufficiently confirmed.

Carlo Mattogno
Rome, March 2016

²³ See in this regard my studies *The Real Case for Auschwitz*, Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2015, Chapter 11, “Critical Analysis of the Testimonies of Rudolf Höss,” pp. 417-431, and Raul Hilberg e i “centri di sterminio” nazionalsocialisti. *Fonti e metodologia*, Rome 2008, in: <http://vho.org/aaargh/fran/livres8/CMhilberg.pdf>, Chap. III, 4-5, pp. 105-112.

Chapter I: Genesis and Significance of the First Gassing

Because of what the account of the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz describes and what it has come to mean, it has its place in a little known historical context, which must be outlined briefly before we can approach the subject in greater detail.

The First World War brought with it the massive use of poisonous airborne chemicals by all belligerents. Between 1914 and 1918, some 250,000 tons of such materials were fabricated, and the casualties due to gas were about one million soldiers, of whom 78,000 died.²⁴ In the summer of 1917, between Neuilly and the left bank of the Maas River on a frontline ten kilometers (about six miles) wide, some 400,000 gas grenades were launched, thousands more in August and October near Verdun, and in December of 1917 on the Russian front.²⁵ By 1918, gas grenades made up 50% of the projectiles stocked in the arsenals of the German artillery. In a single day during the spring offensive of 1918 the Germans launched 200,000 rounds of Yprite.²⁶

After the end of the war, toxic chemicals were further developed – especially for tactical purposes – in all countries that had been involved in the conflict. Instruction manuals and government publications were issued, as well as a wide array of technical literature.²⁷ From a scientific point of view, the fundamental work was undoubtedly the German book *Toxic Gases, Vapors, Fogs, Smoke and Particulates*²⁸ by Ferdinand Flury and Franz Zernik.

²⁴ Attilio Izzo, *Guerra chimica e difesa antigas*, Editore Ulrico Hoepli, Milan 1935, p. 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 445-448.

²⁸ F. Flury, F. Zernik, *Schädliche Gase, Dämpfe, Nebel, Rauch- und Staubarten*, Verlag von Julius Springer, Berlin 1931. Similar information can be found in the Italian tome by Michele Giua, *Lezioni di aggressivi chimici. Parte descrittiva e tecnologica*, R. Accademia e della Scuola di Applicazione di Artiglieria e Genio, Turin 1933. Another important work appeared in 1933: *Chimica delle sostanze aggressive*, edited by Dr. Mario Sar-

Even though the use of aggressive chemicals had been banned by the 1925 Geneva Convention on gases,²⁹ they were considered by all former belligerents for a possible future war. An Italian book dated 1935 opens with the following lines, which reflect the spirit of the time:³⁰

“Recent air exercises in various countries have demonstrated that it is impossible to prevent bombardments and the use of gas against an open city by means of anti-air defenses.”

The preface of a 1937 manual about the defense against noxious gases by the British government stated:³¹

“The measures for safeguarding the civil population against the effects of air attack which these Handbooks describe have become a necessary part of the defensive organisation of any country which is open to air attack. The need for them is not related to any belief that war is imminent. It arises from the fact that the risk of attack from the air, however remote it may be, is a risk that cannot be ignored, and because preparations to minimise the consequences of attack from the air cannot be improvised on the spur of the moment but must be made, if they are to be effective, in time of peace.”

The extent to which the protection against toxic gases was an issue is testified by the German magazine *Gasschutz und Luftschutz. Zeitschrift für das gesamte Gebiet des Gas- und Luftschutzes der Zivilbevölkerung*, established in 1931, which from the outset collected prestigious contributions on the question of protection against chemical weapons.

As we shall see in Chapter III, in 1941 the story of the first gassing in German concentration camps developed along such lines.

In 1946, the Polish investigating judge Jan Sehn, in his famous report on the results of the inquiry into the Auschwitz camp, elaborated the fundamental idea which was to guide orthodox historiography in decades to come. Sehn placed the first gassing within the framework of the alleged

tori, a chemist at the Center for Military Chemistry in Rome. It was translated into German two years later with the title *Die Chemie der Kampfstoffe* (Friedrich Vieweg & Sohn, Braunschweig 1935).

²⁹ The relevant protocol prohibits the use of “asphyxiating, toxic or other types of gases and bacteriological methods of warfare.” United States Army Judge Advocate General (ed.), *Law of War Documentary Supplement*, International and Operational Law Department, The United States Army Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School Charlottesville, Va, 2009, p. 30.

³⁰ M.G. Gusman, *Contro il flagello del gas nemico*, Editrice Napoletana, Naples 1935, p. 11.

³¹ *Air Raid Precautions. Handbook No. 1. Personal Protection against Gas*. His Majesty’s Stationery Office, London 1937, p. 3.

plan for the extermination of the Jews that was to be implemented in that camp:³²

“All these methods of assassination could not, however, eliminate those detainees who were unfit for work; in particular, they could not accomplish the enormous tasks associated with the annihilation of giant transports of hundreds of thousands of Jews who were almost exclusively destined to be exterminated on the spot.

For this reason, the Germans organized the mass murder of people by means of gas. These methods were tested during the summer of 1941 in the Bunker of Block 11 on 250 inmate patients brought in from the camp sick-bays, and on 600 prisoners of war. Once the victims had entered, the windows of the basement were covered with earth, and an SS man with a gas mask emptied the contents of the Zyklon B cans through the door and closed it. The next day, around noon, Palitsch [sic], wearing a gas mask, opened the door of the Bunker and discovered that some inmates were still alive. More Zyklon was then added, and the door was closed again.^[33] It was opened only in the evening of the following day. By then all inmates were dead.”

Jan Sehn’s interpretation was then re-elaborated by former Auschwitz Kommandant Rudolf Höss in his Polish prison and furnished the basis for the description of the extermination of Soviet POWs.

In the text *“Die Endlösung der Judenfrage”* prepared in Krakow in November of 1946, Rudolf Höss describes his well-known alleged meeting with Himmler in Berlin *“im Sommer 1941”* (in the summer of 1941).³⁴ On that occasion the *Reichsführer-SS* had allegedly informed him that the Führer had decided on *“the final solution of the Jewish question”* – or rather, in a blatant historiographic anachronism, on the alleged extermination

³² J. Sehn, “Obóz koncentracyjny i zagłady Oświęcim” (The Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp), *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji badania zbrodni niemieckich w Polsce*, Vol. I, Poznań 1946, p. 120.

³³ According to Jan Sehn the gassing took place in the entire basement, including the hallway, yet for Danuta Czech it occurred only inside the prison cells. Therefore the former stated “the Bunker door” (see photos 9-11 in the Appendix), whereas the latter wrote “the cell doors of the Bunker.”

³⁴ The inescapable chronological contradictions within Rudolf Höss’s statements led orthodox Holocaust historian Karin Orth to date his alleged meeting with Himmler a year later. K. Orth, “Rudolf Höss und die ‘Endlösung der Judenfrage.’ Drei Argumente gegen deren Datierung auf den Sommer 1941,” in: *Werkstattgeschichte*, 18, November 1997, pp. 45-57. But by so doing, it is claimed that Höss set up the alleged “extermination machine” before having received the order from Himmler. See in this regard my study *Hitler e il nemico di Raza*, Edizioni di Ar, Padua 2009, pp. 69-81.

of the Jews³⁵ – and that Auschwitz was to become the central place for that extermination:³⁶

“Shortly thereafter, Eichmann came to see me at Auschwitz. He explained to me the details of the actions planned for the various countries. [...] We then discussed the implementation of the extermination. Only gas would be considered. [...] Eichmann returned to Berlin to inform RFSS about our discussion. [...] At the end of November, a general meeting of the staff of the Jewish Department took place at Eichmann’s office, to which I was invited as well. [...] I was not in a position to find out the date set for the action. Furthermore, Eichmann had so far not been in a position to procure an appropriate gas.

In the fall of 1941, a Secret Special Order given to the POW camps called for the identification by the Gestapo of the Russian Politruks, commissars and, in particular, political officers; they were transferred to the nearest concentration camp for liquidation. On a routine basis, Auschwitz received smaller transports of this type; they were killed by shooting in the gravel pit near the Monopol buildings or in the yard of Block 11. While I was away on a mission, my deputy, Hauptsturmführer Fritzsich had used gas on his own initiative for the liquidation of these POWs in such a way that he herded the Russians into the individual cells located in the basement and then, using a gas mask, he threw Cyklon B into the cells, which caused the immediate death. [...]

When Eichmann came the next time I advised him about this use of Cyklon B, and we decided to use this gas for the future mass annihilations. Killing of the Russian POWs mentioned above by means of Cyklon B was continued, but Block 11 was no longer used, because after the gassing the entire building had to be ventilated for at least two days.”

Rudolf Höss later came back to this topic in his “Autobiography,” which he wrote in February of 1947:³⁷

“Before the mass annihilation of the Jews began, however, the Russian politruks and political commissars were liquidated in nearly all concentration camps in 1941/42. According to a secret decree of the Führer, special Gestapo commands selected the Russian politruks and political commissars

³⁵ As late as February 10, 1942, the term “Endlösung” (final solution) certainly still referred to the Madagascar project, as is irrefutably demonstrated by the letter written by Franz Rademacher (Head of the Jewish Department in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to minister Bielfeld in the same Ministry. NG-5770. See C. Mattogno, *Raul Hilberg*..., *op. cit.* (note 23), chapters I,1-2, pp. 5-14.

³⁶ Martin Broszat (ed.), *Kommandant in Auschwitz. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen des Rudolf Höss*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich 1981, pp. 157-159.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 125f.

in all POW camps. Those selected were moved to the nearest concentration camp for liquidation. [...].

Thus, such selected political officers of the Red Army also came to Auschwitz for liquidation. The first – smaller – transports were shot by execution details of the military.

While [I was] away on a mission, my deputy, head of the protective custody camp Fritzsch, had used gas for killing. It was the hydrogen cyanide preparation Cyklon B, which was commonly used in the camp for disinfection and was readily available. He informed me about this after my return, and for the following transport this gas was used again. The gassing was implemented in the stockade cells of Bunker 11. I observed the killing, protected by a gas mask. Death in the crowded cells occurred immediately upon introduction [of the gas]. There was only a short, almost strangled, outcry, and it was over. I did not really register this first homicidal gassing, perhaps I was too much impressed by the general procedure.”

A comment contained in a publication by the Auschwitz Museum underscores the degree of reliability of this witness with respect to the first gassing:³⁸

“From previous investigations results that the first test to use gas for killing took place in the basement of Block 11. A further killing of inmates in this block could not be ascertained. Even though Höss denies his presence at this first test killing, he does admit his presence a few lines further along when he writes: ‘I did not really register this first homicidal gassing, perhaps I was too much impressed by the general procedure. I remember more distinctly the gassing of 900 Russians soon afterwards in the old crematorium, as the use of Block 11 was too cumbersome.’”

In fact, Rudolf Höss has declared explicitly that he was present at the first gassing, wearing a gas mask. The conclusion is that he witnessed the first homicidal gassing at Auschwitz while being away from the camp!

Let us now consider the consequences arising from the above statements as far as the present study is concerned. First of all, as Rudolf Höss declared after having been summoned by Himmler in June of 1941³⁹ and as Eichmann traveled to Auschwitz “*kurze Zeit danach*”⁴⁰ (shortly thereafter),

³⁸ Jadwiga Bezwinska, Danuta Czech (eds.), *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS. Rudolf Höss, Pery Broad, Johann Paul Kremer*, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim 1997, note 107 on p. 64.

³⁹ NO-1210/D-749a; PS-3868.

⁴⁰ There exists no document regarding this visit. Eichmann did declare that he went to Auschwitz on three occasions, but during the “Ungarn-Angelegenheit” (Hungarian matter), *i.e.* in 1944. State of Israel. Ministry of Justice, *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann*, Jerusalem 1995, Vol. VII, p. 220.

Eichmann had not been able to identify a suitable gas for the planned mass murder of the Jews during the five months between June and the end of November 1941.

Secondly, because Eichmann had not yet been able to find such a gas at the time of the meeting in late November 1941, and because Rudolf Höss informed him about Fritzsche's experiment "on Eichmann's next visit,"⁴¹ the first gassing can have taken place only *after* the end of November 1941. This dating is, however, in explicit disagreement with the official entry in Danuta Czech's *Kalendarium*: September 3, 1941.

Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter V, the first Soviet POWs arrived at Auschwitz only *in early October of 1941*. From November on, they were being examined by a Gestapo commission that identified some 300 political commissars among them, some of whom were then executed in small groups. Considering the rather small amount of prisoners affected, and leaving aside the chronological contradiction with respect to the official texts, there was therefore no compelling motive for gassing these detainees rather than shooting them.

The assertion that Eichmann, working under highest orders, had been unable to find a suitable gas for the exterminations over a period of five months is quite unbelievable. Any layman would have easily been able to find texts concerning toxic gasses in any German technical library; in particular the comprehensive work by Ferdinand Flury and Franz Zernik. In this compendium of over 600 pages, technical and chemical details are given for all the toxic gases known in the early 1930s, including the 34 poison chemicals used by the belligerents during the First World War. An Italian researcher at the time noted:⁴²

"[I]t is undeniable that Germany, at the beginning of the war, was far superior in chemistry, both scientific and technical or industrial. [...] the scientific section, i.e. the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut in Berlin, directed by professor Haber, who can be said to have been the mastermind behind the initiative for and the research into the means of chemical warfare, [...] was the official center for development and can be credited with many brilliant discoveries in the chemical, physical, and medical fields."

Among the toxic gasses tested during World War I was also hydrogen cyanide, which the French called "Vincenite," a chemical of which 4,000 tons were manufactured during the war. It contained a mixture of 50% hydrogen cyanide, 30% arsenic trichloride, 15% stannic tetrachloride, and 5%

⁴¹ This visit is not sustained by any documents either.

⁴² Attilio Izzo, *op. cit.* (note 24), p. 66.

chloroform, and was used as a warhead in ordnance shells.⁴² Other cyanides, such as cyano-chloride (“Mauguinite”) and cyano-bromide (“Campiellite”) were also used.⁴³

Thus, Eichmann could have solved his problem within a week, even if he had had to do all the work himself. Having received the order from Himmler, as Rudolf Höss tells us, he could have found the solution without any effort whatsoever and even faster by turning to the Hygienic Institute of the *Waffen-SS* in Berlin,⁴⁴ headed from 1943 onward by *SS-Standartenführer* Joachim Mrugowski. The competence of this body in the field of highly toxic gases for disinfestation is borne out, *i.a.*, by one of its publications of 1943.⁴⁵

Moreover, hydrogen cyanide, said to have been accidentally “hit upon” by Fritzsch, was in normal use for disinfestations at Auschwitz in the form of Zyklon B, and all the regulations regarding its use stress its extreme toxicity.⁴⁶ Thus, the gas for the alleged exterminations was already known and available to everyone concerned.

Jean-Claude Pressac initially attributed to the first gassing the character of a first experimental testing of hydrogen cyanide for mass exterminations:⁴⁷

“Because the lethal dose for humans was not known, the SS had made a botched trial gassing in the basement of Bunker 11 of the Main Camp on 3rd, 4th and 5th September 1941, the victims being 850 Soviet POWs and other prisoners. It was subsequently seen to be more convenient to gas people as required in the very place where all corpses inevitably had to go eventually: the morgue of Crematorium I.”

Some testimonies summarized by Stanisław Kłodziński go even further:⁴⁸

“The detainee Dr. Eng. Artur Krzetuski (ID 1003) recalls that the preparations for the use of gas (Zyklon B) on humans began by observing the effect of gassings on pests, mostly bugs and fleas. This information is confirmed by the detainee Jan Liwacz employed in the metal workshop [Schlosserei]

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 67f.

⁴⁴ In this regard see my study *Raul Hilberg... , op. cit.* (note 23), pp. 146-148.

⁴⁵ Joachim Mrugowski (ed.), *Arbeitsanweisungen für Klinik und Laboratorium des Hygiene-Institutes der Waffen-SS, Berlin*, issue no. 3: Walter Dötzer, “Entkeimung, Entseuchung und Entwesung,” Urban und Schwarzenberg, Berlin/Vienna 1943.

⁴⁶ Cf. my article, “The ‘Gas Testers’ of Auschwitz. Testing for Zyklon B Gas Residues. Documents – Missed and Misunderstood,” *The Revisionist*, 2(2) (2004), pp. 140-155.

⁴⁷ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York 1989, p. 184.

⁴⁸ S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 82.

of the Industriehof [industrial area]: he remembers that a few weeks prior to the events that took place in the Bunker of Block 13, camp commander Höss, his deputy Fritzsch, section leader Palitzsch, and SS-man Lachmann from the Political Department came to the workshop. They sent away all the detainees and ran a test gassing of the shop with Zyklon B. The next day, opened gas containers were found in the area.”

At the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, the former Polish detainee Eugeniusz Motz declared:⁴⁹

“In 1941, I spent three months in the clothing depot, between August and October, give or take a month. My boss there was Breitwieser, his deputy Reichenbacher; the capo came from Silesia, his successor was Walter Petzold. During that time, a first test was run for the delousing of the dirty laundry by means of gas. We had to patch up all cracks in the room; Breitwieser took a gas mask and sprinkled the gas on the laundry, after which we also had to seal the door. The next day, Breitwieser got his gas mask, opened the door and the window(s), the room was ventilated, and the laundry was then taken away to be washed. In our presence, Breitwieser said to Reichenbacher: ‘Now we also have something to exterminate the inmates with.’”

Hence, the SS would have tested the effect of hydrogen cyanide on bugs and fleas in preparation of the first homicidal gassing!

Jean-Claude Pressac’s explanation is without foundation, because the lethal dose of hydrogen cyanide on humans had been clearly known for several years. The scientific work by Ferdinand Flury and Frank Zernik mentioned above gives an accurate description of the toxicological symptoms of hydrogen cyanide on humans and states, *i.a.*:⁵⁰

“Low concentrations (around 0.05 mg/l or 45 ppm) cause only headache, nausea, vomiting, palpitations; these symptoms disappear after some time. Higher concentrations from around 0.1 mg/l or 90 ppm on up are life-threatening or rapidly fatal. At intermediate concentrations, first symptoms will appear only after some minutes. Death usually occurs within an hour. If respiration still exists at that time, recovery is possible. Occasionally, though, delayed death occurs even after 24 hours. High concentrations – around some 0.3 mg/l or 270 ppm – cause death quickly: with a feeling of compression and sudden screams, the so-called ‘hydrocephalic scream’

⁴⁹ Fritz Bauer Institut, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (eds.), *Der Auschwitz-Prozeß*. Digitale Bibliothek. Verlag der Directmedia Publishing, 2005, pp. 25679-25681. The witness deposed through an interpreter. The quote contains only his answers. Cf. Hermann Langbein, *Der Auschwitz Prozeß. Eine Dokumentation*, Europa Verlag, Vienna/Frankfurt/Zürich 1965, Vol. 2, p. 788.

⁵⁰ F. Flury, F. Zernik, *op. cit.* (note 28), p. 404.

(Lewin), there is collapse, cramps ensue, breathing stops after a few minutes, and death occurs after 6-8 minutes.”

The two authors then include a table titled “Toxicity of inhaled hydrogen cyanide according to Lehmann-Hess,” which shows that a concentration of 0.3 mg of hydrogen cyanide per liter of air (about 270 ppm) – the highest one considered – is “immediately fatal.”⁵¹ Two further tables concerning the effect of toxic gasses and vapors on human beings – which would have solved Eichmann’s research problems immediately – confirm that a concentration of 0.3 mg/l of hydrogen cyanide is “*sofort tödlich*” (immediately fatal), a concentration of 0.2 mg/l being fatal within 5-10 minutes.⁵² These concentrations correspond to about 0.2 and 0.3 g/m³, respectively.

Since the Auschwitz camp authorities were in touch with the Tesch & Stabenow company, which supplied the camp with Zyklon B for disinfection purposes, and because disinfections were carried out in the camp by appropriately trained personnel, all data concerning the toxicological symptoms of hydrogen cyanide were readily available. Hence, there was no need to run tests in order to find out something that was extensively documented.

Furthermore, the results of those alleged experiments (and of alleged later tests in the mortuary of Crematorium I and in the so-called “Bunker 1”) are quite surprising. Concerning the amounts of Zyklon B normally used for the alleged homicidal gasings at the crematoria, Rudolf Höss declared:⁵³

“For gassing 1,500 to 1,700 persons, between 5 and 7 cans of 1 kg each were needed; the number of cans varied with the size of the gas chamber and the weather, that is to say, in cold and wet weather 2 or 3 extra cans were needed.”

And again:⁵⁴

“For this [gassing of 1,500 to 1,600 persons] one needed – it varied with the crematoria, in the very large ones 7, in other rooms 5 cans. But it also depended on the weather. If it was very cold and wet, one had to take an extra 2-3 cans.”

Hence, to gas 1,500 persons in Crematoria II and III (the “large crematoria”) at least seven cans of Zyklon B were needed, or 7 kg of hydrogen cy-

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 453. Cf. Document 1

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 454. Cf. Document 2.

⁵³ Sworn statement by Höss dated May 17, 1946. NI-034.

⁵⁴ Sworn statement by Höss dated May 15, 1946. NI-036.

anide.⁵⁵ The alleged gas chamber of those crematoria – *Leichenkeller* (morgue) 1 – had a volume of 506 m³, from which we must deduct the volume of the 7 concrete columns (0.4×0.4×2.01m³),⁵⁶ which supported the central longitudinal beam of the ceiling, and this beam itself (0.4×0.4×30m³), or a total of 7 cubic meters. If we assume that the body of an average adult weighs some 75 kg and thus occupies some 75 liters of space, 1,500 persons occupy about 112 m³, leaving an effective volume of air of about 387 m³.

Hence, if 7 kg of hydrogen cyanide would have been poured into this alleged gas chamber, a theoretical concentration of about (7,000÷387=) 18 g/m³, or 18 mg/l, would have resulted. This is (18÷0.3=) 60 times higher than what is considered to be “immediately lethal.” In practice, however, the Zyklon B used at Auschwitz, using gypsum as a carrier material, released only some 5-10% of its hydrogen cyanide content within the first five to ten minutes after the can was opened.⁵⁷ Almost all witnesses who made statements about how long it took before all victims in the gas chambers were dead claimed that it took five to ten minutes or even considerably less than that.⁵⁸ Hence, if 7 kg of hydrogen cyanide were used, not more than some 0.7 kg of it could have evaporated from the carrier after the first ten minutes. This would have resulted in a concentration of toxic gas of (700÷387=) ca. 1.8 g/m³, or 1.8 mg/l, after ten minutes. The effective concentration for the entire ten minutes, however, would have been only half that amount, assuming a constant rise of the concentration from zero at the beginning.

Every single gassing would, therefore, have been a waste of (7-0.7=) 6.3 kg of Zyklon B in an attempt to cause the victims’ death within 5-10 minutes. Considering the economy of the alleged extermination, this would have been absolutely senseless and useless, because not the murder with gas, but the cremation of the resulting corpses would have been “the only ‘bottleneck’” of the attempted extermination, as R.J. van Pelt pointed out correctly.⁵⁹ As a matter of fact, employing merely 700 grams of Zyklon B

⁵⁵ The weight indicated on Zyklon B cans referred to the net HCN content.

⁵⁶ Height up to the base of the beam.

⁵⁷ Depending on the ambient temperature, see R. Irmscher, “Nochmals: ‘Die Einsatzfähigkeit der Blausäure bei tiefen Temperaturen’,” *Zeitschrift für hygienische Zoologie und Schädlingsbekämpfung*, 34 (1942), pp. 35f.

⁵⁸ See the large collection of such testimonies compiled by Germar Rudolf, Wolfgang Lambrecht, *The Rudolf Report*, 2nd ed., The Barnes Review, Washington, DC, 2011, p. 194, footnote 480.

⁵⁹ Robert Jan van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 470; Cf. pp. 380, 455, 470. See below.

over a period of a couple of hours would have yielded the same theoretical concentration.

Considering the drastic efforts exerted in the German war economy to save material wherever possible,⁶⁰ the SS administration at Auschwitz would have used on average 7 kg of hydrogen cyanide at a cost of 35 Reichsmarks for one gassing, even though they could have achieved the same result with 0.7 kg at a cost of only 3.5 Reichsmarks.⁶¹ At the same time, they would have considerably reduced the dangers during the removal of the corpses from the gas chamber.

There was, however, a way to quickly obtain high concentrations of hydrogen cyanide with Zyklon B: with the help of the well-known Degesch circulation system for disinfestation chambers.⁶² This system had enormous advantages compared to traditional disinfestations: the Zyklon B can be placed in a receptacle inside the chamber and was opened from the outside. Its contents fell into a wire mesh basket, into which a fan blew warm air. The air inside the chamber was constantly moved around by this fan. This caused the swift release and dispersion of the toxic gas. The ventilation of such a gas chamber lasted only some 10-15 minutes.

As is well-known, 19 such delousing chambers using the Degesch circulation method had been planned since 1941 to be installed in the “laundry and reception building with delousing facility and inmate bath,” building no. 160. It appears in one of the first drawings of that structure, drawing no. 916 of December 30, 1941.⁶³ The Friedrich Boos company, which received the order to erect this building, compiled a cost estimate for it on September 12, 1942.⁶⁴

In anticipation of this construction project and on the “initiative of the Friedrich Boos company,” the company Heerd-Lingler had sent a copy of the article by Peters and Wüstinger on the Degesch circulation system⁶² to

⁶⁰ The *Sonderbefehl* of December 21, 1942, concerned for example the exhortations of the head of the SS-WVHA “to save coal.” APMO, Kommandantur-Befehl, sygn. D-AuI, 1, p. 106.

⁶¹ The cost of Zyklon B in 1944 was 5 RM per kg. PS-1553, pp. 15-26.

⁶² Gerhard Peters, Emil Wüstinger, “Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure in Kreislauf-Begasungskammern. Sach-Entlausung in Blausäure-Kammern,” *Zeitschrift für hygienische Zoologie und Schädlingsbekämpfung*, 32 (10/11) (1940), pp. 191-196; Cf. also F.P. Berg, “The German Delousing Chambers,” *Journal of Historical Review*, 7(1) (1986), pp. 73-94.

⁶³ J.-C. Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 47), p. 34.

⁶⁴ F. Boos, “*Kostenanschlag V über die Einrichtung von 19 Stück Entlausungskammern für die Blausäure-Entlausungsanlage im K.L. Auschwitz.*” RGVA, 502-1-137, pp. 13-16.

the then SS-*Neubauleitung* at Auschwitz as early as July 1, 1941, where it was received on July 3.⁶⁵ If it was governmental policy to implement mass extermination by means of Zyklon B, then why was the Degesch fumigation system not adopted? The responses of mainstream Holocaust historians to this question are absolutely inadequate.

Pressac claims that the above-mentioned article concerning disinfection chambers with the Degesch fumigation system was requested by the SS for the construction of the alleged “Bunker 2,” but the only feature allegedly adopted was the parallel arrangement of four small gas chambers “without mechanical ventilation,”⁶⁶ although the type of arrangement was absolutely irrelevant for the delousing system in question.

Regarding van Pelt’s explanation, who presumes to provide a broad, comprehensive answer to the above question, I refer to my already mentioned study.⁶⁷ Here it matters only that in van Pelt’s view, “in the case of the gas chambers it was the cremation process which invariably went considerably slower than the gassing.”⁶⁸ This brings us back to the starting point: if a short duration of the gassing procedure was not decisive because the cremation proceeded much more slowly, then why did the SS at Auschwitz take 7 kg of Zyklon B to obtain a gassing time of five to ten 10 minutes while wasting 90% of the toxic material?

Apart from safety and efficiency considerations, already this economic reason would have inevitably led the SS at Auschwitz to choose the Degesch fumigation system not just for disinfection purposes, but for the alleged mass extermination as well.

At the Irving-Lipstadt libel trial, the main objection to the *Leuchter Report*⁶⁹ was the ridiculous claim that⁷⁰

“the gas chambers were operated with a low (but lethal) hydrocyanide concentration of 100 ppm,”

a concentration equivalent to 0.12 g/m³, or 0.12 mg/l, and thus (18÷0.12=) 150 times *lower* than the one ultimately resulting from R. Höss’s declarations!

⁶⁵ RGVA, 502-1-332, pp. 86-90.

⁶⁶ J.-C. Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 11), pp. 41f.

⁶⁷ C. Mattogno, *The Real Case...*, *op. cit.* (note 23), Chapter. 6.2, “Why Not Use Degesch Gas Chambers for Homicides?” pp. 185-188.

⁶⁸ Robert Jan van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 380.

⁶⁹ Cf. Fred A. Leuchter, Robert Faurisson, Germar Rudolf, *The Leuchter Reports: Critical Edition*, 4th ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2015.

⁷⁰ Robert Jan van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 388.

Therefore, the first claimed homicidal gassing did not serve to establish the lethal concentration of HCN for human beings, which was already known. As far as the time is concerned that it took for all victims to die, this claimed test would have been a grotesque failure, because it took two complete days for all of them to die! In spite of that, the SS of Auschwitz is said to have decided to use Zyklon B for homicidal purposes anyway, without even considering the option to use the Degesch fumigation system for their alleged machinery of mass murder!

In conclusion, it can be said that the first gassing has no relation to the alleged plan to exterminate Jews, to the execution of the Soviet political commissars, or to the testing of the toxicity of hydrogen cyanide.

Then what were the origin and the significance of the account of the first homicidal gassing?

As we shall see in Chapter III, the first reports by the secret resistance movement supply us with an answer to this question.