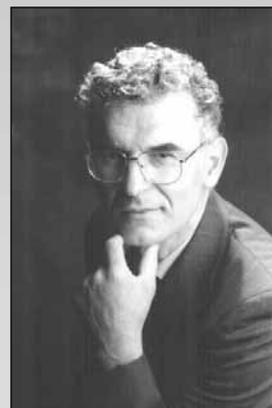


The so-called “Bunkers” at Auschwitz-Birkenau are claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz specifically erected for this purpose in early 1942. In this examination of a critical component of the Auschwitz extermination legend, the indefatigable Carlo Mattogno has combed tens of thousands of documents from the Auschwitz construction office – to conclude that these “Bunkers” never existed.



The Bunkers of Auschwitz shows how camp rumors of these alleged gas chambers evolved into black propaganda created by resistance groups within the camp, and how this black propaganda was subsequently transformed into “reality” by historians who uncritically embraced everything stated by alleged eyewitnesses.

In a concluding section that analyzes such hands-on evidence as wartime aerial photography and archeological diggings, Mattogno bolsters his case that the Auschwitz “bunkers” were – and remain – nothing more than propaganda bunk.

Carlo Mattogno • The Bunkers of Auschwitz

Carlo Mattogno

The Bunkers of Auschwitz



Black Propaganda versus History

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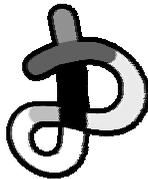


**THE BUNKERS OF AUSCHWITZ
BLACK PROPAGANDA VERSUS HISTORY**

The Bunkers of Auschwitz

Black Propaganda
versus
History

Carlo Mattogno



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Introduction

It is well known that the official historiography on Auschwitz hinges on an order to exterminate the European Jews – supposedly given by Hitler to Himmler and then transmitted to Rudolf Höß – which took on concrete shape when the Auschwitz extermination camp was built.

According to the interpretation that has now become dogma, this order was carried out in four successive stages:

1. In September 1941, the first experimental homicidal gassing by means of Zyklon B was performed at Auschwitz; this represented the ‘discovery’ of the instrument of extermination.
2. In early 1942, the homicidal gassing activity was moved to the mortuary of the Auschwitz crematorium.
3. In the succeeding months two farmhouses located outside the perimeter of the Birkenau camp were transformed into gas chambers (the so-called ‘Bunkers’), and the mass extermination of Jews and sick inmates began.
4. Finally, from March 1943 onwards, the extermination activity was transferred to the four Birkenau crematoria, which all had their homicidal gas chambers.

The starting point for this assumed sequence of events is thus the first homicidal gassing in the basement of Block 11 at Auschwitz between September 3 and 5, 1941, during which (according to the version invented by Danuta Czech¹) 250 sick detainees and 600 Soviet prisoners of war were murdered. This alleged event is very important for the official historiography on Auschwitz, because it is said to have been the birth of the homicidal gas chambers.

In 1992, I dedicated a fairly extensive study, still the only one of its kind,² to this alleged event, in which I demonstrated that this event has no historical foundation whatsoever.³

¹ In the section entitled “*La metodologia storiografica di Danuta Czech*” of my book *Auschwitz: la prima gasazione*. Edizioni di Ar, Padova, 1992, pp. 140-144, I have shown that the Polish researcher has artificially constructed the official version as published in the *Auschwitz Kalendarium* by fusing individual elements taken from completely contradictory testimonies. Updated English edition: *Auschwitz: The First Gassing*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, IL, in preparation.

² Even today, there is no other book dealing with this topic. In the five-volume collective work *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Węzłowe zagadnienia z dziejów obozu* (Fundamental problems of the camp history, by Danuta Czech, Tadeusz Iwaszko, Stanisław Kłodziński, et al.), Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 1995, which represents the historiographical peak of the Auschwitz Museum, scarcely more than four pages are dedicated to the question of the first gassing in the section by Franciszek Piper “*Komory Gazowe i Krematoria*” (Gas chambers and crematoria), Vol. III, pp. 97-102 (pages 97 and 102 contain in total 5 lines concerning this topic).

³ Carlo Mattogno, *Auschwitz: la prima gasazione, op. cit.* (note 1).

My book managed to shake even the confidence of Jean-Claude Pressac. In 1989, he still followed the official interpretation of the *Auschwitz Chronicle* to the letter;⁴ in 1993 he still accepted the reality of Czech's account of the first gassing, but he moved it to December 1941⁵ on account of a polemical cue⁶ I had given him; in 2000 he came to doubt its historical reality. In an interview, which he gave in 1995 but which was clearly updated in 2000, Pressac referred to my study (of which a French translation⁷ had appeared in 1999) stating:⁸

"If that first gassing did occur, it happened in December of 1941, or perhaps in January of 1942, and it has no link at all with the massacre of the Jews." (emphasis added)

In the same way as does this elusive 'first gassing,' the alleged extermination activity of the Birkenau 'Bunkers' relies *exclusively* on testimonies.

As I have emphasized in a previous work,⁹ the archives of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office, which were preserved in Moscow, allow us to re-establish a complete account of the buildings that were erected in Auschwitz during the first half of 1942. Yet neither Pressac nor Robert Jan van Pelt, the new official 'expert' on Auschwitz, has searched those archives for documentary proof of the homicidal Birkenau 'Bunkers,' or, shall we say, none of them has found any evidence of their existence. But if those installations actually existed, there will be documentary proof of their existence.

The present study, which relies for the most part on unpublished documents, fills this embarrassing gap in the official historiography and supplies us with a solid answer to the question of the alleged homicidal 'Bunkers' of Birkenau. This question has, of late, become particularly pressing. In a recent article entitled "*Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz. Neue Erkenntnisse durch neue William Archivfunde*,"¹⁰ Fritjof Meyer, senior editor of the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), has advanced the thesis that the alleged mass gasings at Birkenau were conducted essentially in the so-called 'Bunkers' rather than in the alleged gas chambers of the crematoria. That, in turn, has given rise within the official historiography to an internal dispute, which

⁴ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York, 1989, p. 184.

⁵ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien von Auschwitz. Die Technik des Massenmordes*, Piper, Munich 1994, p. 41.

⁶ Cf. in this respect my study *Auschwitz: The End of a Legend*, Institute for Historical Review, Newport Beach, CA, 1994, pp. 37f.

⁷ *Auschwitz: le premier gazage*, Vrij Historisch Onderzoek, Berchem, 1999.

⁸ "Entretien avec Jean-Claude Pressac" by Valérie Igounet at La Ville-du-Bois, June 15, 1995, in: Valérie Igounet, *Histoire du négationnisme en France*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 2000, p. 644.

⁹ *Special Treatment in Auschwitz. Origin and Meaning of a Term*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, IL, 2004.

¹⁰ *Osteuropa. Zeitschrift für Gegenwartsfragen des Ostens*, no. 5, May 2002, pp. 631-641. Cf. in this respect my article: "Auschwitz. Fritjof Meyer's New Revisions," in: *The Revisionist*, 1(1) (2003) pp. 30-37.

intensified in November 2003 with the involvement of Franciszek Piper, director of the history department at the Auschwitz Museum.¹¹

According to the Auschwitz Museum, the SS called these two presumed gassing ins “*little red house*” (in Polish: *czzerwony domek*) and the “*little white house*” (in Polish: *biały domek*) by the inmates. Although these designations – as I shall show in the Part Two – were invented after the liberation of Auschwitz, I will continue in this study to use the accepted term ‘Bunker,’ but only for reasons of clarity.

¹¹ Cf. in this respect my article “*On the Piper-Meyer-Controversy: Soviet Propaganda vs. Pseudo-Revisionism*”, *The Revisionist*. 2(2) (2004), pp. 131-139.

Part One:
Reality

1. The Alleged Extermination of Jews at Auschwitz: Origins of the Decision and its Execution

1.1. The Beginnings

The account of the beginnings of the alleged extermination of Jews at Auschwitz rests essentially on the statements of Rudolf Höß regarding his summons to Berlin by Himmler and on the decisions and the events that were to follow.

Those declarations contain, however, a heap of chronological contradictions so entangled that historians who specialize in this field must resort to interpretations which are not only purely conjectural but also mutually exclusive. In their effort to create a coherent chronology, these scholars have had to distort the Auschwitz commander's statements in every possible way. This deformation has reached the point where – from the historiographical point of view – the safest interpretation is to say that the chronology given by Höß and the events he described are pure fiction. Although I am convinced that this latter view is correct, as I have demonstrated elsewhere with an abundance of arguments,¹² I shall assume in this chapter, as a working hypothesis, that the meeting between Himmler and Höß actually took place.

The specific aim of accepting such a hypothesis is to examine its consequences from the point of view of the planning and the construction of the Auschwitz camp, *i.e.*, to ascertain, by means of documents, whether the alleged extermination order actually did result in the installation of the two gas-sing 'Bunkers' at Birkenau.

1.2. Danuta Czech's Interpretation

In her *Auschwitz Chronicle*, Danuta Czech assigns the origin of the extermination of the Jews at Auschwitz to July 29, 1941. Under that date she writes:¹³

¹² Cf. L' "irritante questione" delle camere a gas ovvero da Cappuccetto Rosso ad...Auschwitz. Risposta a Valentina Pisanty, Graphos, Genova, 1998, pp. 122-148.

¹³ D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939-1945*, Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbek 1989, pp. 106f. Engl.: Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939-1945*,

“The commander of KL Auschwitz, Rudolf Höß, having been called by the Reichsführer SS, reports to Berlin. Without any witnesses, Himmler discusses with him the technical aspects of the so-called ‘final solution of the Jewish question.’ As a result of this meeting, Höß is charged by Himmler with the execution of the extermination of the Jews at KL Auschwitz; he is to present construction projects for the homicidal annihilation installations within four weeks. Himmler tells Höß that SS Sturmbannführer Eichmann of RSHA will give him the details when the latter went to Auschwitz in the near future.”

The date is entirely conjectural because there is no document confirming the reality of the Himmler-Höß meeting.

Czech then places Eichmann’s first visit to Auschwitz¹⁴ or a meeting in Eichmann’s office¹⁵ (which according to Höß, however, took place in November¹⁶) as well as the first experimental gassing by means of Zyklon B carried out by SS Hauptsturmführer Fritzsich in August of 1941.¹⁷ Again, these dates are totally arbitrary, because there are no documents to confirm the reality of any of the three events.

Eichmann’s second visit to Auschwitz cannot be used in the attempt to establish Czech’s chronology; thus, it is not even mentioned in the *Auschwitz Chronicle*. For the same reason, Höß’ alleged trip to Treblinka, as described in his ‘confessions,’¹⁸ does not appear there either.

1.3. Jean-Claude Pressac’s Interpretation

Jean-Claude Pressac openly acknowledges that Höß’ declarations are chronologically unsound, but comes to a different conclusion:¹⁹

“According to his notes, Höß is ordered to come to Berlin ‘in the summer of 1941.’ His report contains a glaring improbability in that the Reichsführer SS allegedly tells him: ‘The existing annihilation sites in the East (Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka; the killing activities of these camps started only in summer 1942^[20]) are not in a position to handle the major actions envisaged (quoted from: Rudolf Höß, Kommandant in Auschwitz. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen, edited by Martin Broszat, dtv-doku-

H. Holt, New York 1990. Since both books are organized chronologically, we did not replace the author’s original reference to the German edition.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 108

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 115.

¹⁶ Steven Paskuly (ed.), *Death Dealer. The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY, 1992, p. 29.

¹⁷ D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 115f.

¹⁸ Steven Paskuly (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 42f.; PS-3868.

¹⁹ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien...*, *op. cit.* (note 5), note 132 on p. 136.

²⁰ These activities are claimed to have started in late 1941 in Belzec, in early 1942 in Sobibor, and in summer 1942 in Treblinka.

mente, München 1963, p. 237). Hence, an obvious anachronism on Höß' side."

For that reason, Pressac moves the Himmler-Höß meeting to the year 1942.²¹

"In early 1942, Höß is ordered to report to Himmler in Berlin; the latter informs him that his camp has been selected to become the center for the mass extermination of the Jews."

Actually, this kind of dating, as I have stressed elsewhere²² creates further contradictions in chronology; the most serious one is the fact that the installation of the so-called 'Bunker 1' and the beginning of the extermination of Jews at Auschwitz which, according to Höß, were the direct consequence of Himmler's order, would thus have taken place at a date preceding that order.

1.4. Debórah Dwork's and Robert Jan van Pelt's Interpretation

Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt worked out a much more sophisticated and original interpretation:²³

"According to Rudolf Höß, Himmler discussed the transformation of Auschwitz into an extermination site as early as June 1941. Is he correct? Did he have a conversation with Himmler in June 1941? If so, did they talk about the construction of killing installations at Auschwitz? And if they did, did Himmler mean, in June 1941, that this murder machinery was to be used to kill Jews?"

To this question they reply in the following way:²⁴

"Höß' Nuremberg confessions seemed to close the case concerning the origins of Auschwitz as a death camp. But internal inconsistencies in his statements, as well as additional indirect but pertinent evidence, suggest that Höß reinterpreted events that had indeed occurred in the light of the ultimate outcome. Probably, he had a conversation with Himmler in June 1941. Probably, they spoke about the construction of extermination facilities at Auschwitz. But probably, in June 1941, those installations were not intended for the mass murder of Europe's Jews.

Let us look at Höß' statements more closely. In his affidavit saying 'I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941'^[25] he also explained that 'At that time, there were already in the

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

²² *L' "irritante questione" delle camere a gas...*, *op. cit.* (note 12), pp. 130f.

²³ D. Dwork, R. J. van Pelt, *Auschwitz 1270 to the present*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York/London 1996, p. 277.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 279.

²⁵ PS-3868; The German original states: *"Ich hatte den Befehl, Ausrottungserleichterungen in Auschwitz im Juni 1941 zu schaffen"* – where *"Ausrottungserleichterungen"* means *"extermination relieves,"* not *"extermination facilities."*

general government three other extermination camps; Belzek, Treblinka, and Wolzek. (Sobibor)^{126]} These camps, however, came into operation only in 1942. In a detailed account of the role of Auschwitz in the genocide of the Jews that Höß wrote later that year, he again related Auschwitz to other killing sites and again made the same mistake about the dates.^[27]

‘Himmler greeted me with the following: ‘The Führer has ordered the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. We, the SS, have to carry out this order. The existing extermination sites in the East are not in a position to perform these intended major operations. I have, therefore, chosen Auschwitz for this purpose.’

In June 1941 there were no ‘existing extermination sites in the East.’ As Höß insisted on various occasions that the conversation took place in 1941, although acknowledging that he may have been confused about the exact words, it would seem plausible that there was a meeting in June 1941 and that he was ordered ‘to establish extermination facilities.’ But how large were these meant to be and for whom were they meant?”

The solution proposed by Dwork and van Pelt is that Höß was called to Berlin in 1941, but that Himmler, on that occasion, did not order him to launch the extermination of the Jews. We will see later²⁸ for what group of persons, according to the two authors, the ‘extermination installations,’ that is, the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ were intended.

1.5. Dating the Himmler-Höß Meeting

Richard David Breitman has made an attempt to fix the date of Höß’ summon to Berlin on the basis of Himmler’s journeys during the summer of 1941, which we know from his diary. He writes:²⁹

“And Höss now dated the meeting as sometime during summer of 1941, but he could not remember exactly when.

Himmler was not in Berlin very often during the summer of 1941, especially after the invasion of the USSR. It seems most likely that he actually met with Höss sometime during July 13-15.”

In a note, the author explains:³⁰

²⁶ PS-3868: “Zu jener Zeit bestanden schon drei weitere Vernichtungslager in Generalgouvernement: Belzek, Treblinka und Wolzek.” A “Wolzek” camp never existed. Its identification with Sobibór by Dwork/van Pelt is completely arbitrary.

²⁷ R. Höß, “*The Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Concentration Camp Auschwitz*,” in: by Steven Paskuly (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 27: “Contrary to his usual custom, his adjutant was not in the room. Himmler greeted me with the following: ‘The Führer has ordered the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. We the SS have to carry out this order. The existing extermination sites in the East are not in the position to carry out these intended operations on a large scale. I have, therefore, chosen Auschwitz for this purpose.’”

²⁸ Cf. chapter 8.

²⁹ R.D. Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide. Himmler and the Final Solution*, Knopf, New York 1991, p. 189.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 294f.

“Various attempts to redate this meeting have been off the mark. Höss could not have mistaken a summer-1942 meeting with Himmler for 1941 – first, because Himmler’s 1942 appointment book, which exists, contains no such entry, and, second, because Höss was already gassing Jews then.

It is most unlikely that Himmler set the Final Solution in motion before 22 June. Organizing the strategy for the Waffen-SS and the Einsatzgruppen must have taken a considerable amount of Himmler’s time, and he had to see how successful the initial attack against the U.S.S.R. would be. Himmler left the capital for East Prussia on 25 June and did not return [to Berlin] until 13 July. On 15 July he went back to East Prussia. At most he went to Berlin for one brief visit during August, though we cannot be sure where he was on several days late that month.”

Breitman then discusses Himmler’s journeys in August 1942 and concludes:

“Dates in September are too late for the meeting, since the first test gassing at Auschwitz occurred on 3 Sept. What is left is 13-15 July 1941.”

Danuta Czech, as we have already seen, proposes a date of July 29, 1941, for this event, justifying it in the following way: On that day, a detainee escaped from the camp and the telegram informing the competent SS authorities was signed by *Lagerführer* Fritzsch, in Höß’ absence.³¹ It is possible that Höß had gone to Berlin, but it is certain that he could not have met Himmler there on that day because the latter had been staying in East Prussia since July 15.

Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt propose a different method of dating. They state that Höß was in Berlin on June 13 and 14, 1941, to discuss the enlargement of the Auschwitz camp with Kammler of the Main Office of Budget and Buildings,³² and on that occasion he also met Himmler;³³

“Himmler, too, was in town, to celebrate the fifth anniversary of his appointment as chief of the German police. Given his personal interest in the future of Auschwitz, it seems likely that the completion of the first master plan [for construction of the camp] was an occasion for him to chat with Höss.”

The document which the authors invoke is a letter from Kammler to Höß dated June 18, 1941, which refers merely to a meeting of Höß with the head of Department I of Main Office of Budget and Buildings, SS *Oberführer* Lörner, and with Kammler without indicating where it took place.³⁴ In his Cracow ‘notes’ Höß tells of a visit by Kammler to Auschwitz in 1941 when the head of the Auschwitz Construction Office was still Schlachter,³⁵ hence before October 1, 1941, when Schlachter was replaced by Bischoff. The meeting of June 13-14 thus certainly occurred at Auschwitz.

³¹ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 107

³² D. Dwork, R. J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 23), p. 214.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 280

³⁴ RGVA, 502-1-11, p. 37. Cf. chapter 2.2.

³⁵ Kammler profile entitled “*Der Chef der Office Group C im WVHA war der SS Gruppenführer Dr. ing. Kammler*” and dated November 1946. AGK, NTN, 103, p. 244

The most probable date for the Himmler-Höß meeting is therefore 14-15 July 1941. Pressac's proposed dating of this event is historically untenable.

1.6. Dating 'Bunkers' 1 and 2

All establishment specialists of the history of Auschwitz agree that the so-called 'Bunkers' of Birkenau were set up for homicidal purposes, although differences do exist among them as to the kind of victims destined for them.

The official chronology of the *Auschwitz Chronicle* regarding the start of homicidal activity in 'Bunkers' 1 and 2 is accepted by practically all scholars dealing with this camp. According to the *Auschwitz Chronicle*, 'Bunker 1' went into operation on March 20, 1942. The author notes for that date:³⁶

"Gas chambers are put into operation in a Birkenau farmhouse modified for this purpose, this is the so-called Bunker no. 1."

The only discordant voice is that of Jean-Claude Pressac, who moves this alleged event by two months:³⁷

"The 'red house', after its modification, was given the name 'Bunker 1' and probably began to be used for this purpose from the end of May 1942 onwards."

In the chronological summary of his book, Pressac writes:³⁸

"In May [1942]: Modification of a small farm at Birkenau. The gas chamber of the Krematorium [I] is moved there because of the impending construction work. The unit, which will later be called 'Bunker 1,' consists of two chambers, not equipped with mechanical ventilation."

As for 'Bunker 2,' the *Auschwitz Chronicle* affirms that it became operational on June 30, 1942. The following entry for that date appears in the book:³⁹

"In connection with the impending arrival of further transports of Jews who are moved to Auschwitz by the RSHA to be annihilated there, more gas chambers are installed in a farmhouse, similar to Bunker 1. It is situated to the west of crematoria IV and V, which will be built later, and is designated Bunker no. 2."

Pressac does not give a precise date but accepts the period:⁴⁰

"The 'white house', Bunker 2, is put into operation at the end of June 1942."

In the chronological summary, he adds:⁴¹

"in June [1942] another Birkenau farmhouse is modified to become a gas chamber. In the process, the delousing plants of the Degesch Co. of

³⁶ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, (note 13), p. 186

³⁷ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien...*, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 49

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 154f.

³⁹ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 239

⁴⁰ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien...*, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 52

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 52

Frankfurt a.M. are taken as a model (the chambers are arranged in parallel). The unit, later to be called 'Bunker 2,' consists of four parallel chambers with a floor area of 105 m²; it has no mechanical ventilation."

To summarize, 'Bunker 1' went into service in March or May 1942, 'Bunker 2' in June of that year.

Having established the chronological limits of the investigation, we must now examine their implications within the general outlines of the construction of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp.

1.7. The Location of the Birkenau 'Bunkers'

The location of the 'Bunkers' at Birkenau is presently considered an established fact: they have been definitively sited by the Auschwitz Museum as appears on the official map of Birkenau, published in Danuta Czech's *Auschwitz Chronicle*, where 'Bunker 1' is labeled "*1. provisorische Gaskammer*" (first temporary gas chamber), and 'Bunker 2' is called "*2. provisorische Gaskammer*"⁴² (second temporary gas chamber).

That map will therefore constitute our geographical point of departure for the following historical and documentary study of the 'Bunkers.' In Part Three we will learn how the Auschwitz Museum arrived at its own position.

⁴² D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 27. Cf. document 1.

2. The ‘Bunkers’ in the Planning of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp

2.1. The Bureaucratic Procedure for the Construction of the Installations of Auschwitz-Birkenau

On April 27, 1940, Himmler ordered the old Polish army barracks at Auschwitz to be transformed into a concentration camp. Three days later, the first cost estimate for the camp was drawn up.⁴³

In 1941, the Auschwitz concentration camp encompassed the construction project “*SS housing and concentration camp Auschwitz*” of the Waffen-SS and Police, and as such it was subordinate, in all technical, financial and administrative aspects, to Department II, Buildings, of the Main Office of Budget and Buildings, directed by SS *Oberführer* Kammler. Since the camp was situated on the territory of the Reich – East Upper Silesia was annexed by Germany after the Polish collapse in 1939 – it came under the inspectorate of Department II for the region involved, the Construction Inspectorate of the Waffen-SS and Police Reich East, having its seat at Posen, which in November 1941 supervised the Central Construction Offices of Auschwitz, Danzig, Posen, and Breslau.

As it related to the construction industry, the Auschwitz construction project was subordinate to the Regional Administrator for Construction Industry in Military District VIII with its office at Kattowitz, which in turn reported to Reich Minister Speer in his capacity as General Plenipotentiary for Control of the Construction Industry (*Generalbevollmächtigter für die Regelung der Bauwirtschaft* – G.B.-Bau). The realization of a construction project necessitated a preliminary administrative act: its ranking in the order of precedence of the relevant military district (*Wehrkreisrangfolgelisten*), for which a construction authorization was needed. Initially, this authorization, according to the regulations of G.B.-Bau of July 12, 1941, for the third year of the war economy, was given by the control commission for Military District VIII – an organ of the Regional Administrator for Construction in Military District VIII – and required the submission of a file consisting of a sketch of the location, a construction specification, and an initial cost estimate, later to be replaced by a detailed cost estimate. G.B.-Bau would decide on the overall construction volume, a term also including the expense allocation.

⁴³ “*Kostenaufstellung für das Lager Auschwitz bei Kattowitz*,” written by SS *Obersturmführer* Seidler on April 30, 1940. RGVA, 502-1-176, pp. 37f.

On November 14, 1941, the Auschwitz Construction Office was raised to the level of “*Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz*,” and its head, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Karl Bischoff, was promoted from head of construction to “*Head of Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz*.”

From February 1, 1942, on, the Auschwitz Central Construction Office was attached, for all financial, technical and administrative purposes, to Office Group C, Construction, of the SS Economic and Administrative Main Office (*SS Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt* – SS WVHA) run by SS *Oberführer* Kammler, while continuing to be subject to Reich Minister Speer in matters of construction. Within SS WVHA, Office C/I (general construction tasks), headed by SS *Sturmbannführer* Sesemann, was responsible for the supervision and cost control of ordinary construction projects, whereas Office C/III (technical areas), run by SS *Sturmbannführer* Wirtz, exercised the same authority for technical construction projects.

Still within SS WVHA, the supervision of the Construction Inspectorate of Office II of Main Office of Budget and Buildings was taken over by Office C/V Central Construction Inspectorate, which had a double function: technical through Office V/1a (Construction Inspections, Central Construction Offices and Construction Offices) and financial through Office V/2a (budget and accounting). The Construction Inspectorate of the Waffen-SS and Police Reich East, which had controlled the Auschwitz Central Construction Office since November 1941, reported to these two offices; it was replaced in mid-1943 by the Construction Inspectorate of the Waffen-SS and Police Silesia, located at Kattowitz and likewise attached to Office C/V of SS WVHA.

With respect to the construction industry, the Central Construction Office was placed under the authority of Speer’s local offices: the Regional Administrator of the General Plenipotentiary for Control of the Construction Industry in Military District VIII, located at Kattowitz, which handled administrative questions (precedence, construction authorization, etc.) and to the Regional Administrator for Control of the Construction Industry in Military District VIII, located at Breslau, responsible for the allocation of materials.⁴⁴

Any construction order coming from Himmler would be handled along the lines of procedure just described, including orders concerning technical, sanitary and, possibly, extermination facilities.

The bureaucratic channels were described in the following words by SS *Sturmbannführer* Wolfgang Grosch in a postwar ‘confession’:⁴⁵

“As for building gas chambers and crematoria, that was the responsibility of Office Group C, once such buildings had been requested by Office

⁴⁴ For sources, cf. my study *La “Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz.”* Edizioni di Ar, 1998; Engl.: *The Central Construction Office in Auschwitz*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, IL, in preparation.

⁴⁵ Affidavit of Wolfgang Grosch of February 20, 1947. NO-2154. Wolfgang Grosch served from June 1941 at Main Department II/Central Construction Inspectorate of Main Office of Budget and Buildings, from November 1941 through March 1944 at Construction Inspectorate of the Waffen-SS and Police Central Russia, located at Mogilev.

Group D.^[46] The official path was as follows: Office Group D contacted Office Group C. Office C/I did the drawings for those installations, as far as the buildings themselves were concerned, passed them on to Office C/III, which took care of the machinery, i.e., the equipment concerning for example the ventilation of the gas chambers or the gas injection device. These specifications would then be assigned to a private company, which had to supply the special equipment or furnaces. Further along the official path, C/III would inform Office C/V, which transmitted the order to the Central Construction Office via its Construction Inspectorate West, North, South, East. The Central Construction Office then gave the construction order to the Construction Office of the concentration camp concerned, which carried out the actual project using detainees that had been supplied by D/II.^[47] Office Group D gave orders and instructions to Office Group C regarding space requirements and purposes of such buildings. The client for gas chambers and crematoria was, basically, Office Group D.”

This bureaucratic procedure was followed in the construction of all technical and sanitary installations in the concentration camps (crematoria, disinfection and disinfection equipment, etc.), but it was also valid for undisputed execution installations (gallows, ranges for firing squads, etc.) as well as, perhaps, for homicidal gas chambers.⁴⁸ Whenever such installations were built, they inevitably followed the bureaucratic path described above; this is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that Jean-Claude Pressac based his thesis of the existence of homicidal gas chambers on ‘slip-ups’ in the abundant documentation of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office on the cremation installations.

The construction activities of the various Central Construction Offices were, themselves, subject to a bureaucratic procedure just as complex. Let us examine the pertinent case below.

From March 31, 1942, forward, each site of the construction project Concentration Camp Auschwitz was assigned an identification number preceded by the letters BW (*Bauwerk*=building site). All administrative acts related to a *Bauwerk* had to be marked with the reference “BW 21/7b (*Bau*) 13,” in which 21/7b identified the account, “(*Bau*) 13” the title.⁴⁹ For the Prisoner of War Camp (the Birkenau camp), such dispositions had already come into force in February 1942.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Office Group D/concentration camps, headed by SS *Brigadeführer* Glücks, dealt with the concentration camps.

⁴⁷ Office DII/work allocation of inmates, with its head SS *Sturmbannführer* Maurer, was in charge of the work assigned to the detainees.

⁴⁸ None of the alleged homicidal gas chambers was equipped with a “gas feeding equipment” (*Gaseinströmgerät*); this designation applied instead to the gas diffusion equipment of the hydrogen cyanide disinfection chambers using the DEGESCH circulation system.

⁴⁹ “*Aufteilung der Bauwerke (BW) für die Bauten, Aussen- und Nebenanlagen des Bauvorhabens Konzentrationslager Auschwitz O/S*,” March 31, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-267, p. 3.

⁵⁰ “*Baufristenplan für Bauvorhaben: Kriegsgefangenenlager der Waffen SS Auschwitz*” of March 9, 1942, for the month of February; RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 9. “*Aufteilung der Bauwerke (BW) für die*

During the course of the construction of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, the local population was evacuated;⁵¹ many houses that stood in the way of the plans of the SS were demolished, but countless others located within the “*area of interest*” of the camp remained intact and were incorporated into the administration of the camp and entrusted to the SS New Construction Office (later to become SS Construction Office and finally SS Central Construction Office). Some, though very few, houses were not demolished and not incorporated into the camp administration either.

The SS New Construction Office carried out a census of the incorporated houses and gave a serial number to each one. Numbering proceeded by zones, and one of the last zones was that one of the Auschwitz railroad station. The February 1942 report of the surveying section at SS New Construction Office mentions the following activity:⁵²

“*Numbering of the houses between Alter and Neuer Bahnhofstrasse.*”

For example, in the former village of Brzezinka (Birkenau), SS New Construction Office incorporated some forty houses, to which it assigned the numbers from 600 to 640.⁵³

On September 10, 1944, the Central Construction Office renumbered the houses to reflect a renaming of the streets.⁵⁴

All work on the houses was planned and carried out by the above office, which retained responsibility for maintaining them even after the completion of work and the handover to the camp administration. For example, in October 1944 the Central Construction Office took on the inspection and repair of the damage caused by the American aerial bombardment of September 13, 1944, creating for this purpose a special *Bauwerk* no. 167.⁵⁵ Among the structures destroyed or damaged were 18 buildings⁵⁶ and 63 houses.⁵⁷ For each house and each building the Central Construction Office made a damage assessment

Bauten, Aussen- und Nebenanlagen des Bauvorhabens ‘Lager II’ Auschwitz,” copy written by Poles without indication of date; AGK, NTN-94, p. 154.

⁵¹ As early as March 1941, 1,600 Poles and 500 Jews had been evacuated from the Auschwitz “*area of interest*” and moved to the Government General; GARF, 7021-108-32, p. 30.

⁵² “*Tätigkeitsbericht der Tiefbau- und Vermessungsabteilung. Februar 1942,*” March 2, 1942; RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 416.

⁵³ “*Bebauungsplan für den Auf- u. Ausbau des Konzentrationslagers u. Kriegsgefangenenlagers, Plan Nr. 2215,*” dated March 1943. Northern sector of the camp. RGVA, 502-2-94, p. 2. Cf. document 2.

⁵⁴ “*Aufstellung. Umnummerierung von Hausnummern auf dem westlichen Sola-Ufer (Planungsgelände für Neustadt-West,*” RGVA, 502-2-95, pp. 22-25. Cf. document 3.

⁵⁵ “*Bauantrag für die Instandsetzungsarbeiten an den durch Bomben beschädigten Gebäuden und Aussenanlagen im Interessengebiet des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz. BW. 167;*” the document contains an explanatory report (*Erläuterungsbericht*) and a cost estimate (*Kostenvoranschlag*). RGVA, 502-1-159, pp. 80-90.

⁵⁶ Buildings no. 134, 135, 136, 138, 128, 129, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 157A, 157B, 157C, 157E, 157D, 125.

⁵⁷ Houses no. 35, 210, 36, 207, 891, 103, 115, 105, 56, 53, 52, 50, 49, 47, 44, 41, 43, 40, 27, 28, 33, 34, 16, 875, 6, 7, 8, 142, 131, 132, 133, 203, 105, 118, 118a, 149, 156, 126, 45, 25, 54, 139, 142, 46, 78, 1, 5, 9, 121, 21, 116, 117, 120, 122, 123, 125, 129, 130, 150, 152, 163, 170, 208.

and a cost estimate for repairs.⁵⁸ In the village of Broschkowitz some thirty houses were set aside for those who had been displaced.⁵⁹

Some existing Polish houses were incorporated into the construction project concentration camp Auschwitz and given the number of the corresponding *Bauwerk*. For example, houses 130, 132, 150, 151, 152 and 171 became part of BW 36B (housing for officers and NCOs).⁶⁰

From the administrative point of view, the creation of a *Bauwerk* enabled the accomplishment of a complex series of bureaucratic steps, embodied in the drafting of a number of documents: besides the sketch of the location, the construction specification, and the cost estimate already mentioned, they included a drawing, an explanatory report, a transferal to the camp administration, and a notice of completion. For each *Bauwerk*, it was moreover necessary to keep a cash ledger, in which all work done on the *Bauwerk* and the accompanying payments were recorded and which reflected, so to speak, the administrative life of a *Bauwerk*.⁶¹ The construction or the modification was carried out by the Central Construction Office, using either its own detainees or civilian companies called in from the outside. Ordinary jobs were done by the workshops of the Central Construction Office, which had at its disposal a number of Kommandos of skilled workmen (blacksmiths, painters, carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, etc.). The execution of those tasks brought along, in the administrative field, the filing of other bureaucratic forms: the request for materials, the order, the work sheet, the receipt, the delivery slip. The work of the detainees appeared in the accounts of the camp administration and was billed to the Central Construction Office by means of an invoice. The civilian firms also sent regular invoices to the Central Construction Office.

All these documents were issued in several copies, which were distributed to the offices concerned. The addressees of the copies were indicated in the documents under the rubric "*distribution list*."

The *Bauwerke* were also registered in various reports on the construction activities, of which there were at least 14 different types. That practice was also applied to the Polish houses that were taken over by the Central Construction Office, as is shown by the drawing of house 647 located at Budy.⁶²

From the complex bureaucratic procedures outlined above, it follows that the Birkenau 'Bunkers,' too, if in fact they existed, had to have appeared in the documents of Central Construction Office. All we have to do, therefore, is

⁵⁸ "*Kostenvoranschlag für die Instandsetzungsarbeiten an den durch Bomben beschädigten Gebäuden und Aussenanlagen im Interessengebiet des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz. BW 167.*" RGVA, 502-1-159, pp. 82-90.

⁵⁹ "*Lageplan über die ausgebauten Wohnhäuser für Bombenbeschädigte BW. 166. (Eingetragen im Planausgabebuch unter Nr. 18125/29.7.44).*" RGVA, 502-2-50, p. 83. Cf. document 4.

⁶⁰ "*Baubericht für den Monat März 1942.*" RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 385; "*Tätigkeits- bzw. Baubericht für den Monat März 1942*" by SS Schütze Jothann (*Abteilung Hochbau*). RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 398.

⁶¹ Cf. in this regard my study in note 44, p. 38 and 45.

⁶² Cf. document 5.

to look for documentary proof of their existence. The investigation must be directed at four essential criteria:

1. Number of the *Bauwerk*: In contrast to the alleged homicidal gas chambers of the crematoria, which were included in the corresponding *Bauwerke*, that is, the crematoria II, III, IV and V (BW 30, 30a, 30b, 30c), the gassing ‘Bunkers’ would have constituted a *Bauwerk* in themselves. Therefore, their respective numbers must appear in the documents of the Central Construction Office.
2. Designation: Like all *Bauwerke*, the ‘Bunkers’ had to have a specific designation, which would have to appear in the documents. According to the postulates of the official historiography, that designation was necessarily ‘encrypted’ and was indicated by “*sonder-*” (special), as for example “*Haus für Sondermassnahmen*” (house for special measures).
3. The ‘Bunkers’ were existing houses, and the modification of such houses is characterized in the documentation of the Central Construction Office as “*Ausbau*” or “*Umbau*” (completion, conversions) followed by the mention “*eines Hauses*” (of a house) or “*eines Gebäudes*” (of a building), often with the adjective “*bestehend*” or “*vorhanden*” (existing, present). The transformation of the two houses into ‘gas chambers’ would therefore have to be reflected in the documents as “*Ausbau*” of two houses.
4. The alleged undressing barracks near the two ‘Bunkers’ would, in turn, belong to the respective *Bauwerke* and appear as such in the documents.

2.2. Plans and Cost Estimates for the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp (June 1941–July 1942)

As we have seen, Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt have the Himmler-Höb meeting take place on June 13–14, 1941, because (in their opinion) Höb was in Berlin on those two days to discuss the projects for the enlargement of the camp with Kammler. The object of the discussion is confirmed by a letter from Kammler to the camp commander dated June 18, 1941, which refers to “*KL Auschwitz – construction projects 2nd and 3rd year of war economy.*” Kammler writes:⁶³

“Taking into account the construction measures ordered locally by SS Gruppenführer Pohl, and referring to your meeting with the head of Amt I and myself on 13 and 14 of this month, I inform you as follows:

1) The construction measures listed below will be punctually registered by Amt II with plenipotentiary general for control of the building industry [Speer] for the 3rd year of the war economy (1.10.41 – 30.9.41).”

This is followed by a list set out below:

⁶³ RGVA, 502-1-11, pp. 37f.

- a) Completion of utility buildings*
- b) 30 new accommodations for detainees*
- c) Delousing unit*
- d) Laundry building*
- e) Admission building*
- f) Gate building KL*
- g) 5 watchtowers*
- h) Extension camp wall and wire obstacle*
- i) New construction planning office with garages*
- k) Kommandantur building*
- l) Sentry Kommandantur area*
- m) Motor pool Kommandantur*
- n) Housing Kommandantur staff*
- o) Housing for 1 guard battalion*
- p) Finishing of temporary officers' club and officers' housing in existing buildings*
- q) Work camp for civilian workers*
- r) Sewage system*
- s) Water supply*
- t) Road constructions and gardens*
- u) Electrical installations, external."*

Kammler then states that the whole construction project CC Auschwitz could no longer be registered for the second year of the war economy but, considering that the camp was to receive 18,000 detainees by December 31, 1941, he agreed to the start or the continuation of the following items:

- a) Adding upper stories to 14 existing accommodations for detainees*
- b) Completion of utility buildings*
- c) 30 new accommodations for detainees*
- d) Delousing unit*
- e) Laundry unit*
- f) New construction planning office with garages*
- g) Motor pool Kommandantur*
- h) Housing Kommandantur staff*
- i) Finishing of temporary officers' club with officers' accommodations in existing buildings*
- k) Work camp for civilian workers*
- l) Sewage system*
- m) Water supply*
- n) Roads"*

Thus, after the meeting between Himmler and Höß, Kammler's group of offices planned all kinds of construction measures except those for which the entire camp had allegedly been set up: extermination installations.

On October 30, 1941, Bischoff drew up a first cost estimate for the Auschwitz camp (*SS Unterkunft und Konzentrationslager Auschwitz*) arriving at a total of 7,057,400 RM. The document mentions the following items:

- BW 12, 20A, 20B, 20D, 20E, 20F, 20G, 20L, 20M, 20N, 20O, 20Q, 20R: Accommodations for detainees
- BW 62: Kitchen barrack for detainees
- BW 300A-F: Housing and utility barracks of camp for civilian workers
- BW 300E: 1 utility barrack
- BW 300F: 1 washing and toilet barrack
- BW 172: Utility barrack for guard unit
- BW 100-107 and 112-132: Accommodations for detainees
- BW 9A: Sanitary installations in the Auschwitz concentration camp (water and sewage installation, sewers)
- BW 9B: Drainage ducts
- BW 21: Roads.⁶⁴

The same day, Bischoff also elaborated an “*Explanatory report to preliminary plan for the new construction of the Waffen-SS POW camp at Auschwitz, O/S*” (= Upper Silesia), which contained the following *Bauwerke*:

1. BW 3: Prisoner housing barracks 1-174
2. BW 4: Utility barracks 1-14
3. BW 5a: Delousing barrack 1
4. BW 5b: Delousing barrack 2
5. BW 6: Washing barracks 1-16
6. BW 7: Toilet barracks 1-18
7. BW 8: Corpse barrack
8. BW 9: Quarantine camp, entrance building
9. BW 10: Kommandantur building
10. BW 11: Guard building
11. BW 12: Area, fenced in, with open toilets
12. BW 13: Watchtowers, wood
13. BW 14: Barrack camp for guard unit
14. BW 15: Warehouse
15. BW 16: Access road and parking area
16. BW 17: Road consolidation within camp
17. BW 18: Sewage system with treatment plant
18. BW 19: Water supply plant
19. BW 20: Power plant
20. BW 21: Electrical power line from Birkenau
21. BW 22: Telephone system
22. BW 23: Alarm system
23. BW 24: Enclosure
24. BW 25: Wiremesh fencing within camp
25. BW 26: Transformer station
26. BW 27: Siding from Auschwitz station

⁶⁴ “*Kostenüberschlag für das Bauvorhaben: SS Unterkunft und Konzentrationslager Auschwitz,*” October 31, 1941. RGVA, 502-2-97, pp. 3-6.

Furthermore, a new crematorium was planned as item 30, which was, however, to be built in the Auschwitz main camp.⁶⁵

On February 27, 1942, SS Oberführer Kammler visited Auschwitz for an on-site discussion of the camp construction program for the third year of war economy. On March 2, the head of SS WVHA, SS *Gruppenführer* Oswald Pohl, approved the proposals listed below:⁶⁶

I. Agricultural constructions

1. 30 to 35 horse stable barracks for the temporary housing of animals, etc.
2. 2 permanent cow-sheds for a total of 400 head of cattle
3. 3 field barns and 4 temporary farm barns
4. Temporary greenhouse of 3000 m²
5. 4 storage buildings for potatoes
6. Completion of Raisko building as a laboratory

II. Erection of temporary buildings for Deutsche Wirtschaftsbetriebe

1. Construction of a temporary bridge across the Sola river toward detainee entrance, making use of temporary road overpass of road administration, to be dismantled
2. Adding upper stories to 6 permanent detainee buildings
3. Completion of 5 permanent detainee buildings and new construction of 15 detainee buildings to be used initially as follows:
 - 5 housing buildings as workshops
 - 5 housing buildings for storage
 - 5 housing buildings for the guard units

The distance between the permanent buildings will be 14 m edge to edge
4. Laundry building
5. Entrance building, detainees
6. Water supply system
7. Sewage system
8. Bio-gas utilization system
9. Finishing utility barrack, Kommandantur
10. Crematorium in the POW camp
11. 4 officers' housing barracks
12. Construction office barrack
13. Roads as required
14. Completion of existing houses and completion of one house for the commander of the agricultural units at Auschwitz."

On March 17, in response to this letter, Bischoff transmitted to SS Sturm-bannführer Lenzer, head of Office Group C V/1 (supervision of all SS build-

⁶⁵ "Erläuterungsbericht zum Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S" and "Kostenvoranschlag für den Vorentwurf über den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S." RGVA, 502-1-233, pp. 13-30.

⁶⁶ Letter from Pohl to Central Construction Office Auschwitz of March 2, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-319, pp. 210f.

ing offices and building projects) of SS WVHA the list of construction projects (and *Bauwerke*) submitted for approval to the Regional Administrator for Control of the Construction Industry in Military District VIII. The *Bauwerke* are listed in Table 1 in the Appendix (p. 232) without the corresponding cost estimate.

On March 31, 1942, Bischoff compiled a list of all *Bauwerke* planned for the construction project CC Auschwitz. It was later completed by hand by adding new *Bauwerke* that had not been originally planned. I have reproduced Bischoff's list in its entirety in Table 2 in the Appendix (p. 234).

The “*Explanatory report on the construction project concentration camp Auschwitz O/S*” written by Bischoff on July 15, 1942, covers the projects and constructions of the Auschwitz camp up to the end of the third fiscal year of the war, *i.e.*, until September 30, 1942. The document lists in order the *Bauwerke* as given in Table 3 in the Appendix (p. 238).

Between October 26 and 29, 1942, Bischoff compiled a cost estimate entitled “*Project: POW camp Auschwitz (carrying out of special treatment)*.” It dealt with a project for the Birkenau camp and lists 12 *Bauwerke*, the first of which included only the following 18 items:

1. 1. 182 housing, provisions and personal storage barracks
2. 27 washing and toilet barracks
3. 10 utility barracks
4. 12 infirmary barracks
5. 10 block leader barracks
6. 3 washing barracks
7. 6 toilet barracks
8. 3 utility barracks
9. 11 uniform store and administration barracks
10. 16 troop housing barracks
11. 2 Kommandantur and washing barracks
12. Warehouse 1
13. Wire-mesh fence and watch-towers
14. Cooking kettles and stoves
- 15a. 4 crematoria
- 15b. 4 morgues
- 16a. Delousing unit
- 16b. Troop delousing unit

The other *Bauwerke* are the following:

2. Water supply installation
3. Sewage system
4. Railroad siding
5. Electric lighting
6. Alarm and telephone installation
7. Emergency power plant
8. Substation
9. Bakery

10. Workshop hall, 3 camp barracks and 1 housing barrack for supervisory personnel
11. Disinfestation plant I and 4 housing barracks for civilian workers' camp I
12. Disinfestation plant II, 2 washing and 2 toilet barracks for civilian workers camp II.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ "Vorhaben: Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz (Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung)," VHA, Fond OT 31(2)/8.

3. The ‘Bunkers’ in the Construction of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp

3.1. The Construction Reports of the Camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau

The first half of 1942 is the best-documented period for the projects and construction work of the Auschwitz Central Construction Office. There are two series of reports that allow us to appreciate the full scope of its building activities. There is, on the one hand, the “*Baufristenplan*” (construction deadline schedule), a monthly report prepared by the head of the Central Construction Office and sent to Office Group C/V of SS WVHA. These reports list all *Bauwerke* under construction or already built, showing the starting date and the degree of progress in percent as well as the estimated completion date or the date of completion for *Bauwerke* already terminated. Each *Bauwerk* is shown either by its identification number or by its designation (e.g., BW 24 commandant’s residence).

The other set of documents is the series of *Bauberichte* (construction reports), monthly reports from the head of Central Construction Office to the camp commandant. These reports contain detailed descriptions of the various building sites (*Baustellenbeschreibung*) and of the individual *Bauwerke*, arranged by construction project.

The construction projects within the scope of this report were “*Construction project concentration camp Auschwitz*,” “*Construction project POW camp Auschwitz*,” “*Construction project construction depot Auschwitz*” and “*Construction project agriculture Auschwitz*.”

The documents of greatest interest for our investigation are the following:

1) Construction report on the progress of construction work for construction project CC Auschwitz, dated April 15, 1942, covering the period up to April 1, 1942 (see Table 4 in the Appendix, p. 241).

2) Construction report of March 1942 (see Table 5 in the Appendix, p. 243).

3) Construction schedule plan of March 1942 for construction project CC Auschwitz (see Table 6 in the Appendix, p. 244).

4) Construction schedule plan of April 1942 for construction project POW camp of Waffen-SS in Auschwitz O/S (see Table 7 in the Appendix, p. 245).

5) Construction schedule plan of May 1942 for construction project CC Auschwitz (see Table 8 in the Appendix, p. 246).

6) Construction schedule plan of May 1942 for construction project agriculture (see Table 9 in the Appendix, p. 247).

7) Construction schedule plan of May 1942 for construction project construction depot (see Table 10 in the Appendix, p. 247).

8) Construction schedule plan of May 1942 for construction project POW (see Table 11 in the Appendix, p. 247).

9) Construction report of May 1942 (see Table 12 in the Appendix, p. 248).

10) Construction schedule plan of June 1942 for construction project CC Auschwitz (see Table 13 in the Appendix, p. 250).

11) Construction schedule plan of June 1942 for construction project agriculture (see Table 14 in the Appendix, p. 250).

12) Construction schedule plan of June 1942 for construction project construction depot (see Table 15 in the Appendix, p. 251).

13) Construction schedule plan of June 1942 for construction project POW (see Table 16 in the Appendix, p. 251).

14) Construction report of June 1942 (see Table 17 in the Appendix, p. 252).

If ‘Bunkers’ 1 and 2 at Birkenau started functioning on March 20 or at the end of May 1942, and on June 30, 1942, respectively, specific references to those installations would necessarily have to appear in the documents cited – references such as “*Bunker*,” or “*Rotes Haus*” / “*Weißes Haus*” or some kind of ‘code word.’ A thorough examination of all entries in Tables 1 through 17 in the Appenedix reveals, however, that not a single entry can even remotely be interpreted as referring to any of these ‘Bunkers.’ This clearly indicates that the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ never existed as extermination installations.

3.2. A Significant Example: House No. 44 / BW 36C

How decisive is the absolute lack of documentary traces becomes obvious by comparison with other houses that were taken over and modified by the SS New Construction Office (later SS Construction Office and finally Central Construction Office) at Auschwitz. The most significant example to be cited is that of house no. 44, a “*bestehender Rohbau*” (an existing building shell), which was rebuilt as BW 36C and assigned as living quarters to SS *Sturm-bannführer* Cäsar, head of agricultural units. Although I have not investigated this *Bauwerk* in detail, it appears in several documents in my possession, which I shall list chronologically:

March 2, 1942: Letter from the head of SS WVHA to Central Construction Office with reference to “*Construction program 3rd year of war economy, budget year 1942 for CC Auschwitz*”:⁶⁸

“*modification of existing residential houses and modification of a house for head of agricultural units at Auschwitz.*”

⁶⁸ RGVA, 502-1-319, p. 211.

March 17, 1942: Letter from Bischoff to Office Group C V/1 of SS WVHA with reference as before: “*modification of a house for head of agricultural units at Auschwitz.*” Estimated cost: 25,000 RM.⁶⁹

March 31, 1942: Individual *Bauwerke* (BW) for buildings, externals and secondary installations of construction project concentration camp Auschwitz: “*BW 36C residential house modification for head of agricultural units Auschwitz.*”⁷⁰

May 13, 1942: Letter from the Regional Administrator for Control of Construction Industry at Kattowitz to Central Construction Office with reference to “*construction authorization*”: “*modification of residential house for head of agricultural units.*” Cost estimate: 25,500 RM.⁷¹

June 29, 1942: Letter from the head of Central Construction Office to the Regional Administrator for Control of Construction Industry concerning “*Construction project Auschwitz – construction authorization*”: “*modification of an existing shell no. 36 (temporary).*”⁷²

June 1942: Construction report from the head of Central Construction Office: “*BW 36C residence of head of agricultural units. Continuation of modifications, roof framework mounted and covered, lighting and sewers installed.*”⁷³

June 1942: “*Construction schedule plan*” of the head of Central Construction Office: “*BW 36C residence for head of agricultural units.*” This document also mentions the construction order for the BW (item no. 178), the date work started (May 4, 1942) the degree of progress (45 percent) and the estimated date of completion (August 15, 1942).⁷⁴

July 15, 1942: “*Explanatory report on the building project concentration camp Auschwitz O/S*” written by head of Central Construction Office: “*BW36C finishing of an existing shell.*”⁷⁵

July 15, 1942: “*Cost estimate for construction project concentration camp Auschwitz O/S*”: For BW 36C a detailed cost estimate is given, amounting to 29,000 RM.⁷⁶

July 15, 1942: “*Construction description*” of BW 36 C: “*Completion of the existing shell.*”⁷⁷

July 15, 1942: “*Cost estimate for completion of existing shell BW 36C.*”⁷⁸

July 15, 1942: Location sketch of BW 36C.⁷⁹

July 30 [1942]: “*Summary of all Bauwerke that are to be achieved on order of SS WVHA Berlin within the area of CC Auschwitz and/or under the au-*

⁶⁹ RGVA, 502-1-319, p. 205.

⁷⁰ RGVA, 502-1-267, p. 6.

⁷¹ RGVA, 502-1-319, illegible page number.

⁷² RGVA, 502-1-319, p. 192.

⁷³ RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 223.

⁷⁴ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 26.

⁷⁵ RGVA, 502-1-220, p. 4.

⁷⁶ RGVA, 502-1-220, p. 27. Cf. document 6.

⁷⁷ RGVA, 502-1-319, page number illegible. Cf. document 6a.

⁷⁸ RGVA, 502-1-319, page number illegible. Cf. document 6b.

⁷⁹ RGVA, 502-1-319, page number illegible. Cf. document 6c.

thority of Central Construction Office of *Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz within the third year of the war economy.*"⁸⁰

July 1942: "*Construction report*" from head of Central Construction Office: "*BW36C Modification of residence for head of agricultural units. Installation of floors at all levels, doors and windows put in, painting done, externals arranged.*"⁸¹

July 1942: "*Construction schedule plan*" of the head of Central Construction Office: "*Completion of residential home for head of agricultural units.*" Progress: 85%.⁸²

August 1942: "*Construction schedule plan*" of the head of Central Construction Office: "*Completion of residential home for head of agricultural units.*" Progress: 100 percent as of August 15, 1942.⁸³

September 25, 1942: "*Report of completion*" of the head of Central Construction Office to Office CV of SS WVHA: "*already finished [...] modification of existing shell no. 36C for KL Auschwitz.*"⁸⁴

September 1942: "*Construction schedule plan*" of the head of Central Construction Office: "*BW 36C Completion of residential home for head of agricultural units.*" Construction order no. 178; start of work: May 4, 1942; progress: 100%; termination: Aug. 15, 1942.⁸⁵

October 1942: List of *Bauwerke* entitled "*VIII U pa I*": "*BW 36C = modification of an existing shell, residence Cäsar.*"⁸⁶

December 16, 1942: "*Workshop orders (administration) starting June 1, 1942*": "*Installation of window pane in House 44 Stubaf. Cäsar (very urgent!).*"⁸⁷

April 8, 1943: "*Construction schedule plan*" of the head of Central Construction Office; Construction order no. 178; start of work: May 4, 1942; progress: 100%; termination: Aug. 15, 1942.⁸⁸

October 2, 1943: "*Construction schedule plan*" of the head of Central Construction Office; Construction order no. 178; start of work: May 4, 1942; progress: 100%; termination: Aug. 15, 1942.⁸⁹

December 14, 1943: "*Construction Office Industrial Constructions. State of construction invoicing*": "*BW 36C CC. Completion of residential home for head of agricultural units.*" The report states that 95 percent of the cost of 38,000 RM had been paid.⁹⁰

This series of construction reports and construction schedule plans also documents the progress of the modification work going on in other Polish

⁸⁰ RGVA, 502-1-275, p. 33.

⁸¹ RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 181.

⁸² RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 36.

⁸³ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 39.

⁸⁴ RGVA, 502-1-319, p. 95.

⁸⁵ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 48.

⁸⁶ RGVA, 502-1-317, p. 42.

⁸⁷ RGVA, 502-1-153, order n. 145.

⁸⁸ RGVA, 502-1-320, p. 4.

⁸⁹ RGVA, 502-1-320, p. 4.

⁹⁰ RGVA, 502-1-8, p. 123.

houses that predated the camp, for example those assigned as housing for officers and NCOs (*Führer- und Unterführerwohnhäuser*), later subdivided into "housing and residences for married officers" (*Führerunterkünfte und Wohnhäuser für verh. Führer*), BW 36B, and "residences for married NCOs" (*Wohnhäuser für verh. Unterführer*), BW 27. Other officers and NCOs lived in other formerly Polish houses. For example, SS *Untersturmführer* Schwarzhuber lived in house no. 53,⁹¹ SS *Unterscharführer* Kapper in house no. 171, SS *Rottenführer* Stockert in house no. 154, SS *Rottenführer* Schulze in house no. 130, SS *Unterscharführer* Vollrath in house no. 740, SS *Sturmmann* Siebel in house no. 203.⁹² Garrison order No. 19/42 of July 23, 1942, mentions "dependents of SS personnel" who lived both inside and outside the outer surveillance perimeter.⁹³ The register of tasks assigned to the Central Construction Office by the camp administration contains, moreover, indications of work done on various houses, as for example house 23, occupied by SS *Untersturmführer* Ziemssen.⁹⁴ Other houses – 151, 136, 1, 25, 130, 132 – are mentioned in a report from the detainee painting detail (*Häftlings-Malerei*) for the period March 26 to April 25, 1942.⁹⁵

3.3. The 'Bunkers' on the Birkenau Maps

The certainty that we have acquired in the preceding paragraphs that the 'Bunkers' of Birkenau never existed as extermination installations is further enhanced by three maps of the Birkenau camp.

1) "*Site Map of Area of Interest CC Auschwitz No. 1733*" of October 5, 1942.⁹⁶ This map shows the area of the Birkenau camp prior to its construction. Within the area of the camp – the limits of which are indicated – 12 houses appear in the field later called construction sector III (*Bauabschnitt*, BA), numbered as follows: H[aus]. 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914. Outside the camp limits, to the north, there are three more houses (H. 586, 587, 588); to the east, in the former village of Birkenau, there is a group of 39 houses, numbered 601 to 639. All these houses had been taken over by Central Construction Office and had either a temporary function (those inside the camp) or a permanent one (the others). The map also shows the houses that are designated 'Bunker 1' and 'Bunker 2' by the official historiography, but none of these buildings has an identification number allocated

⁹¹ RGVA, 502-1-240, p. 27.

⁹² "Standortbefehl Nr. 40/43" of November 2, 1943. GARF, 7021-108-54, p. 55.

⁹³ RGVA, 502-1-66, p. 219.

⁹⁴ RGVA, 502-1-153, orders no. 37 (July 1, 1942: brickwork), 39 (July 1, 1942: electrical installations), 41 (July 1, 1942: painting), 82 (Sept. 11, 1942: metal work), 88 (Sept. 23, 1942: electrical installations for mess hall), 94 (Oct. 1, 1942: wood-working), 151 (Jan. 6, 1943: hygienic services).

⁹⁵ "*Häftl. Malerei. Arbeitsleistung in der Zeit vom 26.III.-25.IV.1942.*" RGVA, 502-1-24, pp. 370f.

⁹⁶ RGVA, 502-2-93, p. 14. Cf. document 7.

by the Central Construction Office. Thus, none of them had been pressed into service by Central Construction Office or assigned any purpose whatsoever.

2) “*Development Map for the Erection and Extension of the Concentration and POW Camp, map no. 2215*,” dated March 1943.⁹⁷

This master plan shows the complete map of the Birkenau camp. To the north of section BAIII, just outside the camp enclosure, the houses 586, 587 and 588 are visible, together with other houses further north (H. 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 589, 590) as well as the group of houses from the former village of Birkenau to the east of BAIII. The house that official historiography today calls ‘Bunker 1’ and the other five houses to the west of it are not shown, because they had been demolished to make room for a soil sewage basin (“*Erdklärbecken*”). To the west of the central sauna, however, still appears the house which today is known as ‘Bunker 2’ by the official historiography, as well as another house predating the camp in front of it, both without identification numbers. Near them on the map, the Soviets have crudely sketched in three rectangles supposed to represent the alleged undressing barracks of ‘Bunker 2,’ which, however, should have been only two in number, not three. Realizing their mistake, the Soviets struck out the third barrack with three strokes of the pen!

That those ‘barracks’ are indeed the work of the Soviets can be seen above all from their draft technique. In the drawings of barracks done by Central Construction Office⁹⁸ the lines forming the outer edges intersect crosswise at each corner, while those drawn by the Soviets form a closed angle and show, moreover, a thicker penstroke. Furthermore, there is another version of this drawing, identical except for the fact that the “*soil sewage basin*” was changed into a “*sewage plant*” (*Kläranlage*). On this map, the two houses mentioned above appear to the west of the central sauna, – again without an identification number – but there is no trace of any barracks.⁹⁹

3.4. The Logistics of the ‘Bunkers’

Thus, in the construction reports of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp for the months of March, April, May, and June 1942 (or, for that matter, for the entire year of 1942) there is not even the slightest trace of any ‘Bunker.’ Furthermore, there is no hint of them to be found in the entire documentation of Central Construction Office. This, however, would have been absolutely impossible if two farm houses had actually been taken over by this office and modified for any purpose whatsoever,

⁹⁷ RGVA, 502-1-93, p. 1. Cf. document 8.

⁹⁸ The drawing was executed by the detainee 471, the Polish draftsman Alfred Brzybylski.

⁹⁹ “*Bebauungsplan für den Auf- u. Ausbau des Konzentrationslagers u. Kriegsgefangenenlagers, Plan Nr. 2215*” dated March 1943. RGVA, 502-2-94, p. 2. Cf. document 9.

Had that actually taken place, other sets of documents of Central Construction Office would inevitably contain some sort of proof, traces, or additional indications.

The transformation of two farm houses into homicidal gas chambers would in fact have entailed a variety of structural and logistical tasks, the most important of which would have been the following:

3.4.1. Water Supply

After each homicidal gassing it would have been necessary to wash both the houses and the corpses to remove organic residues given off by the dying.¹⁰⁰ This would have required the two 'Bunkers' to be connected to the camp's water supply network; as late as October 28, 1942, however, such a connection was neither present nor planned, as can be seen from the "site map" for the "water supply POW Birkenau," in which the water pipes went up to the crematoria and ended there.¹⁰¹

3.4.2. Sewage

This washing operation would have required a sewer for the discharge of the effluents which, however, does not appear on either of the two maps of Birkenau dated March 31, 1942, mentioned above. These drawings show all of the sewers of the camp, which came together in a single ditch, called the "Königsgraben" (royal ditch), which in turn ended up in the Vistula river. Even though it stood only 200 meters away from this ditch, the house that allegedly became 'Bunker 2' was not hooked up to it by any sewer line.

3.4.3. Fencing and Watchtowers

Fencing in the area of the 'Bunkers' would have been indispensable to prevent the alleged victims from fleeing. It turns out, however, that no such work was done in that area. Central Construction Office map no. 3512 displays the entire system of enclosure of the camp.¹⁰² The small watchtowers ("Kleiner Wachturm") are shown as well as the large ones ("Großer Wachturm"), and also the existing enclosure ("Bestehender Zaun") and the planned one ("Projektierter Zaun"). The outermost fence in the west, "Zaun 34," ran a few meters beyond the central sauna and continued into BAIII as "Zaun 38." There were three large watchtowers (nos. 5, 6 and 7) in this area, and 4 small ones

¹⁰⁰ "Once we had taken out all the corpses from this house, we had to clean it up meticulously, wash the floor with water, sprinkle the floor with sawdust, and whitewash the walls." Szlama Dragon on 'Bunker 2.' Cf. chapter 5.1.

¹⁰¹ "Vorhaben: Kriegsgefangenenlager Auschwitz (Durchführung der Sonderbehandlung)," VHA, Fond OT 31(2)/8.

¹⁰² "Absteckungsskizze der Wachtürme um das K.G.L." RGVA, 502-2-95, p. 19.

(nos. 19, 20, 21 and 22). No ‘existing’¹⁰³ fence appears in the zone around ‘Bunker 2’ and no known document indicates that this zone was enclosed.

3.4.4. Installation of a Power Line

Lighting in the ‘Bunkers’ and of the enclosed space would have been indispensable for nocturnal operations. For example, when the Central Construction Office realized that the construction of crematorium II was not proceeding on the schedule ordered by Kammler, it decided to speed up the work by running night shifts. To enable this, it issued an order to the “*Electrician Kommando*” of its work shops, which was described as follows in the corresponding “*work card*”:¹⁰⁴

“*Re: Crematorium II – BW no. 30 in POW camp. Lighting for construction works in Crematorium II and focusing of searchlights for night shift / guard unit.*”

The work was carried out between January 15 and 23, 1943, and entailed 14 specialist man-hours and 28 helper man-hours for a total expenditure of 1,413.76 RM, consisting of 1,283.32 RM for materials (explicitly listed), a surcharge of 10% amounting to 128.34 RM and 2.10 RM for the 42 man-hours of the detainees. No such voucher exists for the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’

3.4.5. Installation of Undressing Barracks for the Victims

According to the official thesis, two barracks were set up next to each ‘Bunker,’ which the victims had to use as ‘undressing rooms.’ The installation of these barracks would have left evidence and references in the Central Construction Office documentation, starting with three documents of the June-December 1942 period, which deal specifically with the distribution of the barracks (*Barackenaufteilung*) for Auschwitz and Birkenau.¹⁰⁵

3.4.6. Transportation of Materials

The motor pool (*Fahrbereitschaft*) of the Central Construction Office, commanded by SS *Scharführer* Kurt Kögel, was responsible for the use and the maintenance of all vehicles assigned to the Central Construction Office. The head of this section had to write a monthly report – “*Activity report of the motor pool of Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz*” – which contained, a “*detailed employment of vehicles within camp area*” and a “*detailed employment of vehicles outside camp area.*” The report contained a list of all worksites and locations to which the vehicles had been driven, the total number of trips they had made, and the reason for the

¹⁰³ If ‘Bunker 2,’ in contrast to ‘Bunker 1,’ was not demolished on account of possible future re-use, it is not clear why the fence should have been removed.

¹⁰⁴ RGVA, 502-2-8, pp. 1-1a.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. chapter 3.5.

trips. The report for May 1942¹⁰⁶ mentions 1,171 trips, the one for June¹⁰⁷ 1,532 trips. Various trips involved houses predating the camp that were being modified by the Central Construction Office: for example there were 17 trips to bring construction materials to houses 171 and 28 in the month of May; in the June report are 8 trips to the Waffen-SS building, 7 to house 24, 105 to house 28, 1 to house 210, 9 to house 170, all to transport construction materials as well. However, even though 'Bunker 2' allegedly belonged to the same category, there is not even the slightest hint – open or veiled – of construction materials or dismantled barracks being taken to that worksite¹⁰⁸

3.4.7. Laying of a Camp Railway

The corpses of the alleged victims – according to the most important witness¹⁰⁹ – were taken to mass graves (later to become incineration ditches) by means of carts running on a field railway. This device is not mentioned in any document. A field railway (*Feldbahngleis*) for a totally different purpose was offered to the Central Construction Office by the company Schlesische Industriebau Lenz & Co. in a letter dated February 2, 1944. It was used in BW 47 – transport of materials – of BAIII at Birkenau.¹¹⁰

3.4.8. Road Works

For the victims to be transported to the 'Bunkers' by truck (by day, all those unable to walk, and everybody by night), it was also necessary to build a suitable road. The construction reports describe the road works during the month covered in detail, but they do not contain the slightest trace of linking any 'Bunkers' to the camp. The construction report for March, under the entry "road works," mentions beginning work on the road linking the "*Deutsche Haus*" to the Auschwitz camp as well as works within the Birkenau camp.¹¹¹ The construction report for May informs us of the continuation of work on the road from "*Deutsches Haus*" to the Auschwitz camp (450 meters ~1,500 ft.), of a road of 600 meters from the Main Industrial Camp to the new stables, and also of road works within the Birkenau camp.¹¹² The construction report for June, finally, refers only to the progress on the two roads just mentioned.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ "Tätigkeitsbericht der Fahrbereitschaft vom 1.-31. Mai 1942." RGVA, 502-1-24, pp. 295f. I have not found any prior documents of this type and it is probable that this was the first of the series.

¹⁰⁷ "Tätigkeitsbericht der Fahrbereitschaft der Zentral-Bauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz für den Monat Juni 1942." RGVA, 502-1-181, pp. 282-287.

¹⁰⁸ In the report for June, the transportation of barrack parts (*Barackenteile*) is borne out for the POW camp in general (786 trips), for DAW (*Deutsche Ausrüstungs-Werke*, 27 trips), and for the disinfection barracks (14 trips).

¹⁰⁹ Szlama Dragon, cf. chapter 5.1.

¹¹⁰ RGVA, 502-1-346, p. 44.

¹¹¹ "Baubericht für Monat März 1942," written by Bischoff on April 3, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 385.

¹¹² "Baubericht für Monat Mai 1942" written by Bischoff on June 2, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 263.

¹¹³ "Baubericht für Monat Juni 1942" written by Bischoff on July 2, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 222.

3.4.9. Gastight Doors

The modification of two Polish houses into homicidal gas chambers would have required, first of all, the installation of gastight doors. It is well known that documents for doors of this type exist in connection with the Birkenau crematoria (and are considered by the official historiography to be ‘traces’ of the existence of homicidal gas chambers in these structures). There are also documents referring to 22 gastight doors of the Birkenau disinfestation plants BW 5a and 5b,¹¹⁴ but no document speaks of the production of a gastight door for the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’

3.5. The So-called “Code Language”

We have seen above that, according to bureaucratic practice at Auschwitz, the ‘Bunkers,’ just like all other *Bauwerke*, needed a specific designation, which would have shown up in the documents. As the existence of these installations is, in fact, not shown by the documents, Polish investigators doing research on Auschwitz invented the fiction of ‘code words’ as early as 1946, that is, by claiming that the SS allegedly used innocent sounding terms in order to camouflage the ‘real,’ but unspeakable designations.¹¹⁵ Later Holocaust scholars endorsed this expedient with great relief and embarked on a quest for ‘camouflaged’ designations for the ‘Bunkers.’ After nearly six decades of effort, they have only been able to come up with three alleged designations, which we will examine in the following sections.

3.5.1. “Baths for Special Actions”

This designation, which appears a single time in the existing documentation – in a file memo by SS *Untersturmführer* Fritz Ertl of August 21, 1941¹¹⁶ – has been interpreted by Jean-Claude Pressac as an ‘encryption’ referring to the ‘Bunkers’;¹¹⁷ in this, as for all the rest of Pressac’s arguments, he was slavishly followed by Robert Jan van Pelt.¹¹⁸ Such an interpretation is groundless, as I have demonstrated with an abundance of evidence in a specific historical analysis, to which I refer the reader.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Cf. in this regard my study *Special Treatment...*, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 46-50.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 9f.

¹¹⁶ RGVA, 502-1-313, p. 159.

¹¹⁷ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien...*, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 61.

¹¹⁸ R.J. van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz. Evidence from the Irving Trial*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2002, pp. 297-299.

¹¹⁹ C. Mattogno, “The ‘Bathing Facilities for Special Actions’” in: *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 66-71.

3.5.2. "House for Special Measures"

This designation appears in two documents, rather late in the chronology of the 'Bunkers': the "*Explanatory report on the construction project concentration camp Auschwitz/OS*" of September 30, 1943,¹²⁰ which mentions "*modification of an existing house for special measures*" for BAII and one for BAIII at Birkenau, and the "*Cost estimate for extension of POW camp of the Waffen-SS in Auschwitz*" of October 1, 1943.¹²¹ Both documents also mention "3 barracks for special measures" for each house. According to Fritjof Meyer, the designation "*house for special measures*" is the encrypted designation of the 'Bunkers.'¹²² As I have shown elsewhere, this alleged encryption actually refers to the program for the improvement of the hygienic installations of the Birkenau camp, appropriately called "*special measures for the improvement of the hygienic installations,*" which was ordered by SS *Brigadeführer* Kammler in May of 1943.¹²³ More specifically, the barracks "*for special measures*" bore the label BW 33a; they were, therefore, a sub-site of site BW 33 – *Effektenbaracken* (personal property barracks, storage of inmate belongings), just as BW 11a – "*new construction chimney crem. concentration camp*" – was a sub-site of BW 11 – crematorium.

The two houses and the three barracks constructed as an addition to them had obviously all the same function: the storage of inmate belongings. Furthermore, in 1942 no *Bauwerk* bore the designation "*for special measures,*" which is further confirmation of the fact that the two houses did not, in fact, refer to the 'Bunkers.'

3.5.3. "Barracks for Special Treatment"

This designation, which appears in a number of documents in 1942, the first one dated March 31, 1942, refers to BW 58. By referring to the "*Explanatory report on the construction project concentration camp Auschwitz/OS*" of July 15, 1942, J.-C. Pressac asserts that the barracks "*for special treatment of detainees*" of BW 58, which are mentioned in this document, were the alleged undressing barracks of Bunkers 1 and 2 at Birkenau.¹²⁴ This assertion is, however, not borne out by documents.¹²⁵ Not only is it not confirmed by any documents, but it is categorically ruled out by three Central Construction Office documents that deal with the assignment or allotment (*Aufteilung*) of the barracks. The first document dates from June 30, 1942, and is entitled "*Barackenaufteilung*" (barrack allotment).¹²⁶ All barracks planned are listed here by construction project and by type of barrack. The construction project

¹²⁰ RGVA, 502-2-60, pp. 80-82.

¹²¹ RGVA, 502-2-60, pp. 83-94.

¹²² F. Meyer, *op. cit.* (note 10), p. 632, note 7.

¹²³ Cf. *Special Treatment...*, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 60f.

¹²⁴ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien...*, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 57.

¹²⁵ C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 25-27.

¹²⁶ RGVA, 502-1-275, pp. 270-273.

POW comprised 516 barracks; none of them was assigned to a worksite even remotely connectable to the ‘Bunkers.’ The sole ‘suspicious’ designation – but suspicious only in the sense of an assumed ‘encrypted language’ of the SS – belonged to the “Construction project SS housing and concentration camp Auschwitz” and concerned three “*Effektenbaracken für Sonderbehandlung*” (personal property barracks for special treatment), which served only for the storage of personal belongings taken from inmates upon their arrival at Auschwitz (“*for storage of [personal] effects*”). The second document, entitled “*concentration camp Auschwitz, barrack allotment*,”¹²⁷ is dated July 17, 1942, and is a general account of the barracks of the camp, listing their purpose, their type, the number of barracks needed, the number of barracks erected, the number of barracks stored, and the number missing. Here, too, the only ‘suspicious’ assignment concerns the barracks for ‘special treatment’: needed – 5, erected – 3; we are dealing with the 5 storage barracks of BW 58. The third document is a “*barrack allotment*” dated December 8, 1942,¹²⁸ following the same lines as the preceding document, but with the additional specification of the construction sector or *Bauwerk* to which they belonged. Again, the 5 barracks for ‘special treatment’ appear in this document, but they belong to BAII of Birkenau and were therefore located inside and not outside of the camp. Their function was that indicated above.¹²⁹

We have thus demonstrated that in the archives of the Central Construction Office of Auschwitz there is no document, explicit or ‘encrypted,’ which refers to the so-called ‘Bunkers’ or to the alleged ‘undressing barracks.’

3.6. Conclusion

In the beginning of this study I assumed, as a working hypothesis, that the meeting between Himmler and Höß actually took place. It is now time to verify the validity of this hypothesis. Leaving aside the obviously false chronology presented by Rudolf Höß and its insurmountable contradictions, let us turn our attention to two serious, unresolved, and irresolvable problems deriving from this hypothesis about the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’

1. Himmler’s order, Pressac assures us, made Auschwitz the “*center for the mass extermination of Jews*,”¹³⁰ and the entire camp was to fulfill this function. Why, then, in order to carry out this monstrous task, would the Office Group C of SS WVHA (and consequently Himmler himself)¹³¹ have had to make use of two existing cottages rather than build two completely new and efficient extermination installations? This is all the more surprising as the cost

¹²⁷ RGVA, 502-1-275, pp. 237-239.

¹²⁸ RGVA, 502-1-275, pp. 205-208.

¹²⁹ Cf. my study *Special Treatment...*, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 37f. and document 10 on p. 121.

¹³⁰ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien...*, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 51.

¹³¹ Oswald Pohl, SS *Obergruppenführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS*, in his position as head of SS WVHA, reported directly to *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler.

estimate for the Birkenau camp of October 30, 1941, totaling 7,700,000 RM, included the installation of two disinfestation barracks,¹³² designated BW 5a and 5b, which were equipped with a gas chamber ("*Vergasungsraum*") using hydrogen cyanide, showers and wash basins ("*Brause- und Waschraum*"). The cost of each of them was 41,040 RM.¹³³ We must remember that, by the end of October 1941, Höß and Eichmann are alleged to have already decided, more than a month earlier, to carry out the alleged extermination of the Jews in gas chambers by means of hydrogen cyanide. Therefore, Office Group C of the SS WVHA, and thus Himmler himself, while prepared to spend 82,080 RM on two new gas disinfestation chambers in order to save the lives of the Auschwitz inmates, did not bother to build two new buildings for the alleged homicidal gassings, a task to which the whole camp had allegedly been assigned!

Van Pelt asserts that on Birkenau drawing 885, dated January 5, 1942, the new crematorium, originally destined for the main camp, was placed at the north-west corner of the Birkenau camp instead, so as to be in 'connection' with the alleged 'Bunker 1.'¹³⁴ In practice, 'Bunker 1' would have produced the corpses and the crematorium would have incinerated them. This interpretation¹³⁵ is in itself nonsensical both because the 'Bunkers' never existed as such and because of the presence of some 10 additional morgues on the drawing mentioned: it thus renders Himmler's and SS WVHA's alleged *modus operandi* even more senseless. The new crematorium, according to the construction program for the third fiscal year of the war economy dated March 17, 1942, had a cost of 400,000 RM.¹³⁶ Thus, Himmler would have created a conveyor-belt for the extermination with a final link in the form of a new building costing 400,000 RM, whereas the initial link – far more important – would have been a ramshackle old house to be equipped with gas chambers!

2. According to Himmler's order, the entire camp of Birkenau was built to carry out the future mass exterminations. But then why did Himmler and the SS WVHA build a crematorium for the natural mortality among the detainees, while the victims of the mass extermination, whose number would be vastly superior, were to be simply buried?

In the first construction project for the Birkenau camp, dated October 31, 1941, there is an entry for just one crematorium with five furnaces of three muffles each to be built at the Auschwitz camp at an estimated cost of 270,000

¹³² In spite of the designation, the buildings were made of brick.

¹³³ "*Kostenvoranschlag für den Vorentwurf über den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS Auschwitz O.S.*," October 30, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 23.

¹³⁴ R.J. van Pelt, "*A Site in Search of a Mission*," in: Yisrael Gutman, Michael Berenbaum (eds.), *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1994, pp. 146f. See also: D. Dwork, R. J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 23), pp. 146f.

¹³⁵ I will come back to this interpretation by R.J. van Pelt in chapter 8.4.

¹³⁶ RGVA, 502-1-319, p. 204.

RM.¹³⁷ On November 12, 1941, the head of the Central Construction Office described its purpose as follows:¹³⁸

“The company Topf & Söhne, incineration technical devices, of Erfurt has been given an order by this office to build an incineration plant as quickly as possible, in view of the fact that the Auschwitz concentration camp will be enlarged by a POW camp that will shortly be occupied by 120,000 Russians. The construction of the incineration plant has thus become urgently necessary in order to prevent epidemics and other risks.”

This crematorium, therefore, served only for deaths from natural causes among the prisoners, as Pressac, too, accepts when he writes that this crematorium had nothing directly to do with the extermination of the Jews.¹³⁹

The cremation of the alleged victims of mass exterminations in the ‘Bunkers,’ on the other hand, is said to have been begun on September 21, 1942,¹⁴⁰ and to have been based on an order from Himmler himself given after his visit to Auschwitz on July 17 and 18, 1942.¹⁴¹

In conclusion, the story of the use of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ as a means of homicidal gassings has no foundation in the documents and is nonsensical organizationally. It is,propaganda, not reality. In the second and third part of this book we shall see how this propaganda arose and how it grew to ‘historical reality.’

¹³⁷ “*Kostenvoranschlag für den Vorentwurf über den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS Auschwitz O.S.*”, RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 27. The project of the crematorium had not yet been approved.

¹³⁸ RGVA, 502-1-314, pp. 8-8a.

¹³⁹ J.-C. Pressac, *Le macchine dello sterminio. Auschwitz 1941-1945*, Feltrinelli Editore, Milan 1994, p. 67. R.J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 118), p. 72 expresses himself in the same way.

¹⁴⁰ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 305.

¹⁴¹ F. Piper, “*Gas Chambers and Crematoria*,” in: Y. Gutman, M. Berenbaum (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 134), p. 163.

Part Two: Propaganda

4. The Origin of the Propaganda Story of the ‘Bunkers’ – Wartime Rumors

4.1. The First Reports

The first rumors about the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ began circulating at the end of August 1942. In a “*Letter written from the Auschwitz camp*,” dated August 29, 1942, we read:¹⁴²

“Most terrible are the mass executions by means of gas in chambers built for that purpose. There are two and they can take in 1200 persons. They are equipped with baths and showers, but instead of water there is gas coming out of them. In this way, first and foremost are murdered entire transports of unsuspecting persons. They are told that they are going to have a bath, they are given towels – in this way, 300,000 persons have already perished. At first, they were buried in graves, now [the corpses] are burnt outside in ditches dug for that purpose. Death occurs by suffocation, because blood is coming out of the nose and the mouth.”

This story, although a rather crude concoction, already contains the leitmotif of the later propaganda: the showers that gave off gas instead of water, something rather absurd in the case of gassing with Zyklon B. The cause of death is clearly nonsensical. Poisoning with hydrogen cyanide, in fact, provokes a form of asphyxiation by the cessation of cellular functions caused by the blocking of the principal path by which cellular redox reactions take place, so that the body cells can no longer utilize the oxygen that comes to them via the blood.¹⁴³

The number of alleged victims claimed in this statement is four times as high as the total number of Jews deported to Auschwitz up until August 29, 1942: some 76,000, of whom some 37,000 were properly registered.¹⁴⁴ The incineration of the corpses of the victims is in contradiction with official historiography, according to which, as we have already seen, such a practice started only on September 21, 1942.

¹⁴² Kazimierz Smoleń (ed.), “*Obóz koncentracyjny Oświęcim w świetle akt Delegatury Rządu R.P. na Kraj*,” *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie*, Numer specjalny I, Oświęcim 1968, p. 43.

¹⁴³ *Enciclopedia medica italiana*, Sansoni, Florence, 1951, p. 1404.

¹⁴⁴ Data taken from the *Auschwitz Kalendarium* (note 13) after elimination of its 10 fictitious transports. Cf. my study *Special Treatment...., op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 34f.

The number of the ‘gas chambers’ is in contradiction to the final propaganda story worked out by Szlama Dragon, who speaks of 6 rooms altogether with a total capacity of over 4,000 persons.¹⁴⁵

On September 8, 1942, edition no. 33 (58) of the *Informacja Bieżąca* (Current Information) published this news item:¹⁴⁶

“Over the last few months, in the camp area were organized [sic]:

1) Gas chambers have been installed in which the Jews (on average 1000 persons per day) are poisoned.”

This news item was too vague to make an impression. On October 10 of that year, the Department of Information (i.e., of propaganda) and Press of the Delegatura of the (Polish exile) government¹⁴⁷ drew up a “*Report on the situation in the country during the period of August 26 through October 10, 1942,*” in which it furnished more detailed information:¹⁴⁸

“Gas chambers: The first use of gas chambers took place in June 1941. A transport of 1,700 incurable patients was organized and ‘officially’ sent to a sanitarium at Dresden, but in reality [it went] to a building transformed into a gas chamber. This installation, however, turned out to be too small and not very practical. It was therefore decided to build 5 new gas chambers at Brzezinka [Birkenau] some 7 km from the camp. Construction was terminated in April 1942. These 5 chambers are windowless, with double doors that have bolts, and with gas input and ventilation devices. Each chamber is laid out for 700 persons. A railroad has been laid out between these buildings, by which the corpses are taken to graves that have been dug in the woods nearby. Gassing of 3500 persons, including all activities before and after, takes 2 hours. Those gassed are primarily Bolshevik prisoners of war and Jews. Among the Poles, mainly the terminally ill.”

This story was repeated in “*Annex I,*” entitled “*Copies of a tale and of reports from the Auschwitz penal camp*” of a report dated November 1942, but with an important addition: the German term “*Degasungskammer*”:¹⁴⁹

“On January 1, 1942, 2000 Jews were brought in. During 1942, some 30,000 Jews and 15,000 Jewesses and children. Out of that number some 3,000 and 7,000 Jewesses were registered on the numerical list. The others (including all the children) went directly to the *Degasungskammer*. [...] The *Degasungskammer* was used for the first time in June 1941. A transport of 1700 persons (incurably ill from venereal disease, *Körperschwache* [=frail persons¹⁵⁰], wounded who had had their ribs removed, patients with meningitis) was formed and sent to a sanitarium at Dresden (according to the official communication). Actually, they went to the building that had been converted into a gas chamber. It turned out, however, to be too

¹⁴⁵ Cf. below, chapter 5.1.

¹⁴⁶ K. Smoleń (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 142), p. 44.

¹⁴⁷ The *Delegatura* was the secret representation in Poland of the Polish government in exile in London.

¹⁴⁸ K. Smoleń (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 142), p. 48.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 60f.

¹⁵⁰ In German in the text.

small and not very practical. [Then] an installation of 5 modern chambers was built at Brzezinka, some 7 km from the camp. Construction was finished in April 1942. It comprises 6 [sic] blocks (windowless, with double doors and modern apparatuses for feeding the gas and for ventilation), each one for 700 persons. Between the buildings there is a narrow-gauge railway which takes the corpses to graves, each 4 km long, in the woods nearby. The entire area of the D-kammer is off limits, anyone found there, unless on assignment, faces the death penalty (this goes also for the SS, the Wehrmacht, civilians and detainees) Gassing of 3,500 persons takes two hours."

In an earlier study¹⁵¹ I have already demonstrated that the alleged first use of the "Degasungskammer" is gossip without historical foundation. It is worthwhile, though, to follow up on how Polish historiography transformed this gossip into historical reality.

In the first version of the *Auschwitz Chronicle*, Danuta Czech asserted that on July 28, 1941, 575 invalids, cripples, and chronically ill, selected by an *ad hoc* government commission, were sent to the Königstein hospital for the mentally ill in Saxony, where they were gassed with carbon monoxide.¹⁵² In a later article, entitled "The first selection for the gas at Auschwitz – the transport to the Dresden sanitarium," Stanisław Kłodziński took a closer look at this alleged event: he stated that the gassing of these detainees did not take place at Königstein but "near Sonnestein [sic] some 20 km from Dresden."¹⁵³ Consequently, Czech corrected "Königstein" to "Sonnestein" in the second edition of the *Auschwitz Chronicle*.¹⁵⁴ However, there is no document supporting the reality of this alleged event: it is based on second-hand testimonies only, in particular on the declarations of Rudolf Höß. There is no direct testimony by persons who had witnessed the alleged massacre, or its preparations, or who had seen the corpses of the alleged victims, or who had merely seen the transport arrive at Königstein, Schloß Sonnenstein in Pirna, or Dresden. All the testimonies collected by Kłodziński refer exclusively to the departure of the transport from Auschwitz; thus, even if it really did leave, there is no real proof of the gassing. During his trial, Höß, the only (indirect) witness to the alleged event, declared that the alleged homicidal gassing at Königstein had been reported to him by his subordinate, Franz Hößler, at that time SS *Obersturmführer*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 119-121.

¹⁵² D. Czech, "Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau," *Hefte von Auschwitz*, no. 2, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz, 1959, pp. 106f.

¹⁵³ Stanisław Kłodziński, "Pierwsza oświęcimska selekcja do gazu. Transport do 'Sanatorium Dresden'," *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. I, 1970, p. 40; this probably refers to Schloß Sonnenstein in Pirna, 20 km southeast of Dresden.

¹⁵⁴ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 106.

¹⁵⁵ S. Kłodziński, *op. cit.* (note 153), p. 40.

The historical veracity of this event is thus based only on the hearsay testimony of a single person who, moreover, had been dead for 14 months when the Höß trial began.¹⁵⁶

Let us look at the “*Degasungskammer*.” This term is a deformation of the German word “*Begasungskammer*,” which designated a hydrogen cyanide disinfection chamber using the DEGESCH circulation system. At the time there was no such installation at Auschwitz, but 19 DEGESCH circulation chambers were planned for the admissions building of the main camp. Now, whereas a ‘Gaskammer’ could have referred also to a homicidal gas chamber, a *Begasungskammer* could mean only a gas chamber for disinfection. But then, where did the term *Begasungskammer* – deformed into “*Degasungskammer*” – originate? It came, no doubt, from an article by G. Peters and E. Wüstinger entitled “*Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure in Kreislauf-Begasungskammern*” (Delousing with Zyklon-hydrogen cyanide in circulatory gas chambers).¹⁵⁷ This article had been requested as technical background information from the HELI company (Heerd-Lingler GmbH), the main representative of DEGESCH, by the firm Friedrich Boos, which had received the order to build the 19 Auschwitz disinfection chambers mentioned above; it was received by the then SS New Construction Office at Auschwitz on July 3, 1941. After having been kept in the archives for a year, it was dusted off by the civilian engineer Rudolf Jährling, who worked in the technical department of the Central Construction Office and supervised the construction of the disinfection installations in the admissions building.¹⁵⁸ The admissions building project was the subject of specific discussions at that time; on July 31, 1941, Bischoff drew up a “*first cost estimate regarding new construction of the laundry and admissions building with delousing and bath for detainees in concentration camp Auschwitz O/S*” and the corresponding site plan.¹⁵⁹ One may assume that, at that time in Auschwitz, only a detainee who worked at the planning office (*Baubüro*) of Central Construction Office could have any knowledge of *Begasungskammern*. In February 1943, the planning office employed 96 detainees in various sections of the Central Construction Office.¹⁶⁰ They had access to classified documents and produced such documents themselves. For example, drawing no. 2136 of crematorium III was prepared by the Polish detainee Leo Slawka (ID number 538), drawing no. 2197 of crematorium II by the Czech Jewish detainee Ernst Kohn (ID Number 71134), and the two maps of Birkenau of March 1943 mentioned above were done by the Polish detainee

¹⁵⁶ Franz Hößler was sentenced to death by the British in the Belsen trial and the sentence was carried out on December 13, 1945. The Höß trial began on March 11, 1947.

¹⁵⁷ The subtitle of the article is “*Sach-Entlausung in Blausäure-Kammern*” (Disinfection of objects in chambers of hydrogen cyanide).

¹⁵⁸ RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 87 (Letter of transmittal from the HELI Co. of July 1, 1941) and 87-90 (article “*Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure in Kreislauf-Begasungskammern*”). Both documents show the “in”-stamp (*Eingang*) of the SS New Construction Office and Jährling’s signature with date of July 21, 1942.

¹⁵⁹ “*Kostenüberschlag zum Neubau des Wäscherei- und Aufnahmegebäudes mit Entlausungsanlage und Häftlingsbad im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz O/S*,” RGVA, 502-1-319, pp. 129f.

¹⁶⁰ “*Kommando: Baubüro der Zentralbauleitung*,” RGVA, 502-1-256, pp. 171-173.

Alfred Brzybylski (ID number 471). The various resistance groups at Auschwitz had members or sympathizers in the planning office, as well. In August 1944, three female detainees who worked in that office, Vera Foltynova, Valeria Valova, and Krystyna Horczak, secretly prepared two photocopies of Birkenau crematorium drawings and managed to smuggle them out of the camp.¹⁶¹

The report mentioned above contains other significant details that confirm the soundness of this interpretation.

First of all, there is the mention of “*modern apparatuses for feeding the gas and for ventilation.*” None of the hydrogen cyanide gas chambers in the Auschwitz camp at that time had “*apparatuses for feeding the gas and for ventilation.*” As they were only temporary gas chambers, that is to say not in conformity with the standard DEGESCH circulation type, they were indeed equipped with exhaust ventilation, but not with Zyklon B input apparatuses; the product was simply thrown into the disinfestation room. Only the DEGESCH circulation *Begasungskammer* was equipped with devices that enabled a can of Zyklon B to be put in the gas chamber, opened, and the hydrogen cyanide safely vaporized from the outside: the contents of the Zyklon B can fell automatically onto a plate, where it was struck by a current of warm air that vaporized it, thus creating a form of gas input.¹⁶² According to the official historiography, the alleged homicidal gas chambers of the ‘Bunkers’ had neither gas input apparatuses nor ventilation equipment.

Second, there is the fact that the alleged homicidal *Begasungskammern* were equipped with double doors, just like the disinfestation *Begasungskammern*,¹⁶³ and had no windows. Windows are perfectly useless in disinfestation gas chambers, but some openings are absolutely necessary for the homicidal gas chambers as attested to by witnesses.¹⁶⁴

The fusion of gas chambers and showers, which we have noted in the letter of August 29, 1942, and which became a permanent feature of later propaganda, stemmed from the fact that the planned admission building included, under one roof, 19 *Begasungskammern* and an installation of showers for the detainees. At that time, however, two major disinfestation installations were constructed at Birkenau, labeled BW 5a and 5b, which consisted of a gas chamber using hydrogen cyanide and a shower and washing section. The individual parts were called “*gas chamber*” and “*wash and shower room,*” respectively. The latter installation, equipped with 50 showers, stood in front of the gas chamber at a distance of only 5.52 meters and was separated from the lat-

¹⁶¹ Henryk Świeboczi, “*Die lagernahe Widerstandsbewegung und ihre Hilfsaktionen für die Häftlinge des KL Auschwitz,*” *Hefte von Auschwitz*, no. 19, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz, 1995, p. 152.

¹⁶² “*Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure...*,” *op. cit.* (note 158), RGVA, 502-1-332, p. 69.

¹⁶³ To prevent the disinfested objects from being recontaminated they were introduced into the gas chamber from the unclean side (*unreine Seite*) and, thanks to the system of the double door, taken out on the opposite clean side (*reine Seite*).

¹⁶⁴ I refer to the alleged little windows for the introduction of Zyklon B which, in this literary phase, were unnecessary because the gas was claimed to have come from the shower-heads!

ter by an air lock and a vestibule.¹⁶⁵ It is thus highly probable that the idea of a shower installation in the alleged gas chamber suggested itself to the first fabricators of the propaganda story because of the disinfestation installations, which were then being built or planned.

The problem of the ventilation of the alleged gas chambers in the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ is so senseless that it deserves to be investigated in greater depth.

We have already seen that in order to carry out the alleged extermination order given by the Führer, the Main Office of Budget and Buildings and later the SS WVHA, hence Himmler himself, are said to have created the entire Birkenau camp from scratch, but that for the most important installations, those for which the whole camp had been set up, they were seemingly happy to modify two Polish farm houses. What is even more nonsensical, though, is the assertion that these installations – which were to accomplish an order of mass extermination coming from the government – were technically rudimentary and not at all in keeping with a country which was at the international forefront of gas chamber technology employing hydrogen cyanide. The circulation system allowed an effective disinfestation (but also the rapid killing of human beings) by hydrogen cyanide to be carried out safely even in large spaces. In an article dated 1938, for example, there is the photograph of a disinfestation chamber of 100 cubic meters, using hydrogen cyanide and the circulation system at normal pressure, and another one showing a 400-cubic meter chamber for the gassing of railroad carriages at Budapest,¹⁶⁶ also using the circulation system and hydrogen cyanide.

Thus, we are supposed to believe that in order to carry out the government order of the alleged mass extermination of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in the ‘gas chambers’ of the ‘Bunkers’ at Birkenau, the SS WVHA (which had absorbed the Main Office of Budget and Buildings), Himmler himself would *not* have made use of those miraculous technical circulation installations, would *not even* have installed a miserable exhaust fan! Yet the gas chambers in the disinfestation units of BW 5a and 5b, which had a floor area of about 105.7 square meters¹⁶⁷ and were thus practically the same size as ‘Bunker 2’ (104.3 m²),¹⁶⁸ were equipped with two exhaust fans each!

Jean-Claude Pressac, while citing the abovementioned “*Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure in Kreislauf-Begasungskammern*,” has completely avoided the problem outlined above. He writes:¹⁶⁹

“Not very far away from Bunker 1 stood another small farmhouse. It was whitewashed and had a floor area of some 105 square meters. To turn this building into a gas chamber was easy enough (after all, this had been done with Bunker 1 earlier on), and one could have squeezed some 500

¹⁶⁵ Drawing 801 of November 8, 1941, 1293 of May 9, 1942, and 1715 of September 25, 1942. Cf.: J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ...*, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 55-57.

¹⁶⁶ G. Peters, “*Begasungsanlagen. Von der Kiste zur Kreislauf-Kammer*,” in: *Zeitschrift für hygienische Zoologie und Schädlingsbekämpfung*, 1938, pp. 183f.

¹⁶⁷ The chambers measured 10.90 × 9.70 meters.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. chapter 9.2.

¹⁶⁹ J.-C. Pressac, *Die Krematorien...*, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp. 51f.

persons into it. But Höß wanted the ventilation to be improved. He consulted Bischoff who showed him an article by Dr. G. Peters, the director of Degesch Co. (a firm producing Zyklon B), which described a delousing unit employing Zyklon B consisting of 8 small cells of 10 m² each arranged in parallel.”

The article was the one already mentioned: “*Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure in Kreislauf-Begasungskammern*”. The anecdote of Höß’ consultation with Bischoff is simply a fanciful invention by Pressac who then came to an even more imaginative conclusion:¹⁷⁰

“Finally, the ‘white house’ was split into 4 small gas chambers of about 50 cubic meters arranged in parallel. They were not equipped with mechanical ventilation but were located in such a way as to catch the wind where it was most frequently blowing (north-south at Birkenau).”

So Höß and Bischoff had used the least significant element of the article in question: the arrangement of the chambers “in parallel.” Pressac, finally, did not even touch upon the most ludicrous problem in terms of design: the splitting of ‘Bunker 2’ into four sections. If we assume a total floor area of 105 m²¹⁷¹ as a basis for the capacity of the individual chambers, their respective floor areas were 49.6, 28.9, 16.5 and 9.3 m².¹⁷² Now we are told that ‘Bunker 2’ was put in service because ‘Bunker 1’ was no longer able to satisfy the needs of the alleged mass extermination – but then why on earth was ‘Bunker 2’ split into four ‘gas chambers’ of such odd dimensions? What would have been the advantage for efficient mass extermination of this foolish arrangement?

These two reports on the “*Degasungskammern*” contain, moreover, three major contradictions with respect to the final version of the propaganda story.

According to the official history, there was in fact no “*building transformed into a gas chamber*” in June 1941. Furthermore, the buildings that were allegedly turned into ‘gas chambers’ numbered two and not five. Also, neither of those two buildings was finished “in April 1942,” but one in March or May, the other in June.

Finally, the story of the graves “each 4 km long” is false and nonsensical. Such graves would have been more than twice as long as the length of the Birkenau camp (1,657.01 m).

Annex III of the November 1942 report cited above contains another tale entitled “*From the correspondence of an Auschwitz detainee*”:¹⁷³

“Every week, two transports on average arrive from Slovakia, from France, from the [Ruhr] Basin and from the Government [General]. The Jews from the Basin and from the Government are poisoned en masse; it is difficult for us to determine their number, but it is so enormous that it is impossible to remove the clothing after [the Jews] have been poisoned.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

¹⁷¹ F. Piper, *op. cit.* (note 141), note 29 on p. 178.

¹⁷² Cf. below, Chapter 9.2.

¹⁷³ K. Smoleń (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 142), p. 69.

Near the gas chambers, there are some 15,000 garments, these have to be removed every day by wagons.

There are two places for poisoning: in the camp crematorium (capacity 400 persons) and at Brzezinka where a few cottages of considerably greater capacity have been arranged for this purpose near the forest. The gassed are buried in large graves. A small train specifically built to facilitate those transports runs up to them. The Jewish civilians who have to load it are themselves poisoned after a certain time, others take their place. Among the garments, once [the Jews] have been eliminated, there is an enormous percentage of women's and children's clothes. On the latest transport from Slovakia (200 persons) there were some 80 children (the families were apparantly used for work), they were poisoned at Brzezinka together with their mothers."

The report is rather vague. It does not mention the four undressing barracks (where were those "15,000 garments"?) and does not even mention the number of 'gas chambers' ("a few cottages"). Besides, at that time, according to the official history, the corpses were not buried but incinerated.

4.2. An Anonymous Report from the Secret Resistance Movement at Auschwitz¹⁷⁴

This report on the living conditions in the camp, dating from December 1942 or January 1943,¹⁷⁵ was entered into evidence by the prosecution at the trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison (the Cracow trial, November 25 to December 16, 1947). The section "*Executions*"¹⁷⁶ described three assassination methods. The first is by means of an air-hammer.¹⁷⁷ The second method is by lethal injections in the detainee hospital of the camp, the third by gassing in the 'Bunkers.' The latter two methods are described as follows:¹⁷⁸

"The second killing center is the camp hospital. There were killed all those who had become so weak by diseases that, according to the opinion of the camp commander, they were no longer fit for work. From time to time, a German doctor would inspect the patients and note their [ID] number. The next morning, very early, [the detainees] were called out and killed by means of injections. If their number was too high, they would be loaded on a truck and taken to the Birkenau gas chamber. There are two of those, and they can accept 1,000 persons at a time. They are two residential houses, from which the inner walls and the windows have been removed. Only wide, airtight doors and small openings for ventilation have

¹⁷⁴ AGK, NTN, 155, pp. 297-301.

¹⁷⁵ The report gives the strength of the men's and the women's camp as of December 1, 1942. This is the latest date mentioned there.

¹⁷⁶ "Egzekucje"

¹⁷⁷ "przy pomocy młota powietrznego 'Lufthammer'"

¹⁷⁸ AGK, NTN, 155, pp. 299f.

been left. On the inside, the chambers are arranged to look like a bath, from which they differ only by the fact that instead of water, toxic gas comes out of the showers. Inside, there is the track of a narrow-gauge railroad to take away the corpses. Between the two chambers, there is a barrack which has been spilt into two sections, one for women and children and one for men. The drawing^[179] explains the rest. The transport [of detainees] arrives on a dead-end track, specifically laid for this purpose. It is received by the elite, persons devoid of any feeling. Their number is small, that is why there are 30 of them. When the train arrives, the escort, which always consists of several persons, helps them. All luggage is placed next to the track. Then there is the separation and loading onto trucks. When strong persons for work are needed, 100 or 200 out of the 1000 are selected and taken on foot to the camps of Auschwitz or Birkenau. The rest are taken by truck to Brzezinka. In the barrack they must undress immediately, because they must go to the bath. For that purpose they are handed soap and a towel. After the bath they are to receive underwear and clothing. When the chamber is full, the doors are closed and the gas comes out from openings shaped like a shower[head]. What then happens inside is difficult to say. After half an hour, ventilators are switched on, and after 45 minutes, the corpses are already loaded on the carts and taken away. Death occurs probably through asphyxiation, because all are bleeding from the mouth. Initially, the corpses were interred and created enormous tombs that contained about 200,000 persons. Presently, they are being burned in trenches specifically dug for this purpose. In these trenches, a layer of wood is put down, then a layer of human bodies, then a layer of paper, more wood and another layer of corpses. When we come back from work, we see Brzezinky on fire.”

This report is based on a reworking of the previous literary motifs with the addition of a dash of originality. The attached drawing shows the author's effort to make history out of the propaganda story. The result is most fanciful claims: that the 'gas chambers' were in two buildings next to each other; that in both buildings the inner walls had been removed so that in each there was a single 'gas chamber;' that the 'gas chambers' were equipped with showers that spurted the lethal gas; that there was ventilation; that there was one undressing barrack split up into two sections; that the camp railway went into the 'gas chambers.' All these details are literary motives in contradiction to the final version of the story.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. document 10.

4.3. The Reports from 1943

In a report dated April 1943 and written by a member of the secret resistance movement at Auschwitz under the pseudonym “Tadeusz,” one can read:¹⁸⁰

“In the crematorium, the walls are stained with blood – because the people who were overcome by the gas regain consciousness in the oven and scratch the cement with their fingers in defense before they die. The same thing happens also with the open-air incinerations, where the poisoned victims remain conscious for some time in the cremation trenches. About these burning trenches there are legends – they are known as the ‘Eternal Fire’ because they burn day and night.”

With this report, the propaganda acquires another literary motif standard for the ‘horror’ genre: the incineration of semi-live, hence semi-conscious people, which will later become, in an effort to make things even more horrific, the incineration of living human beings and finally the burning of living children.

The use of the word legend regarding the “Eternal Fire” of the burning trenches is obviously a Freudian slip.

Annex I of *Informacja Bieżąca* no. 37 (110) of September 22, 1943, contains a report dated June 10, 1943, which includes the following passage:¹⁸¹

“Up to the month of September 1942, 468,000 non-registered Jews were gassed at Oświęcim. Between September [1942] and June 1943 arrived some 60,000 Jews from Greece (Saloniki, Athens), 60,000 from Slovakia and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, some 50,000 from Holland, France and Belgium, 6000 from Chrzanów, and 5000 from Kęt, Żywiec, Sucha, Slemien and their environs. Of these persons, 2% are alive today, the other 98% were sent into the gas, mostly young and very healthy people, and were burnt semi-live. Each transport arriving at Oświęcim is unloaded, the men are separated from the women, then 98% (mostly women and children) are loaded haphazardly onto trucks and taken to the gas chambers at Brzezinka; after horrible tortures (suffocation), which last 10 to 15 minutes, the corpses are thrown out through an opening and burned on a pyre. It should be stressed that before going into the gas chamber the condemned must take a bath.

Because of a lack of toxic gas, people are also burned half-alive. At the present time, there are three large crematoria at Birkenau, for 10,000 bodies per day, which burn corpses all the time and are called ‘Eternal Fire’ by the local population.”

The figure of 468,000 Jews burned up to September 1942 is decidedly mad: some 92,800 Jews had been deported to Auschwitz up to September 30, 1942, of whom some 43,200 were registered, that is: not gassed even accord-

¹⁸⁰ K. Smoleń (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 142), pp. 100f.

¹⁸¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 124f.

ing to official historiography.¹⁸² The report mentions only a single 'gas chamber' at Birkenau. The bath, which in former reports was only a means of fooling the victims and of killing them (the gas came out of the showers), has now become reality: "*It should be stressed that before going into the gas chamber the condemned must take a bath.*" As the victims are claimed to have soiled themselves with feces and urine before dying, the function of this bath is not particularly clear.

The "*Eternal Fire*," formerly constituted by the "*burning trenches*," is now applied to the three Birkenau crematoria,¹⁸³ to which an absurd incineration capacity is attributed.¹⁸⁴

The annex referred to above contains another report, dated August 12, 1943, which states:¹⁸⁵

"As the crematoria are not able to cope with the number of people, the corpses were normally cremated in an open trench in a field near Birkenau, and for three days one could see nothing but towering flames where the corpses were being burned. More transports arriving from France were executed in this way. Brzezinka celebrated its record with the gassing of 30,000 persons in a single day."

Here we must note that the trenches of the preceding reports have become a single trench. The assertion that 30,000 persons were gassed within a day demonstrates how far this type of propaganda, predicated on its horrific impact, has departed from credibility. Nowhere near as many persons ever arrived at Auschwitz on a single day, not even during the deportation of the Hungarian Jews (May to July 1944).

Annex I of the *Informacja Bieżąca* no. 32 (105) of August 18, 1943, contains a "*Letter from an Auschwitz detainee*"¹⁸⁶ stating:¹⁸⁷

"Entire transports are sent directly into the gas, without any registration. Their number exceeds 500,000 persons, mainly Jews. Recently, transports of Poles from the district of Lublin have gone directly to the gas (men and women). Children were thrown directly into the fire. Outside of Birkenau, there is the so-called 'Eternal Fire' – a pyre of corpses in the open air – the crematorium cannot cope.

Lately, gassing tests in the open air are being carried out for – military ends."

The 500,000 'gassed' belong to the shock propaganda already mentioned. The "*Eternal Fire*," initially consisting of some "*burning trenches*,"¹⁸⁸ then of

¹⁸² Data taken from D. Czech's *Kalendarium*, *op. cit.* (note 13).

¹⁸³ The fourth crematorium, no. III, was handed over to the camp administration on June 24, 1943, RGVA, 502-2-54, p. 84, "*Übergabeverhandlung.*"

¹⁸⁴ Cf. in this respect my article "*The Crematoria Ovens of Auschwitz and Birkenau*," in: G. Rudolf (ed.), *Dissecting the Holocaust. The Growing Critique of "Truth" and "Memory,"* 2nd ed., Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2003, pp. 373-412.

¹⁸⁵ K. Smoleń (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 142), p. 129.

¹⁸⁶ "*List więźnia Oświęcimia*"

¹⁸⁷ K. Smoleń (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 142), p. 111.

¹⁸⁸ "*doly spaleniowe*"

the crematoria, now becomes a pyre.¹⁸⁹ The literary motif of semi-conscious persons burned alive moves on: “*Children were thrown directly into the fire.*” The open-air gassing experiments for military ends are likewise a product of the imagination.

In the “*Review of Major Events in the Nation. Weekly report of August 27, 1943,*” there is the following item:¹⁹⁰

“In the crematorium, 5000 corpses are burned every day, but as there are more, the remaining [Jews] are burned alive in the ‘Eternal Fire’ in the open air at Birkenau – the children are thrown into the fire alive.”

Here, the three crematoria of the report of June 10 have become a single one, but its capacity has grown enormously: 5,000 corpses per day! The horror story of people burned alive reaches its literary climax: the victims are no longer killed in the ‘gas chambers’ but directly on the pyre.

4.4. The Report of the “*Polish Major*” (Jerzy Tabeau)

Jerzy Tabeau, of Polish citizenship, was born at Zabłotów on December 18, 1918, and was interned at Auschwitz on March 26, 1942, under the name of Jerzy Wesołoski, receiving the ID number 27273. On December 19, 1943, he escaped from the camp. Between December 1943 and early 1944 he wrote a report about his ‘experience’ at Auschwitz, which was published in August by A. Silberschein in mimeographed form¹⁹¹ and in November 1944 by the War Refugee Board.¹⁹² The author of the report was claimed to be a “*Polish major*” who was identified as Jerzy only several years after the end of the war. The part I will quote is taken from the handwritten report attributed to Tabeau, of which only three pages have survived, and from the translation by A. Silberschein:¹⁹³

“The gas chambers.

For the realization of these executions special gas chambers were installed in the wood at B[irkenau]. They were halls that had no openings in the walls except for valves,^[194] which could be opened or tightly closed as needed. They were built in the nature of a bathing establishment in order to divert the attention of the persons taken there. The execution was done in the following way: The prisoners who were destined for execution were checked once more and separated into those fit for work and those unfit, and then loaded onto trucks. Such a convoy consisted of 8-10 tightly

¹⁸⁹ “stos”

¹⁹⁰ “Przegląd najważniejszych wydarzeń w kraju. Meldunek tygodniowy z dn. 27. VIII 43 r,” K. Smoleń (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 142), p. 120.

¹⁹¹ A. Silberschein, *Die Judenaustrittung in Polen*, IX, Dritte Serie, Geneva, 1944.

¹⁹² Executive Office of the President, *German Extermination Camps – Auschwitz and Birkenau*, War Refugee Board, Washington, D.C., November 1944.

¹⁹³ APMO, D-RO/88, t.Va, pp.322b-323a. *Das Lager Oswiecim (Auschwitz)*. A. Silberschein, *op. cit.* (note 191), pp. 67-68.

¹⁹⁴ The English text has “ventilators”, p. 11.

packed cars. The condemned went along without a guard, because everything happened inside the camp. Only an ambulance followed the convoy because the camp doctor, by reason of his function, had to be present at each execution. After arriving in the area of the chamber, which is surrounded by barbed wire, the condemned had to undress, men, women and children together. Each one was given a towel and soap. Then everyone was herded into the chamber with many blows and ill-treatments. They herded in as many as the chamber would allow, then the door was tightly closed, and specially selected SS men threw [into the chambers] bombs filled with prussian acid¹⁹⁵ through the valves¹⁹⁶ in the walls. Ten minutes later, the doors were opened and a special unit¹⁹⁷ (always consisting of Jews) pushed the corpses away and made room for the next convoy.

At that time, the crematoria were only being built, so that the small crematorium, located, by the way, at Auschwitz, could not be considered at all for the disposal of the corpses. Because of that, enormous trenches were dug, and the corpses were buried there, one on top of the other. This state of affairs lasted until about the autumn of 1942. As the gassing of the Jews, at that time, proceeded with great intensity, enormous corpse-fields resulted, with masses of Jews [lying around] just barely covered by a thin layer of earth. As the corpses putrefied, vapors developed, and there was a horrible stench of corpses. Because of this, in the autumn of 1942 all trenches had to be excavated, the decomposing remains taken out and burned in the crematoria (four of those had already been finished at that time) or else piled into enormous heaps, and those [heaps] soaked with gasoline and incinerated that way. The great masses of ash which resulted from this were moved away and strewn on the fields as fertilizer. Once the crematoria had been completed, the corpses were burned there, but even then, as the crematoria could not cope, one had to resort to the old method and burn piles of corpses.”

This description is clearly inspired by the disinfection buildings at BW 5a and 5b. As I have already mentioned, these installations had a hall with 50 showers (Wasch- und Brauseraum) and a gas chamber for hydrogen cyanide of about 105.7 m² floor area.

Those delousing chambers were equipped with two ventilators, which were set into two round openings in the wall opposite the one with the two entrance doors. On the outside of the two openings, two short sheet-metal tubes were set¹⁹⁸ which could be closed by means of a round lid with a hinge that was welded to the upper part of the tube, as can still be seen today in the outer walls of the gas chambers located on the first floor of Block 3 of the main

¹⁹⁵ “Mit Preussensäure gefüllte Bomben.” In the English text: “hydrocyanic bombs,” pp. 11f. Prussic acid = hydrogen cyanide.

¹⁹⁶ In the English text “through the ventilation openings,” p. 12.

¹⁹⁷ “Ein spezielles Kommando.” In the English text: “a special squad,” p. 12.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. photographs 1 and 2.

camp.¹⁹⁹ During the gassing operation, the lid stayed closed under the force of gravity; before the ventilators were switched on, the lid was raised by means of a wire attached to a little wheel located somewhat above the lid. These devices changed into “*valves*” in the propaganda stories of the secret resistance movement. The use of the Polish word “*wentyl*” (from German: Ventil), which means valve, can, in fact, be explained only in this way. Buildings BW 5a and 5b thus corresponded perfectly well to all the propaganda requirements for homicidal gas chambers of the ‘Bunkers’: they had a “*bathing installation*” and “*special gas chambers*” for disinfection, which were equipped with “*valves*” that could be opened and closed as needed and otherwise “*had no openings in the walls.*” Furthermore, they were “*inside the camp,*” but this was not true for the so-called ‘Bunkers’ (another Freudian slip!).

The “*bombs filled with prussian acid*” was a rather infelicitous literary device, quickly abandoned in subsequent tales.²⁰⁰

Two other literary finds treated in the report, which certainly reflected the propagandistic climate of the era, fared better. The first is the one about the use of human ash as fertilizer. This anecdote, similar to the tale about ‘human soap,’ had a similarly wide distribution among the former detainees of German concentration camps in the years after the war, giving rise to variants that were sometimes so grotesque as to border on the ridiculous, such as the one about Dachau camp told by the ex-detainee Isaak Egon Ochshorn:

“*The Jews were thrown alive into gigantic concrete mixers and ground in a pulp. This material was used for road paving and the roads were therefore usually referred to as ‘Jewish roads.’*”

The other find concerns the name of the auxiliaries for the alleged gasings, “*special unit,*”²⁰¹ which was to become a mainstay of the official historiography in its German translation of “*Sonderkommando.*”

In Annex III of the report of November 1942 mentioned above, this body of men was simply called “*the civilian Jews.*”²⁰² In the anonymous report of December 1942 or January 1943 they were called “*elite.*”²⁰³ With Jerzy Tabeau we have not yet arrived at the German term “*Sonderkommando,*” but the (Polish) designation “*specjalne komando*” anticipates it. As I have shown elsewhere, various “*special units*” did indeed exist at Auschwitz, but this designation never applied to the personnel of the crematoria.²⁰⁴

Jerzy Tabeau claims that the four crematoria at Birkenau had already been completed in the fall of 1942;²⁰⁵ this shows the reliability of his sources.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. photograph 3.

²⁰⁰ Zyklon B was furnished in cans (German: *Dosen*), in Polish *puszki*.

²⁰¹ “*specjalne komando*”

²⁰² “*zydzi ciwile*”

²⁰³ “*elita*”

²⁰⁴ C. Mattogno, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 101-103.

²⁰⁵ Crematorium IV, which was completed first, was handed over to the camp administration on March 22, 1943.

4.5. The Report of Alfred Wetzler

Alfred Wetzler, born at Trnava on May 10, 1918, was deported to Auschwitz on April 13, 1942, and received ID number 29162. On April 7, 1944, he escaped from the camp together with Rudolf Vrba, born at Topolcany on September 11, 1924, who had been interned under the name of Walter Rosenberg since June 30, 1942 (ID number 44070). After their escape, the two detainees wrote a long report, which began to be circulated in May 1944.²⁰⁶ It was first published by A. Silberschein, and later by the War Refugee Board together with the report by the “*Polish major*.” The report appeared anonymously: its authors were identified as “*two Slovakian Jews*.”

In the section of the report written by Alfred Wetzler we read the following about the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’:²⁰⁷

“At the same time the so-called ‘selections’ started. Twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, the garrison surgeon (camp surgeon) set the number of detainees that were to be killed by gassing and then cremated. The selectees were loaded onto trucks and taken into the birch forest.^[208] Those who arrived there alive were gassed in a large barrack that had been set up for this purpose near the cremation pit, and then thrown into the pit and burned.”

This pit, as Wetzler states on the preceding page, was “*several meters deep and 15 meters long*.”

The following section of the report, drawn up jointly by Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, deals also with the alleged extermination of Jews at Birkenau:²⁰⁹

“38,000 – 38,400.^[210] 400 naturalized French Jews. These Jews arrived with their families. The whole transport consisted of about 1600 souls. Of these, some 400 men and 200 girls were admitted to the camp by the procedure described while the other 1000 persons (women, old people, children, and also men) were taken directly from the railway siding to the birch forest, without any evidence or treatment, and gassed and cremated there. From this moment on, all Jewish transports were treated in the same way. About 10% of the male deportees and 5% of the women were admitted to the camp while the others were gassed on the spot. Even before, Jews from Poland had suffered the same fate. For months on end, trucks kept on taking thousands of Jews from the various ghetti [sic] directly to the pit in the birch forest.”

²⁰⁶ *Tatsachenbericht ueber Auschwitz und Birkenau*. Geneva, May 17, 1944. RL, WRB 61. Chronologically speaking, this is the first known version of the Wetzler report.

²⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

²⁰⁸ The German original has “*in den Birkenwald*,” the name of the camp, Birkenau (birch meadow), is the German equivalent of the Polish Brzezinka, related to the Polish word brzoza = birch.

²⁰⁹ *Tatsachenbericht ueber Auschwitz und Birkenau*, *op. cit.* (note 206), pp.11f.

²¹⁰ The ID numbers assigned to the detainees.

The report then lists enormous exterminations of Jews in the “birch forest,” stating laconically “*all others gassed in the birch forest*” or “*some 3000 persons were gassed in the birch forest*” or “*the remainder gassed in the birch forest.*”²¹¹

*“At the end of February 1943 the new and modern crematorium and the gassing installation were opened at Birkenau. The gassing and the cremation of the corpses in the Birkenau [sic] were abandoned and those procedures were, from now on, carried out in the 4 new crematoria built for this purpose. The large pit was filled in, the land leveled, the ash had always been used as fertilizer in the camp agricultural unit at Hermensee [Harmense], so that today there is hardly a trace to be found of the horrifying mass murder that took place here.”*²¹²

The two authors give to understand that the source of this information was the “*special unit*” of the “*birch forest*,” with which they had been in contact until December 1942, when it was “*eliminated.*”

*“On December 17, 200 Jewish boys from Slovakia who had worked, as a so-called special unit, at the gassing and the cremation of the corpses, were executed at Birkenau. [...] The unit was replaced by 200 Polish Jews who had just arrived with a transport from Makow. [...] This change of the special unit cut us off from our direct contact with this ‘worksite,’ with unfortunate consequences for our food supply.”*²¹³

The information contained in these two reports is in total contradiction with the final version of the story. In lieu of the two farm houses allegedly transformed into homicidal gas chambers (‘Bunkers’ 1 and 2) we have “*a large barrack that had been set up for this purpose,*” and instead of the four “*cremation pits*” only one is mentioned. Vrba and Wetzler, too, make a little mistake when they write that the pit was filled in and the land leveled “*so that today there is hardly a trace to be found of the horrifying mass murder that took place here.*” In other words, even at that time there was no proof of this “*horrifying mass murder.*”

The theme of the human ashes used as fertilizer takes shape: they are being used in “*the camp agricultural unit at Hermensee,*” and the auxiliaries for the alleged homicidal gassings become the “*special unit.*”

4.6. Anonymous Reports from 1944

The “*Periodic report of May 5 to 25, 1944,*”²¹⁴ written on May 26, 1944, by an anonymous member of the secret resistance movement at Auschwitz, contains a section entitled “*The Death Factory,*”²¹⁵ in which we read:²¹⁶

²¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

²¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 15f.

²¹³ *Ibidem*, p.13.

²¹⁴ “Sprawozdanie okresowe od 5 V 1944 – 25 V 1944”

²¹⁵ “Fabryka śmierci”

“Up to the spring of 1943, two small farm cottages at Brzezinka/Birkenau were used as gas chambers. All the windows had been walled up, and there are only a few hermetically closed openings and fake shower heads on the ceiling. It has to look like a bath! The truck convoys arrive, escorted by armed SS men who straight away push in a naked crowd holding their towels, unaware and unsuspecting, and close the door hermetically. Through the openings they pour in a pulverized gas, from cans which bear the name ‘Cyklon.’ The powder, oxidizing itself, immediately poisons the persons shut in. In order to consume less ‘Cyklon’ – a gas that smells like mustard – they first throw in other cans which absorb the oxygen of the air. The ventilator [is switched on] and special ‘Sonderkommando[s]’ throw the corpses into two enormous pits, arranging them in layers and covering them with calcium chloride. Because the pits fill up quickly, as early as summer 1942 the corpses were laid on pyres of branches and wood and burned with petroleum or gasoline. Children would be thrown directly on the pyres amid really terrible curses. A black and dense smoke infests the surroundings.”

This report takes up the previous literary motives with one important addition: it names the ‘weapon’ – “*Cyklon*.” In this respect the author makes use of somewhat questionable items of information, however: a “*pulverized gas*”²¹⁷ which “*oxidizes itself*”²¹⁸ and “*smells like mustard*.”²¹⁹ The anecdote of “*cans which absorb the oxygen*” is pure fantasy. The “*ventilator*,” as I have explained above, was located in the disinfection gas chambers of BW 5a and 5b, but not in the alleged homicidal gas chambers of the ‘Bunkers.’

The term “*special unit*” in the sense explained above had been created only a short time before, and this explains the insecurity of the author of the report when it comes to its use: “*specjalne ‘Sonderkommando’*” is, in fact, equivalent to “*special ‘special units’*,” particularly in the plural. With this report, the sinister story of the children burned alive comes to the fore again, this time they are burned on pyres²²⁰ and not in cremation pits.²²¹

Besides the “*Cyklon*,” the report introduces another novelty, which later becomes an essential element of the official versions: the openings for the introduction of the Zyklon B. Having jettisoned the utterly nonsensical story of the introduction of the gas through shower heads, the Auschwitz propagandist now had to invent appropriate openings.

²¹⁶ APMO, D-RO/85, vol. II, p. 437.

²¹⁷ Zyklon B was hydrogen cyanide adsorbed on gypsum.

²¹⁸ Controlling the temperature suffices to release the hydrogen cyanide vapors. Hydrocyanic acid has a boiling point of 25.7 °C (78.26°F).

²¹⁹ Hydrocyanic acid has hardly any smell, only remotely resembling bitter almonds. The author of the report confuses it with Yprit, which smells like mustard and was therefore called mustard gas (German: *Senfgas*) by the British.

²²⁰ “*na stosach*”

²²¹ “*dolę spaleniowe*”

“*Special Annex to the periodic report of May 5 to 25, 1944*” tells us the following about the topic which interests us:²²²

“Before entering into the gas chamber, everybody leaves the money and valuables they have with them at a deposit.

They strip naked, checking all their garments, which will then be examined again for valuables that might be concealed in them. Now they go into the ‘bath,’ i.e., the gas chamber, in groups of 1,000 persons. Nowadays, they no longer get towels or soap – there is no time for that.

The two gas chambers work without pause and still do not manage to keep up. Between two gassings, there is time only for ventilation. Elsewhere – invisible to those coming in, of course – enormous piles of corpses are going up. There is no time to burn them.”

The report then describes the treatment of the corpses (extraction of gold teeth, cutting the women’s hair, search of the bodies) and concludes:

“The corpses will be burned only after having been treated and controlled in this way.”

The propaganda story takes on new literary terms. The number of gassing houses varies, eventually stabilizing at two.

The report of Czesław Mordowicz and Arnošt Rosin,²²³ written after their escape from Auschwitz on May 27, 1944,²²⁴ contains a single reference to the “*birch forest*” with respect to the period after May 15, 1944:²²⁵

“Because the crematoria are insufficient, trenches are dug again in the birch forest – as during the time before the crematoria were built^[226] – 4 of them, [each] 30 m long and 15 m wide, in which corpses are burned day and night.”

The source for this were men of the so-called ‘special unit,’ with whom the two authors claimed to have been in touch:²²⁷

“According to a Jew of the special unit, [...] was told by the people of the special unit.”

²²² APMO, D-RO/85, vol. II, pp. 441f.

²²³ The report was published in November 1944 by the War Refugee Board, together with the reports by J. Tabeau, A. Wetzler, and R. Vrba. These reports were sometimes collectively called the “*Auschwitz Protocols*.” See E. Aynat, *Los “Protocolos de Auschwitz”*: ¿Una fuente histórica?, García Hispán, Alicante 1990.

²²⁴ Czesław Mordowicz, born at Mława on August 2, 1911, was interned at Auschwitz on December 17, 1942, with the ID no. 84216. Arnošt Rosin, born at Snina on March 20, 1913, was interned on April 17, 1942, with the ID no. 29858.

²²⁵ Michael Dov Weissmandel, מן המצר (Min Hammetsar*), facsimile document outside of text, p. 3 of the document. Cf. Henryk Świeboccki (ed.), *London wurde informiert... Berichte von Auschwitz-Flüchtlingen*, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim, 1997, p. 303.

* Beginning of psalm 118:5 “*In my anxiety I called onto Jah[veh]*.” Emunah, New York 1960.

²²⁶ The text mistakenly says “*arbauť*” instead of “*erbauť*” or “*gebauť*.”

²²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 4 of the document.

4.7. Conclusions

For the members of the Auschwitz resistance, the idea of the 'Bunkers' was thus inspired by the disinfestation buildings BW 5a and 5b; they projected these installations – showers, gas chambers, ventilation, lids for the ventilation openings – onto the alleged gassing installations, obviously with the appropriate adaptations and distortions, starting with the very term "*Degasungskammer*." As for the number of the 'Bunkers' and the 'gas chambers' they contained, and, more generally, the number of the alleged victims, the Auschwitz propagandists had not yet come to a common decision – their statements on these contain contradictions. This was clearly due to the fact that the various resistance groups then active – that of the Polish socialist party, that of the Union of Military Organizations, the Kampfgruppe Auschwitz, the group directed by Colonel Aleksander Stawarz, Captain Włodzimierz Koliński's group, the one founded by Colonel Jan Karz, Roman Rybarski and Jan Mosdorf's group²²⁸ – spread their propaganda with minimum coordination, and each one wanted to surpass the others with their own horrifying stories.

Typical in this respect is the intensification of the propaganda theme of people being burned alive, which, starting with semi-conscious adults, over a number of intermediate stages ends up with children being thrown alive onto pyres. In the same way, the assignment of the designation "*Eternal Fire*" to cremation pits, to pyres, and to the crematoria shows the same lack of propaganda coordination, not to mention the odd and contradictory literary themes which were tossed around the camp at that phase of propaganda. All these topics, like literary seeds, entered the minds of the detainees to a greater or lesser extent and, after the liberation, blossomed in wider propaganda fields.

The central part played by the members of the resistance in the creation of propaganda about Auschwitz was candidly admitted by Bruno Baum, an ex-detainee who had founded the German resistance group made up of socialist, communist, and anti-fascist inmates. In 1949, he published a book on the activities of the secret Auschwitz resistance movement in which he states:²²⁹

"From my side, the propaganda material went to Cyrankiewicz who passed it on. From mid-1944 on we sent something at least twice a week. Now the Auschwitz tragedy went around the world.

I think it is no exaggeration to say that the major part of the Auschwitz propaganda, which spread through the world at that time, was written by us in the camp."

²²⁸ B. Jarosz, "*I movimenti di resistenza interni e limitrofi al campo*," in: F. Piper, T. Świebocka (eds.), *Auschwitz. Il campo nazista della morte*, Edizioni del Museo Statale di Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1997, pp. 193f.

²²⁹ B. Baum, *Widerstand in Auschwitz. Bericht der internationalen antifaschistischen Lagerleitung*. VVN-Verlag, Berlin-Potsdam 1949, p. 34.

5. The Propaganda Is Consolidated: Postwar Testimonies

5.1. Szlama Dragon's Testimony

In the preceding chapter, we saw that between 1942 and 1944 the black propaganda literature on the Birkenau 'Bunkers' produced, a hodge-podge of topics too strongly divergent and too contradictory to be accepted as history. The literary reworking of these themes into as coherent a story as possible was done in the first month after the liberation of Auschwitz. The artisan was Szlama Dragon, who became, whether because of his self-styled role as an eyewitness or because of the moment at which he testified, undoubtedly the most important witness to the Birkenau 'Bunkers.'

On February 26, 1945, Dragon was interrogated by the Soviet military investigating judge Captain Levin; he gave a deposition, of which I shall quote the essential parts on the 'Bunkers.' He declared that he had arrived at Birkenau on December 7, 1942, with a transport of 2,500 persons, of whom only 400 young and strong men were registered. The selection was done by the "fascist SS Mengele," by *Rapportführer* Plagge and by Moll. On December 8, Dragon was tattooed with the ID number 80359. Two days later, Plagge and Moll selected 200 men from the 400 that had been registered and divided them into two groups. On December 11, the two groups were taken to work. Dragon says:²³⁰

"As a member of one of the two groups, I was taken to the gas chamber called gas chamber no. 2, the other group was taken to gas chamber no.1. [...] The group brought in to work at gas chamber no. 2 was assigned various tasks by Moll. Twelve persons had to take away the corpses from the gas chamber – I was one of those; 30 persons had to load the corpses on the carts, 10 persons had to carry the corpses to the carts, 20 persons had to throw the persons into the pits, 28 persons had to bring the wood to the pits, 2 persons had to take gold teeth, rings, earrings etc. from the corpses – which happened in the presence of two SS men – and two persons had to cut the hair off the women in the presence of one SS man. Moll personally lit the pyres.

After having worked for one day in gas chamber no. 2, I became sick and was therefore assigned to cleaning work and other jobs in barrack no. 2. In that barrack I worked until May 1943, then I was assigned to work

²³⁰ GARF, 7021-108-12, pp. 182-185.

salvaging bricks from semi-underground stores and from storage buildings in masonry that the Germans had blown up. I worked there until February 1944 and at the same time for about two months in gas chamber no. 2 and a few days in gas chamber no. 1.

The gas chambers 1 and 2 were located about 3 km apart from each other, in the area of the village center of Brzezinky which the Germans had burned.^[231] The gas chambers were two modified houses whose windows had been hermetically sealed. In the gas chamber called gas chamber no. 1 there were two rooms, in gas chamber no. 2 there were four.

At some 500 meters from gas chamber no. 1, there were two standard wooden barracks, another two barracks stood some 150 meters from gas chamber no. 2. In these barracks, men, women and children had to undress, they were then herded naked into the gas chambers, all of them together, with the help of dogs. In each of the rooms of gas chamber no. 1 there were two doors; the naked persons entered through one and the corpses were taken out through the other. On the outside of the entrance door was written 'To the disinfection' and on the inside of the exit door 'To the bath.' Next to the entrance door there was an opening of 40 by 40 centimeters through which the Zyklon containing the hydrogen cyanide was poured in from a can. At that time, the SS personnel wore gas masks. One can contained 1 kg [of hydrogen cyanide]. The empty cans were taken away by the SS.

About 1,500 to 1,700 persons were squeezed into the two rooms of the gas chamber. The gassing operation lasted about 15 to 20 minutes. Gas chamber no. 1 had a floor area of 80 square meters. The Zyklon was poured into the chamber by various SS men, one of whom was called Scheimetz. The removal of the corpses from the chamber, as I have already explained, was carried out by 12 persons who took out 6 corpses every 15 minutes. It was difficult to stay in the chamber for more than 15–20 minutes, because the odor of the Zyklon, in spite of the open doors, did not go away. The clearing of the chamber took 2 to 3 hours. [Then] the gold teeth were removed from the corpses and rings, earrings, and [gold] pins were taken away, and the women's hair was cut off. The pockets of the garments were searched for valuables, especially gold. An SS man was present when the women's hair was cut. Five hundred meters away from gas chamber no. 1 there were four trenches where the persons [sic] were burned, each one 30–35 meters long, 7–8 meters wide and 2 meters deep. The corpses were transported to the trench by means of five carts of a narrow-gauge railway. Each cart was loaded with 25–30 corpses. It took about 20 minutes for a cart to go to the trench and back. Near the trenches 110 persons worked day and night in shifts. In 24 hours 7,000–8,000 persons were burned in the trenches.

²³¹ Actually, a number of houses had been demolished, others modified and handed over as lodgings to camp officers and non-coms.

Gas chamber no. 2 had a floor area of about 100 square meters, each room – there were four – had two doors. Gas chamber no. 2 could take in 2000 persons. Gassing took 15 to 20 minutes. The Zyklon was introduced into each room of gas chamber no. 2 in the same way as for gas chamber no. 1. The removal of the corpses did not take more than two hours, because all the doors could be used and, moreover, the narrow-gauge railway passed along both sides of gas chamber no. 2, near the doors. With this railway, the corpses were taken to the trenches on 7 to 8 carts. At 150 meters from chamber no. 2, there were six trenches of the same dimensions as those near chamber no. 1. About 110–120 persons emptied the chamber and burned the corpses. Over 24 hours, all the trenches of chamber 2 could burn no fewer than 10,000 persons. On average, in the ten trenches, no [fewer than] 17,000 to 18,000 persons were burned in 24 hours, but on certain occasions the number of persons burned reached 27,000 to 28,000; they had come from various countries and had different nationalities, primarily Jewish [nationality]. To obtain a good combustion in the pyres, when lighting, a liquid – low-grade gasoline – was poured on, but also human fat. The human fat came from the trenches, in which the persons were burning, by means of a small channel that went to another small trench, into which the fat would flow; it was then recovered by the SS. In February 1944 I was sent to work at crematorium no. 4.”

The activity of “gas chamber no. 2” in 1944 is described by the witness in a few lines:²³²

“In each crematorium there were gas chambers and simultaneously gas chamber no. 2 was in operation, from which the corpses went to the trenches to be burned. Gas chamber no. 2 worked mainly when there were 6 to 7 transports of persons, then the corpses were burnt on pyres, in addition to the crematoria”

According to the witness, this happened mainly between May and August 1944 during the deportation of the Hungarian Jews.²³³

On May 10 and 11, 1945, Dragon was again interrogated, this time by the Polish judge Jan Sehn, as part of the preparation for the trial of Rudolf Höß. The relevant parts of this deposition, as far as the ‘Bunkers’ are concerned, are as follows:²³⁴

“We were led into a forest where there was a brick cottage with a straw-thatched roof. The windows were walled up. The door leading into the house had a metal plate with the inscription ‘Hochspannung – Lebensgefahr’ [high-voltage – danger of death]. At about 30 to 40 meters from this cottage stood two wooden barracks. On the other side of the house there were four trenches, 30 m long, 7 m wide, and 3 m deep. [...] Once we had taken out all the corpses from this house, we had to clean it up meticu-

²³² *Ibidem*, p. 186.

²³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 187f.

²³⁴ Höß trial, vol. 11, pp. 103, 104, 106, 107.

lously, wash the floor with water, sprinkle the floor with sawdust, and whitewash the walls.

The inside of the house was split into four rooms by means of partitions. One of them could take in 1,200 naked persons, the second 700, the third 400, and the fourth 200 to 250. The first one, which was the largest, had two little windows in the wall. The other three had only one. These little windows were closed with wooden shutters. Each room was accessible by means of a separate entrance. On the entrance door there was the plate of which I have already spoken, with the inscription 'Hochspannung – Lebensgefahr.' This inscription was visible only when the entrance door was closed. When the door stood open, it could not be seen, instead, there was another sign 'Zum Baden' [to the bath]. The victims destined for the gassing saw another sign on the exit door of the chamber which said 'Zur Desinfektion' [to the disinfection]. Of course, behind the door with this inscription there was no disinfection at all, because this was the exit door from the chamber, through which we pulled out the corpses into the yard. Each room had a separate exit door. The chamber that I have described has been faithfully drawn on the basis of my testimony by the engineer Jan Nosal from Oświęcim. This chamber was designated Bunker no. 2. In addition to it, at a distance of about 500 meters, there was another chamber, identified as Bunker no. 1. This, too, was a brick house, but it was divided into only two rooms, which could take in a total of fewer than 2,000 naked persons. These rooms had only one entrance door and one little window.^[235] Not far from Bunker no. 1 there was a barn and two barracks. The trenches were very far away, a narrow-gauge railway led to them. [...]

Bunker no. 1 was dismantled completely as early as 1943. After the construction of crematorium no. 2 at Brzezinka, the barracks near Bunker no. 2 were dismantled as well and the trenches filled in. The Bunker itself, however, remained until the end and, after a long period of inactivity, was put back into operation for the gassing of the Hungarian Jews. Then new barracks were built and new trenches were dug. [...]

The capacity of Bunkers no. 1 and 2 was about 4,000 persons. Bunker no. 2 could contain, at one time, over 2,000 persons, and Bunker no. 1 fewer than 2,000 persons.

In 1943, we were transferred from the women's camp to camp BIId, and were first housed in Block 13 and then in Block 11. In the fall of that year, I think, I was again employed at the 'Sonderkommando.' Between the work at the Bunkers [and the new job] I was assigned to the 'Abbruchkommando' [demolition detail]."

Attached to this deposition are a drawing of 'Bunker 1',²³⁶ a drawing of 'Bunker 2',²³⁷ and a location sketch of 'Bunker 2'.²³⁸ These three drawings do

²³⁵ This is at variance with the corresponding drawing by the engineer Nosal, which shows two small windows (O₁-O₂ and O₃-O₄) in each of the gas chambers. Cf. document 11.

²³⁶ Cf. document 11.

²³⁷ Cf. document 12.

not have the normal north-south orientation, but are laid out east-west because they take the Birkenau camp as a point of reference.²³⁹

5.2. Comparative and Critical Analysis of the Two Depositions of Szlama Dragon

Even a cursory reading of the sections quoted above makes it obvious that the Polish deposition of Szlama Dragon presents significant contradictions with respect to the Soviet one, dated less than three months earlier. In the following comparative analysis I shall examine the most important ones.

5.2.1. Terminology

The first thing to note is that Dragon, at the time of the Soviet deposition, did not yet know the terms ‘Bunker 1’ and ‘Bunker 2,’ allegedly used even by the SS. In this deposition he speaks always of “*gazokamera*” (газокамера) nos. 1 and 2 and states explicitly that this was the official designation: “*I was taken to the gas chamber called gas chamber no. 2.*” In the Polish deposition, the term for these alleged extermination installations becomes ‘Bunker:’ “*This chamber was designated Bunker no. 2. In addition to it, at a distance of about 500 meters, there was another chamber, indicated as Bunker no. 1.*” The term occurs here with the same frequency as the term “*gazokamera*” in the preceding deposition. However, in this deposition Dragon is still unaware of the other two designations, “*czzerwony domek*” (little red house) for ‘Bunker 1’ and “*biały domek*” (little white house) for ‘Bunker 2,’ which were invented a few years later during the Höß trial.

The fact that in February-March 1945 the abovementioned official terminology was still unknown is also clear from the deposition of Henryk Tauber, dated February 27 and 28, 1945, in which he refers to the ‘Bunkers’ merely as “*gas chambers*” (газовые камеры).²⁴⁰

The Polish-Soviet experts, in their report prepared between February 14 and March 18, 1945, also speak only of “*gas chambers*” (газовые камеры) nos. 1 and 2.²⁴¹

The term ‘Bunker’ appears for the first time in the April 16, 1945, deposition of Stanisław Jankowski,²⁴² which was concocted between March 9 and April 16, 1945. The reason is simple: in a legal procedure it was unacceptable that two buildings of the Auschwitz camp, in which, as was alleged, hundreds of thousands of Jews had been murdered, did not even have an official name!

²³⁸ Cf. document 13.

²³⁹ The Birkenau camp is normally shown with an east-west orientation, *i.e.* with the crematoria at the top (= west).

²⁴⁰ Cf. chapter 6.1.

²⁴¹ Cf. chapter 7.1.

²⁴² Cf. chapter 6.1.

Hence the alleged ‘official’ designations of ‘Bunker 1’ and ‘Bunker 2,’ where the term ‘Bunker’ was simply taken from the term sometimes used for the building of the old crematorium of the main camp.²⁴³ In the black propaganda of the camp, the term later came to designate the morgue of that crematorium, allegedly transformed into a homicidal gas chamber, and then the morgues of crematoria II and III in Birkenau. For Henryk Mandelbaum, deported to Auschwitz on April 23, 1944, and assigned to the so-called ‘special unit’ in early June, the term ‘Bunker’ designated, in fact, only the alleged semi-underground gas chambers of crematoria II and III. At the trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison he declared:²⁴⁴

“In crematoria III and IV [= IV and V], the gas chambers were smaller than those of crematoria I and II [= II and III]. These crematoria were of a new kind: they could accommodate a transport of 3,000 persons. This Bunker was some 50 m long and divided into two parts. In this Bunker, there was a bath with showers and faucets, and a normal person entering it could believe that it was, indeed, a bath, [...]”

In the end, by analogy, the term ‘Bunker’ was extended to the two alleged gassing houses.

The term “*little white house*” was introduced by Ludwik Nagraba, a Catholic Pole, who was deported to Auschwitz on February 15, 1941, and who became, according to his own statement, a member of the so-called ‘special unit’ in May 1944. At the eleventh session of the Höß trial, he declared:²⁴⁵

“When the crematorium did not yet exist, there was [at Birkenau] a little white house, a barrack.”

A variation on this theme was the designation “*grey house*” (*graues Haus*) used by the witness Adolf Rögner.²⁴⁶ Actually, the Polish house allegedly converted into ‘Bunker 2’ was made of natural brick without plastering,²⁴⁷ which is why the designation “*little red house*” would have been appropriate!

The designation “*little red house*,” as we shall see, was introduced by the former detainee Wilhelm Wohlfahrt.

5.2.2. ‘Bunker 1’

In this section, I shall list the major discrepancies of the two depositions on the subject of ‘Bunker 1.’

1) Soviet deposition:²⁴⁸

²⁴³ For example in “*Baubericht über den Stand der Bauarbeiten für das Bauvorhaben Konzentrationslager Auschwitz*” of April 15, 1942, one can read: “*Krematorium: Im vorhandenen Bunker eingebaut...*” (RGVA, 502-1-24, p. 320).

²⁴⁴ AGK, NTN, 162, p. 165.

²⁴⁵ AGK, NTN, 110, p. 1147.

²⁴⁶ Cf. chapter 6.2.5.

²⁴⁷ Cf. chapter 7.5. & 9.2.

²⁴⁸ “*В каждом отделении газокамеры по 1 имелись две двери, в одну из которых загоняли голых людей, а из другой выносили трупы*”

"In each of the rooms of gas chamber no. 1 there were two doors; the naked persons entered through one and the corpses were taken out through the other."

Polish deposition:²⁴⁹

"In addition to it, at a distance of about 500 meters, there was another chamber, indicated as Bunker no. 1. This, too, was a brick house, but it was divided into only two rooms, which could take in a total of fewer than 2000 naked persons. These rooms had only one entrance door and one little window."

On the corresponding drawing, too, the two gas chambers of 'Bunker 1' have only one door each.

2) Soviet deposition:²⁵⁰

"On the outside of the entrance door was written 'To the disinfection' and on the inside of the exit door 'To the bath.'"

Polish deposition:²⁵¹

"On the entrance door there was the plate of which I have already spoken, with the inscription 'Hochspannung – Lebensgefahr.' This inscription was visible only when the entrance door was closed. When the door stood open, it could not be seen, instead, there was another sign 'Zum Baden' [to the bathing]."

The inscription "Zum Baden" was therefore (Soviet deposition) on the inside of the exit door, but (Polish deposition) on the inside of the entrance door.

3) Soviet deposition:²⁵²

"At some 500 meters from gas chamber no. 1, there were two standard wooden barracks."

Polish deposition:²⁵³

"Not far from Bunker no. 1 there was a barn and two barracks."

In the Soviet deposition Dragon affirms that the incineration trenches were located about 500 meters from 'Bunker 1'; in the Polish one he declares: *"The trenches were very far away."*²⁵⁴ It follows that the barn and the two barracks which were "not far" from 'Bunker 1' stood at a distance much less than 500 meters from Bunker 1: the witness contradicts himself.

²⁴⁹ *"Oprócz niej istniała bowiem w odległości około pół km. druga komora, oznaczona jako bunker nr.1. Był to również dom murowany, składał się jednak tylko z dwóch komór, które razem mieściły mniej aniżeli dwa tysiące rozebranych ludzi. Komory te miały tylko drzwi wejściowe i po jednym okienku"*

²⁵⁰ *"На входной двери на наружной стороне была надпись: 'Для дези[н]фекции,' а на выходной двери, на внутренней стороне ее: 'Вход в баню.'"*

²⁵¹ *"Na drzwiach wejściowych wisiała tabliczka, o której już poprzednio wspomniałem, z napisem 'Hochspannung-Lebensgefahr.' Napis ten widoczny był tylko wówczas, gdy drzwi wejściowe były zamknięte. Gdy drzwi były otwarte napisu tego widać nie było, a widać było natomiast napis drugi 'Zum Baden'."*

²⁵² *"На расстоянии приблизительно 500 метров от газокамеры по.1 были два деревянных стандартных барака."*

²⁵³ *"W pobliżu bunkra 1 stała stodółka i 2 baraki"*

²⁵⁴ *"Doły znajdowały się bardzo daleko"*

5.2.3. 'Bunker 2'

We now come to the major contradictions of the two depositions on the subject of 'Bunker 2'

1) Soviet deposition.²⁵⁵

"The gas chambers were two modified houses, whose windows had been hermetically sealed."

Polish deposition.²⁵⁶

"The windows were walled up."

2) Soviet deposition.²⁵⁷

"[...] another two barracks stood at some 150 meters from gas chamber no. 2."

Polish deposition.²⁵⁸

"At about 30 to 40 meters from this cottage stood two wooden barracks."

3) Soviet deposition.²⁵⁹

"At 150 meters from chamber no. 2 there were six trenches of the same dimensions as those near chamber no. 1."

Polish deposition.²⁶⁰

"On the other side of the house there were four trenches, 30 m long, 7 m wide and 3 m deep."

In the Soviet deposition these trenches are 30 to 35 meters long, 7 to 8 m wide, and 2 m deep.

4) Soviet deposition.²⁶¹

"Gas chamber no. 2 could take in 2,000 persons."

Polish deposition.²⁶²

"One of them [the rooms] could take in 1,200 naked persons, the second 700, the third 400, and the fourth 200 to 250."

At maximum, then, the four rooms of 'Bunker 2' could contain 2,500 to 2,550 persons.

5) Soviet deposition.²⁶³

"The gas chambers 1 and 2 were located about 3 km apart from each other."

Polish deposition.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁵ "Газокамеры были переоборудованы из 2-х домов, окна которых были герметизированы"

²⁵⁶ "Okna miała zatynkowane"

²⁵⁷ "[...] на расстоянии 150 метров от газокамеры по.2 были такие же два барака"

²⁵⁸ "W odległości około 30-40 metrów od owego domku stały dwa baraki z drzewa"

²⁵⁹ "На расстоянии 150 метров от камеры по.2 находилось шесть рвов такой же величины, как и при камере по.1."

²⁶⁰ "Po drugiej stronie domu znajdowały się 4 doły o wymiarach 30 m. długości, 7 m. szerokości i 3 m. głębokości."

²⁶¹ "В газокамеру по.2 вмещалось 2000 челрвек."

²⁶² "Jedna, w której pomieścić można było rozebranych 1200 osób, w drugiej mieściło się 700, w trzeciej 400, a w czwartej 200-250 osób."

²⁶³ "Газокамеры по.по. 1 и 2 находились одна от другой на расстоянии приблизительно 3-х километров"

“In addition to it, at a distance of about 500 meters, there was another chamber, indicated as Bunker no. 1.”

5.2.4. Critical Analysis

For this analysis, I shall again restrict myself to the most important points.

1) In the Soviet deposition, Szlama Dragon affirms that ‘Bunker 1’ had a total floor area of 80 square meters and 1,500 to 1,700 persons could be squeezed into it – *i.e.*, 19 to 22 persons per square meter in rounded figures! In the Polish deposition he speaks of “*fewer than 2,000 persons*” which corresponds to a density of “*fewer than*” 25 persons per square meter! On the other hand, ‘Bunker 2’ had a total floor area of 100 square meters and could take in 2,000 persons according to the Soviet deposition or up to 2,550, if we follow the Polish one. Thus, here again, we have a density of 20 to 25 persons per square meter!

2) In the Soviet deposition, the witness, referring to ‘Bunker 1,’ declares:²⁶⁵

“The removal of the corpses from the chamber, as I have already explained, was carried out by 12 persons who took out 6 corpses every 15 minutes. [...] The clearing of the chamber took 2 to 3 hours.”

Actually, if 12 men carry 6 corpses every 15 minutes, the clearing of 1,500, 1,700, or “*fewer than 2,000*” corpses would have required about 62 hours, or about 71 hours, or “*fewer than*” 83 hours respectively. To carry 2,000 corpses within 3 hours would require that each of the 12 persons carried roughly one corpse each and every minute!

3) In the Soviet deposition the witness declares that his transport (2,500 persons), which arrived on December 7, 1942, was received at Birkenau by Dr. Mengele, who carried out the selection.²⁶⁶ However, Dr. Mengele was not dispatched to Auschwitz until six months later, on May 30, 1943.²⁶⁷ Dragon adds that the gassings were performed “*by various SS men, one of whom was called Scheimetz.*”²⁶⁸ In the Polish deposition the witness declares that the gasings were carried out by Rottenführer “*Scheinmetz*” upon the orders given by Mengele; the Zyklon B was brought by a car with the sign of the Red Cross, which the Germans called “*Sanker.*”²⁶⁹

At the time – as we have already seen – Mengele was not yet at Auschwitz. As to “*Scheimetz,*” “*Scheinmetz,*” or “*Steinmetz*” – a rather common German

²⁶⁴ “*Oprócz niej istniała bowiem w odległości około pół km [= half a km]. Druga komora, oznaczona jako bunker nr. 1.*”

²⁶⁵ “*Разгрузкой камеры от трупов, как я выше указывал, занимались 12 человек попеременно, разгружали каждые 15 минут по шесть человек. [...] Разгрузка камеры продолжалась 2-3 часа.*”

²⁶⁶ GARF, 7021-108-12, p. 181.

²⁶⁷ Helena Kubica, “*Dr. Mengele und seine Verbrechen im KL Auschwitz-Birkenau,*” in: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, no. 20, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz, 1997, p. 376.

²⁶⁸ “*Шайметц.*”

²⁶⁹ Höß trial, vol. 11, p. 105; the German term for an ambulance or similar vehicle was “*Sanka*” = *Sanitätskastenwagen*.

last name – nothing at all is known about him,²⁷⁰ and there is therefore no proof that he ever existed. It is true that this name was also mentioned by Henryk Tauber in his deposition of May 24, 1945, but Tauber gave his deposition after Dragon's. That the source is really Dragon is borne out by the fact that for the gassings Tauber, too, evokes the duo Mengele-Scheimetz.²⁷¹ It is likewise clear that Dragon, at the time of the Soviet deposition, did not yet know anything about the alleged vehicle with the Red Cross, which brought the Zyklon B and which appears in many later testimonies.

4) In his declarations regarding the extermination capacity of the 'Bunkers,' Dragon reaches the pinnacle of absurdity. He states:²⁷²

"Over 24 hours, all the trenches could burn no fewer than 10,000 persons. On average, in the ten trenches, [no fewer than] 17,000 to 18,000 persons were burned in 24 hours, but on certain occasions the number of persons burned reached 27,000 to 28,000."

Hence, between December 1942 and March 1943 not fewer than (17,000 × 30 × 4 =) 2,040,000 persons, most of them Jews, were exterminated! However, during the period in question, only some 125,000 Jews had arrived at Auschwitz, of whom 105,000²⁷³ were not registered. As far as 1944 is concerned, during the deportation of the Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz, 6 or 7 transports never arrived on a single day.

These nonsensical figures, by the way, clash with the technical data furnished by the witness. For example, at the rate of 6 corpses being removed every 15 minutes it would have taken 290 to 333 hours, or 12 to 13 days, to clear 7,000 to 8,000 corpses from the gas chamber at 'Bunker 1,' to say nothing of the transportation of the corpses to the trenches, or of their incineration. The incineration of 7,000 to 8,000 corpses per day would have required a daily supply of 1,120 to 1,280 tons of wood,²⁷⁴ which would have had to be carried to the trenches and laid out by a detail of just 28 detainees; each one of them would have had to carry and lay out in the trenches some 40 to 46 tons of wood every single day! Not to mention the question of the two barbers and the two dentists for a daily load of 7000 to 8000 corpses!

Dragon did not dare repeat these absurd figures to Judge Jan Sehn; he had provided them to please the Soviets, or else the Soviets had suggested them to him.

5) Just as absurd is the assertion that the SS collected the human fat of the corpses to feed the combustion in the trenches. Animal fat has a flashpoint²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ Even F. Piper admits that on Scheimetz/Scheinmetz "there is no further information." *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz*, Verlag Staatliches Museum in Oświęcim, 1993, p. 207, note 19.

²⁷¹ Declaration by H. Tauber on May 24, 1945. Höß trial, vol. 11, p. 139.

²⁷² "В течении суток во всех рвах при газокамере по.2 сжигали не менее 10000 человек. В среднем во всех десяти рвах в течении суток сжигали не (менее) 17-18 тысяч человек, а в отдельных случаях число сожженных в течении суток составляло 27-28 тысяч человек."

²⁷³ Data taken from *Kalendarium* by Danuta Czech, *op. cit.* (note 13).

²⁷⁴ Cf. C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *Treblinka. Extermination Camp or Transit Camp?* Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, IL, 2004, pp. 148-150.

²⁷⁵ The temperature at which the fat begins to produce appreciable quantities of vapors that can ignite when in contact with a flame.

of under 184°C (363°F),²⁷⁶ considerably less than the ignition temperature of dry wood, which varies between 325 and 350°C; on the other hand the combustible substances in a corpse start to gasify (into carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons) at around 400 to 500°C,²⁷⁷ so that in any kind of burning trench²⁷⁸ for corpses the first thing to burn would be the fat.

I have demonstrated the impossibility of recovering burning human fat for fuel in a series of specific experiments.²⁷⁹

The facts did not keep the literary theme of human fat as fuel from being employed successfully in later accounts. This, in turn, was an elaboration of the theme of the recovery of oils and fats for machinery and washing soaps.²⁸⁰

6) In the Polish deposition, the witness attributes to ‘Bunker 2’ four incineration trenches, which in the Soviet deposition he had assigned to “gas chamber no. 1.”

7) We must also note that the first description of the installations of the two ‘Bunkers’ follows a pattern that is both repetitive and nonsensical. For ‘Bunker 1’ it is as follows:

undressing barracks $\xrightarrow{500\text{ m}}$ ‘Bunker’ $\xrightarrow{500\text{ m}}$ burning trenches

For ‘Bunker 2’ it is as follows:

undressing barracks $\xrightarrow{150\text{ m}}$ ‘Bunker’ $\xrightarrow{150\text{ m}}$ burning trenches

From the point of view of logistics, it does not speak strongly in favor of German organizing methods to have 2,000 naked people walk or run 500 m in the open and to transport the corpses over the same distance.

8) A final observation: According to official historiography, the members of the so-called ‘special unit’ were regularly murdered by the SS after a few months as potentially dangerous ‘witnesses.’

According to Danuta Czech, the previous ‘special unit,’ consisting of 300 persons, was gassed on December 3, 1942, “in the gas chamber near crematorium I,” and three days later, a new ‘special unit’ was formed, which included Szlama Dragon.²⁸¹ This same witness, in the Polish deposition, relates that his ‘special unit’ was housed near Block 2 and states:²⁸²

“This Block was a closed one, and, different from the other Blocks, was surrounded by a wall. They did not want us to communicate with the detainees in another Block.”

After his first day at work in “gas chamber no. 2,” he fell ill, but instead of being gassed, he was assigned to cleaning duty and other tasks in barrack no.

²⁷⁶ J.H. Perry, *Chemical Engineer’s Handbook*, Wilmington, Delaware, 1949, p. 1584.

²⁷⁷ C. Mattogno, “*The Crematoria...*”, *op. cit.* (note 184), pp. 410f.

²⁷⁸ It is better to speak of burning rather than cremation, because a real cremation – yielding only incombustible ash – is possible only in a crematorium oven at a temperature not below 800°C.

²⁷⁹ C. Mattogno, “*Combustion Experiments with Flesh and Animal Fat*,” *The Revisionist*, 2(1) (2004), pp. 64-72.

²⁸⁰ Cf. chapter 6.1.

²⁸¹ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 349 and 352.

²⁸² “*Był to blok zamknięty i otoczony, w odróżnieniu od innych bloków, murem. Nie wolno nam było komunikować się z więźniami z innego bloku.*” Höß trial, vol. 11, p. 105.

2, where he worked until May 1943. He was then transferred to the unit in charge of gathering bricks, where he stayed until February 1944. At the same time, though, he worked for 2 months in “*gas chamber no. 2*” and for some days also in “*gas chamber no. 1*” until he was finally assigned to crematorium IV. Dragon remained with the so-called ‘special unit’ until January 18, 1945, when he and the other 100 men²⁸³ of the unit – instead of being shot as dangerous witnesses – were sent to Germany on foot (!), and he was able to escape unobserved along the way.²⁸⁴

One can see that the SS had a strange way of keeping their ‘secrets,’ about which Dragon and his brother Abraham were to provide further accounts in 1993, just as amusing.²⁸⁵

5.2.5. The Topographical Location of the ‘Bunkers’

Szlama Dragon provides us with no indication that would allow us, even only approximately, to locate the two ‘Bunkers.’ His statements as to the distance between them are contradictory (3 kilometers in the Soviet deposition, 500 meters in the Polish one). That is strange, to say the least, because in 1945 establishing the location of both houses would have been extremely easy, as their positions could have been determined in relation to that of two other major buildings in their vicinity, i.e., the central sauna and the sewage plant of BAIII. One might therefore reasonably suspect that Dragon never even set foot into the places he speaks of. When it comes to ‘Bunker 2,’ this suspicion becomes certainty. All the maps of the area around the Birkenau camp show, in fact, two houses in the zone of ‘Bunker 2.’ As the two versions of drawing 2215 “*Development Map for the Erection and Extension of the Concentration and POW Camp*”²⁸⁶ demonstrate, the second of these two houses, which stood some 25 meters to the east of ‘Bunker 2,’ was still standing in March 1943. Nevertheless, Dragon never mentions it in his depositions, although it must have been clearly visible, considering its position right next to ‘Bunker 2.’ Why then, doesn’t he mention it?

The alleged ‘Bunker 1’ was a house situated at some 25 meters from the western enclosure of BAIII, in the area between the sewage plant and the northwest corner of the camp, hence in a location that could be easily identified and described. The “*Site Map of Area of Interest Concentration Camp Auschwitz No. 1733*” of October 5, 1942,²⁸⁷ shows that close by the house, to the west, there were also two barns and another larger house within a radius of 40 meters. Still, Dragon affirms that “*in the vicinity of Bunker 1,*” aside from

²⁸³ Actually, the crematorium personnel, called “*Kommando 53-B, Heizer Krematorium IV,*” consisted of scarcely 30 persons on January 16, 1945. “*Arbeitseinsatz für den 16. Januar 1945*”, RGVA, 502-1-67, p. 17a.

²⁸⁴ Höß trial, vol. 11, p. 114.

²⁸⁵ Cf. below, chapter 6.4.6.

²⁸⁶ Cf. documents 8 and 9.

²⁸⁷ Cf. document 7.

the two barracks allegedly built by the Central Construction Office, there was only one small barn.

It is true that he says he began his activity in the so-called ‘special unit’ on December 11, 1942, while the map dates from October 5, 1942, and the situation may have changed in the interim. But it is also true that ‘Bunker 1’ is said to have started its alleged extermination activity in either March or May 1942. Hence, there are two possibilities: either the situation changed after October 1942, in which case the Central Construction Office would have left the two barns and the other house intact for five or seven months and then suddenly, for some mysterious reason, have demolished one barn and the house, or else the situation did not change – but in that case Szlama Dragon never set foot in the area of ‘Bunker 1.’ Which of the two possibilities is the correct one is immediately evident from the fact that the witness was not able to locate ‘Bunker 1’ (or ‘Bunker 2’ either) or to help the Soviet investigative commission with its identification,²⁸⁸ even though – as Andrzej Strzelecki tells us – he was present during its proceedings.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Cf. chapter 7.2.

²⁸⁹ A. Strzelecki, “*Evacuazione, liquidazione e liberazione del campo*,” in F. Piper, T. Świebocka (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 228), p. 259.

6. Literary Variations on the Propaganda

6.1. Witnesses Who Stayed Behind at Auschwitz

With Szlama Dragon, the black propaganda about the ‘Bunkers’ no doubt achieved its best organized and most complete literary level, later to rise to the higher order of ‘history.’ During the first months of 1945, however, even at Auschwitz, the ‘Bunker propaganda’ was known only to a small circle of detainees.

On March 4, 1945, four eminent university professors – Mansfeld Geza of Budapest-Pecs, Berthold Epstein of Prague, Bruno Fischer of Prague, and Henri Limousin of Clermont-Ferrand – representing some 4,000 detainees whom the Soviets had liberated at Auschwitz, published a four-page appeal entitled “*An die internationale Öffentlichkeit*” (To the International Public). The aim of this appeal was to publicize the terrible crimes committed at Auschwitz by the German “*Bestien in Menschengestalt*” (beasts in human form). Item d) of the appeal dealt with the alleged exterminations by means of gas:²⁹⁰

“The greatest number of murders was, however, attained when the gasings started, in 1941. In succession, 5 crematoria were built, which also contained the gas chambers. People of all nations were gassed without distinction as to sex or age. For the gasings that were realized by means of Cyklon-gas, the detainees were selected from the Auschwitz main camp and the 36 subsidiary camps. Not only the severely ill were taken from the infirmaries, but, on the contrary, mostly slightly ill patients. Then, at will, people were screened from the various work units. It often happened that entire work units were seized, such as the lumberyard, removed from their workplace and transported to the Birkenau subcamp, where the gas chambers and crematoria were located. Gassings of an unimaginable scope occurred on the arrival of transports of deportees from the countries of France, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Germany, the Polish camps, and Norway. When the trains arrived, the deportees had to pass in front of the camp doctor or the camp commander, who pointed with his thumb either to the right or to the left. Left meant death by gassing. Transports comprising some 1,500 persons usually sent 12 or 13 hundred into the gas. The percentage of people meant to survive was rarely greater. It happened that the SS doctors Mengele and Thilo would whistle a tune while doing the selection.”

²⁹⁰ GARF, 7021-108-46, p. 9.

The people meant to be gassed had to undress in front of the gas chambers, to be whipped into the gas chambers. Then the doors were closed and the gassings were carried out. After 8 minutes – death occurred after 4 minutes – the chambers were opened and the corpses taken out by a specifically assigned special unit and taken to the various hearths of the crematoria that burned day and night. At the time of the Hungarian transports, the ovens did not suffice, and gigantic incineration trenches had to be dug for the corpses. Piles of wood had been soaked with petroleum. The corpses were thrown into these pits of fire. It often happened that the SS men threw children and adults into these burning pits alive, and the victims died a horrible death by fire. To save petroleum, oils and fats necessary for the cremations were partly recovered from the corpses of those gassed. The corpses also yielded oils and fats for machinery, even washing soaps.”

Therefore, even in early March 1945, the propaganda story of the gassing ‘Bunkers’ of Birkenau was unknown to the majority of the detainees the Soviets had liberated.

Even important witnesses like Henryk Tauber and Stanisław Jankowski, both self-styled members of the so-called ‘special unit,’ knew almost nothing about the ‘Bunkers’ in the first months of 1945.

Henryk Tauber, a witness held in high esteem by historians like Jean-Claude Pressac and Robert Jan van Pelt, declared in his deposition of February 28, 1945:²⁹¹

“[in May 1944] the separate gas chamber^[292] with the pyres^[293] near it was built and went into service. [...]

At Birkenau, besides the crematoria, the Germans also built the separate gas chambers^[294] nos. 1 and 2 and the pyres near them where the people would be annihilated. I don’t know when these [gas chambers] started to work, but I know that the Germans stopped to kill people there in April 1943. Gas chamber no. 2 and the pyres nearby as well as the pyres near crematorium no. 5 were in operation between May and October 1944 inclusive.”

This is a description somewhat wanting for an ‘eye’-witness who pretended to have worked in the four crematoria and around the pyres and therefore to know “*everything in detail.*”²⁹⁵

Stanisław Jankowski, alias Alter Feinsilber, was deported to Auschwitz from the camp at Compiègne on March 27, 1942, and received the ID number 27675. He claims to have been part of the so-called ‘special unit’ from November 1942 until January 18, 1945. On April 16, 1945, Jankowski was ques-

²⁹¹ GARF, 7021-108-13, p. 10.

²⁹² “газовая камера”

²⁹³ The text erroneously says “*the chambers.*”

²⁹⁴ “газовые камеры”

²⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

tioned by Judge Edward Pechalcki and prepared a written deposition, which contained the following account of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’:²⁹⁶

“Initially at Birkenau, the gassings were done in the bunkers, and the corpses were burnt in pits. The bunkers were camouflaged as ordinary quaint farmhouses. Bunker 1 was in a field on the right-hand side of Birkenau, Bunker 2 on the left.”

Jankowski declared later that during the deportation of Hungarian Jews (May to July 1944) to Birkenau, an average of 18,000 Jews were murdered every day and adds:

“When the necessary number of people had not been attained, they were shot and burned in pits. The rule was that the gas chambers would be used only for groups in excess of 200 persons, as it was not worthwhile to put them into operation for smaller groups of people. It happened that several detainees resisted during the executions or that children wept; then Oberscharführer Moll would throw these people into the fire alive.”

In this case, too, the description is not at all in keeping with the credentials of an ‘eye’-witness.

Jankowski attempts even to rationalize the theme of the children thrown into the fire alive, but is rather clumsy at it: he actually claims that in the four crematoria of Birkenau “a total of 8000 corpses could be burned daily”²⁹⁷ – a figure, by the way, which is technical nonsense. The rest of his average of 18,000 victims daily had thus to be exterminated in ‘Bunker 2’, i.e., 10,000 a day. Therefore, there cannot have been a situation where there were fewer than 200 victims to be killed, hence the shootings of small victim groups near the pits and the subsequent ritual of throwing live babies into the fire in fact never occurred.

6.2. Witnesses Transferred Away from Auschwitz before the Liberation of the Camp

The literary version of the propaganda story created by Dragon was not, in itself, unique: the ‘eyewitnesses’ who had been moved to other camps and had not been able to benefit from this version developed their own literary versions of the black propaganda which circulated in the years 1942 to 1944 in various and contrasting versions. I shall set forth six of the most significant examples.

²⁹⁶ Teresa Świebocka, Franciszek Piper, Martin Mayr, *Inmitten des grauenvollen Verbrechens. Handschriften von Mitgliedern des Sonderkommandos*, Verlag des Staatlichen Auschwitz-Birkenau Museums, 1996, p. 42 and 49.

²⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

6.2.1. David Olère

David Olère was deported to Auschwitz from Drancy on March 3, 1943. Next to nothing is known about his function in the camp. He has left us more than 120 paintings and drawings, which allegedly represent atrocious scenes of Auschwitz and which stem mostly from the period of 1945 to 1949. Serge Klarsfeld, who published them, wrote about him as follows:²⁹⁸

“At Auschwitz, David Olère was saved because he was an artist who spoke several languages: Polish, Russian, Yiddish, French, English, and German. It was his knowledge of this last language and his gift as an illustrator that made him useful to the SS. He wrote letters to their families for them, with elegant calligraphy and floral designs. Nevertheless, he was assigned from time to time to the garbage ovens or had to participate in the ‘emptying’ of the gas chambers. He saw the paroxysms of horror that took place in the crematory: the undressing in the cloakroom, the gassing, the recuperation of dental fillings and hair, the incineration of the bodies, the sexual violation by the SS of young Jewish girls, the so-called medical experiments, the terror of the victims and the cruelty of the executioners.”

Olère was never deposed nor has he written an account of his experiences in the camp; his account of Auschwitz as presented by Serge Klarsfeld is taken exclusively from the paintings and drawings we have mentioned. Klarsfeld supposes – without proof – that Olère himself witnessed directly all that he represented in his works. Actually, if Klarsfeld’s assertion were true, Olère must have been omnipresent in the camp, to judge by the variety of themes he treats.

The one painting by Olère which will concern us here has already been published by Jean-Claude Pressac. It was done in 1945 (the month is not indicated) and depicts ‘Bunker 2’ in 1944.²⁹⁹

Here is Pressac’s comment:³⁰⁰

“Inexact details:

- *The hilly nature of the terrain. Reacting to the monotonous flatness of Birkenau, David Olère, in some of his drawings, has introduced a hilly landscape, clearly for artistic reasons only.*
- *The orientation of the hut on the right. We we [sic!] should see the entrance, not the side.*
- *The house in the background on the right is probably a reminder of Bunker 1, which no longer existed in 1944.*

Exact details:

- *The relative positions of the ditch, Bunker V^[301] and an undressing hut are well respected though they are shown somewhat too close together.*

²⁹⁸ Serge Klarsfeld (ed.), *David Olère, 1902-1985. A painter in the Sonderkommando at Auschwitz / un peintre au Sonderkommando à Auschwitz*, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York, 1989, pp. 8f.

²⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 34. Cf. document 14.

³⁰⁰ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ..., op. cit.* (note 4), p. 178.

- *The positions of the door and of the opening for the introducing the gas in the west corner of Bunker V are also correct.*
- *The hut is of the stable type.*
- *Part of the north-west wall was indeed set back as shown by the ruins, but in the reverse direction.*
- *There was still a tree in front of Bunker V in 1982, of identical shape, a striking coincidence as forty years later it is [...³⁰²] the same tree. This scene recorded a year after the events by D. Olère is of such remarkable precision as to be almost as good as a photograph.”*

Pressac’s judgment is a little too benevolent. Let us look a little closer at Olère’s drawing:

6.2.1.1. The Trees

On the aerial reconnaissance photograph of May 31, 1944, no. 3056, there are at least 9 trees around the house alleged to have been a homicidal gas chamber (‘Bunker 2’). The map drawn by engineer Nosal on March 3, 1945, entitled “*Location zone of gas chamber no. 2 and of the pyres for the cremation of the corpses at Birkenau*”³⁰³ shows 5 trees around the house. In 1990, there were still 4 large trees around the foundations of the house: one with a trunk circumference of 1.70 meters at 17.25 meters from the eastern corner at an angle of 96° from north, another, with a circumference of 2 meters at 18.40 meters from the western corner at an angle of 32°, a third, with a circumference of 2.40 meters at 3.55 meters from the western corner at an angle of 285° and a fourth with a circumference of 1.24 meters at 5 meters from the western corner, at an angle of 233°. These trees could also be seen from the southern yard of the central sauna. In May 1944³⁰⁴ and in February 1945³⁰⁵ the area between the central sauna and the area of ‘Bunker 2’ was completely open, so that those trees could also be seen from the northern yard and even better from the strip of land to the west between this building and the enclosure.

On Olère’s drawing, the tree that stands in front of the corner of the house (between the door and the little window) is indeed in its proper position, but the other two trees shown on the left of the cottage are in an erroneous position with respect to the perspective of the drawing: there were no trees behind the cottage, as is borne out by the photograph of May 31, 1944.

Thus, if we suppose that Olère had actually seen the sight that he drew, we should be more surprised by the absence of at least six trees than by the presence of the one in front of the house.

³⁰¹ Alleged redesignation of ‘Bunker 2’ in 1944. Cf. chapter 6.3.1. below.

³⁰² I omit the word “*not*” which was apparently an error in translation and gives the sentence a meaning opposite to what was intended.

³⁰³ Cf. document 20.

³⁰⁴ Cf. photograph 9.

³⁰⁵ Cf. photograph 11.

6.2.1.2. The Background

Pressac's assertion that the drawing in question brings in non-existent elements into the actual landscape "for artistic reasons," but still has almost the same value as a photograph clearly makes no sense. Not only has Olère introduced two non-existent elements – a hill and the two structures that appear on it³⁰⁶ – into the background, but he has failed to include an existing element which, from the perspective of the drawing, was clearly visible: the central sauna. Even today, if one places oneself in the perspective of the drawing, one can see in the background a sizeable portion of the western façade of the central sauna.³⁰⁷ Between May 1944 and February 1945 the view was even more open and the central sauna could be seen in full, obscured only here and there by the trees mentioned above, which were very small at the time. Is this serious omission also justified by "artistic reasons"?

6.2.1.3. The Cottage

- The cottage drawn by Olère has nothing whatsoever in common with the description provided by Szlama Dragon and the corresponding design by engineer Nosal.³⁰⁸ The latter, as we have seen, has an east-west rather than a north-south orientation and depicts the house turned south by about 25°; however, standing the drawing³⁰⁹ on its head, we obtain a perspective quite close to that of Olère's drawing. It is true – as Pressac states – that the position of the little window for the introduction of Zyklon B is in agreement with that shown by Nosal's drawing, but on this wall (turned north-west) there should appear another three windows (Nosal's openings O3, O4 and O5) as well as three exit doors. (W2, W3 and W4).
- Moreover, the position of the entrance door was not in the middle: it was next to the southern angle of the wall facing southwest.
- On its left-hand side, the roof of the cottage juts out well past the wall, and is supported by a wooden post at its outer edge: This, too, contradicts Dragon's description, according to which there was no projecting roof.
- Finally, the sign which appears above the cottage door – "Dezinfektion" – is wrong and in the wrong place. According to Dragon, the signs with the inscriptions were on the door (one on the outside and one on the inside) and not above it; also, as the door stands open on Olère's drawing, the sign "Zum Baden" should be visible on it, as Pressac has carefully done on his own drawing.³¹⁰
- As an afterthought: The presence of such an inscription is contradicted by Wohlfahrt, Paisikovic, and Müller.³¹¹

³⁰⁶ The building on the right resembles a horse stable barrack, the one on the left a private house with a very tall chimney.

³⁰⁷ Cf. photograph 4.

³⁰⁸ Cf. document 12.

³⁰⁹ Cf. document 12a.

³¹⁰ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ..., op. cit.* (note 4), p. 172.

³¹¹ Cf. chapters 6.2.6., 6.3.1., 6.3.3.

6.2.2.4. The Undressing Barrack

Pressac states that the barrack on the right is not shown properly, because “*one should see the entrance, not the side.*” Actually, this barrack should not be visible at all. It stands next to a trench to the west of the cottage whereas it should be to the east, roughly where the little hill appears: in that position one would be able to see its front with the door.³¹²

6.2.1.5. Conclusion

Far from having “*almost the same value as a photograph,*” Olère’s drawing represents merely the illustration of a propaganda script which, by 1945, had become well known.

As we shall see in chapter 7, this drawing is, furthermore, in total contrast with another drawing of ‘Bunker 2’ worked up from the declarations of another ‘eye’-witness – Dov Paisikovic.

Robert Jan van Pelt’s analysis, as might be expected, is rather superficial. He dedicates to Olère’s drawing the few lines that follow:³¹³

“The drawing shows not only Bunker 2 but also the undressing barrack in the correct position vis-à-vis the cottage. Of particular interest is the small window in the side of the cottage with the heavy wooden shutter. This was the opening through which the SS introduced the Zyklon B into the room. The same way of introducing the gas was adopted in crematoria 4 and 5, and not only do the plans, elevations and photographs of the crematoria show these openings, but three of these shutters still survive and are presently stored in the coke room of crematorium 1. Even in its details, Olère’s drawing is supported by surviving material evidence.”

As we have already seen, the position of the barrack in the drawing with respect to the cottage is actually quite wrong: it should have stood to the southwest of the cottage, whereas Olère places it in the north-west. The representation of the “*heavy wooden shutter*” may be similar to the little windows of crematoria IV and V, but that proves absolutely nothing with respect to ‘Bunker 2’ – in the same way as the fact that the door of the cottage is a heavy wooden door similar to those of the disinfestation chambers of Auschwitz and Birkenau proves nothing, either.

All this, together with all the other mistakes pointed out above, proves that Olère’s drawing is nothing but the pictorial rendering of the literary propaganda about the ‘Bunkers,’ i.e., the painter-detainee had done nothing but sketch out a fictional scene based on the black propaganda.

As for van Pelt, he knows nothing of the other three windows and three doors, which would have been visible on the side of the cottage. He says nothing at all about the other alleged undressing barrack, and speaks of a single window and a single room, as if the ‘Bunker’ contained only one gas chamber

³¹² Cf. chapter 9.1 and 9.3.

³¹³ R.J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 118), p. 180.

and not the four that have been sanctified by official historiography. This is not very flattering for the author of an expert report on Auschwitz!

6.2.2. Miklos Nyiszli

Miklos Nyiszli was deported to Auschwitz from Hungary on May 29, 1944. At the camp, he was registered with the number A-8450. In early June,³¹⁴ so he says, he became a member of the so-called special unit as a physician and kept that post until January 18, 1945, when he was evacuated to the Mauthausen camp.

In 1946, he published a book of memoirs in Hungarian with the title *Dr. Mengele boncolóorvosa voltam az Auschwitz-i krematóriumban* (I was an anatomist with Dr. Mengele at the Auschwitz crematorium), in which he speaks in great detail about ‘Bunker 2.’ In the following I quote the relevant passages in a direct translation from the Hungarian original, because the available translations are rather inaccurate:³¹⁵

“One day, early in the morning, I received an order by telephone, asking me to go immediately to the pyre^[316] and to take the medicines and eye-glasses that had been collected [there] to the crematorium I^[317] to be sorted and then shipped. The pyre was behind a grove of birches at Birkenau, at some 500 – 600 meters from crematorium IV^[318], on a clearing surrounded by a forest of fir-trees. It is located outside the electrified camp enclosure, between the first and the second chain of guards. My freedom of movement did not extend that far. I asked for a written permit at the office. I obtained a ‘Passierschein’ [permit³¹⁹] valid for three persons. I was, in fact, accompanied by two men who were to help me carry the load. We walked towards the huge black swirling column of dense smoke. It was visible from all parts of the concentration camp,^[320] and on it fell the terrified look of all those who, having climbed down from the cars, fell into line for the selection. Anyone who had the misfortune of being in this place saw the column of smoke. It was visible at any hour of the day or night. By day, it covered the sky above the Birkenau forest like a dense cloud. By night, it lit up the surroundings as if it was a hellish fire. On our way we passed along the

³¹⁴ In his sworn statement of October 8, 1947, (NI-11710) Nyiszli asserted, on the other hand, that he had arrived at Auschwitz on May 19, 1944, and to have been immediately moved to Monowitz from where he was transferred to Birkenau a couple of weeks later.

³¹⁵ Miklos Nyiszli, *Dr. Mengele boncolóorvosa voltam az Auschwitz-i krematóriumban*, Tipografia “Grafica,” Oradea, Nagyvárad 1946, pp. 59-61, 62. Italian translation: *Medico ad Auschwitz*, Longanesi, Milano, 1976; German translation: *Im Jenseits der Menschlichkeit. Ein Gerichtsmediziner in Auschwitz*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1992; English translation: *Auschwitz. A Doctor’s Eyewitness Account*, Fawcett Crest, New York 1961.

³¹⁶ “A máglyához;” the noun “máglya” = pyre, with the directional suffix “hoz.”

³¹⁷ Nyiszli uses the numbering system I-IV instead of the more common one of II-V.

³¹⁸ Crematorium V in today’s numbering system – ed.

³¹⁹ In German in the text.

³²⁰ „K.Z. tábor.” “Tábor” means “camp.” “K.Z.” is the abbreviation for “Konzentrationslager” in use among the detainees.

crematorium. We came to a passage through the enclosure and, after having shown the document to the SS guards on duty, walked through without difficulty.

A fresh and green clearing comes into view, a quiet landscape, but my searching eyes soon discover the second chain of sentries, standing or sitting in the grass with their enormous dogs, next to their automatic rifles. Crossing the clearing, we come to the entrance to the grove that surrounds it. Again, we come to a wire fence with a wooden gate covered with barbed wire. On the fence is a large warning sign with a text just like the signs on the iron gratings of the crematoria 'Access to this zone is strictly prohibited, even to unauthorized SS personnel.' We, men of the 'Sonderkommando,'³²¹ entered. We did not even have to show our permits. The SS from the crematorium was on duty here, as well as 60 men from crematorium II, men from the 'Sonderkommando' to which we are assigned. This is the day-shift. They work from 7 in the morning until 7 at night when they are relieved by 60 men from crematorium IV who do the night shift.

On the other side of the fence, we come to a square, looking like a court-yard, in the middle of which stands a long house with a thatched roof of straw and a well-worn layer of plaster. Its small windows are covered with boards. The construction has the well-known look of German farm houses. It is at least 150 years old. One can see that from the old roof of blackened straw and from the plaster that has fallen off the wall in some places. The German State has expropriated the village of Birkenau, near Auschwitz, to build its KZ there: they have demolished the houses, with the exception of this one, and have moved the people away. What was the real purpose of this house? A residence? It had separate rooms that had been knocked into one large space by the removal of the dividing walls for a new purpose, or for another similar task? I don't know. Today, it is an undressing room, those who find their death on the pyre leave their clothes there.

Here end up, coming from the 'Jews' ramp,' those transports which do not go into the four crematoria. Their end is horrible. Here are no faucets for them to quench their burning thirst. There are no magic words to dispel their ugly expectations. This is not a gas chamber which they believe to be a disinfection installation. This is only a farm house with a thatched roof, at one time painted yellow, with its shutters closed, but behind it an enormous column of smoke rises into the sky spreading an odor of burning human flesh and of hair that smolders.

In this yard, there is a crowd of 5000 souls, petrified with horror. Around them there is a tight chain of SS guards with enormous dogs held on the leash. They go to the undressing room 300–400 at a time. Here, pursued by incessant lashings they quickly drop their garments and leave through the door that is on the other side of the house. Once in the open,

³²¹ In German in the text.

they do not have time to look around and to comprehend the horror of their situation, because right away a man from the 'Sonderkommando' seizes them by the arm and carries them through a cordon of SS guards along a path lined with trees and some 150 meters long, leading to the pyre which they can make out at the end of their road only once they come out of the tree-lined lane.

The pyre is a trench 50 meters long, 6 meters wide and 3 meters deep full of hundreds of corpses on fire. On the edge of the trench, toward the tree-lined lane, there are SS guards, every 5–6 meters or so, pistol in hand—small-caliber pistols, 6 mm, for shooting people in the neck. Coming out from the tree-lined lane, two men from the Sonderkommando working at the pyre grab the unfortunate victim by both arms and drag him [or her] some 15–20 meters to the pistol of some SS man. Then, over the horrible noise a shot rings out. It resonates and more often than not they throw [the victim] only half dead into the sea of fire in the trench. Fifty meters away, there is another trench just like it. Here, at the pyres, the commander is SS Oberscharführer Moll [...].

The daily capacity of the two pyres was about 5000–6000 bodies, somewhat more than one crematorium, but the death of those who arrived here was a hundred thousand times worse."

The propaganda story invented by Nyiszli did not meet with objective material criticism and presented, moreover, insurmountable contradictions with what might be called the 'official' version of Szlama Dragon.

Nyiszli had wanted to lend credibility to his tale by a detailed description of the site which, actually, was only the fruit of his imagination. In reality, the house that was to be called 'Bunker 2' stood some 250 meters to the west of the central sauna, which was the closest major structure to it: why does Nyiszli make crematorium V his reference point? This is all the more astonishing as crematorium IV was closer to 'Bunker 2' than crematorium V. The answer is that the witness believed that in order to get to the house one had to leave the camp at the level of crematorium V after having passed "*alongside the crematoria.*" Actually, starting out from crematorium II, where Nyiszli claims to have had his quarters and worked (in the dissection room), one only had to pass along crematorium III and then along the sewage plant to leave the camp through the gate next to the four settling basins. That was the only road leading to the house. The gate itself opened not onto a clearing, but a grove of trees.

Besides, there is no trace of two cremation trenches of 50 by 6 meters on any of the air reconnaissance photographs taken of Birkenau in 1944.

Nyiszli obviously did not know the later designations 'Bunker 2' or 'little white house'; he even says that the house had been painted yellow at one time—so that, if anything, it should have been called the 'little yellow house.'

Furthermore, according to Nyiszli, the house was not split into four rooms, but consisted of only one large room and had no signs with "*magic words.*" Its windows had not been walled up but simply "*covered with boards.*" Finally,

the house was not a gas chamber but an undressing room. Nyiszli, in fact, knows absolutely nothing of the two undressing barracks that are claimed to have been set up near the house. The assassination technique at ‘Bunker 2’ was, for him, not gassing but shooting with small arms.

Although the testimony of Miklos Nyiszli is a pile of inventions and absurdities,³²² Jean-Claude Pressac considers it “*precious*.”³²³ He even attempts to explain the contradiction regarding the extermination technique at ‘Bunker 2’ in the following way:³²⁴

“Towards the end of the summer, when Zyklon B ran low, the infirm from the various transports who still arrived at Auschwitz were thrown directly into the cremation pits at crematorium V and Bunker 2.”

Pressac names as his source the following deposition of Hermann Langbein at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial:³²⁵

“In 1944, children were thrown alive into the huge fires that were burning near the crematoria. We heard about this at the main camp and I informed the garrison surgeon. Dr. Wirths refused to believe me. He went to Birkenau to find out. When I went to him the next day for dictation he simply said ‘that was an order of camp commandant Höß. It was issued because there was no more gas.’ From that time on, Dr. Wirths believed anything I told him.”

This was only a clumsy attempt at rationalizing the propaganda motif of the burning of children alive, the literary origins of which we have seen in chapter 2. Langbein’s credibility can, by the way, be judged by his 1945 assertion that 5 million persons had been gassed at Auschwitz.³²⁶

The lack of Zyklon B at Auschwitz is a tale without foundation. It is known with certainty that 195 kg of Zyklon B were supplied to the camp on April 11, 1944, 195 kg on April 27, and another 195 kg on May 31.³²⁷ In connection with various documents presented at the IG Farben trial, Raul Hilberg has examined the question of Zyklon B supply and has come to the conclusion:³²⁸

“The supply was kept up to the end – the SS did not run out of [Zyklon B] gas.”

Therefore, the aforementioned contradiction on the subject of ‘Bunker 2’ remains real.

³²² Cf. in this respect my study “*Medico ad Auschwitz*”: *Anatomia di un falso. La falsa testimonianza di Miklos Nyiszli*, Edizioni La Sfinge, Parma, 1988.

³²³ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ...*, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 479.

³²⁴ J.-C. Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 139), p. 102.

³²⁵ H. Langbein, *Der Auschwitz-Prozess. Eine Dokumentation*, Europa Verlag, Vienna 1965, vol. 1, p. 88.

³²⁶ Declaration by H. Langbein given in Vienna on August 8, 1945, to *Polizeidirektion*. GARF, 7021-108-34, p. 22: “*Im Zuge dieser Transporte wurden etwa 5.000.000 Menschen vergast*” (In the course of these transports about 5,000,000 persons were gassed).

³²⁷ PS-1553.

³²⁸ R. Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Fischer, Frankfurt 1999, vol. 2, p. 954.

6.2.3. Sigismund Bendel

Sigismund Bendel – from Piatra in Romania – settled in Paris in 1932. He was arrested by the French police on December 4, 1943, and after a week was moved to the Drancy camp, to be deported to Auschwitz on December 7, 1943.³²⁹ On arriving at the camp on December 10, Bendel was registered under ID no. 167460 and sent to Monowitz, and, three weeks later, to Birkenau, where he was employed as a physician, first at camp BIIa, then at the Gypsy camp (BIIe). On June 2, 1944, by his own account, he became part of the so-called special unit as a physician.

On October 7, 1947, Bendel was interrogated by an inspector of the Paris police on behalf of the Polish authorities, which at the time were preparing the trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison. He made the following declaration on the so-called ‘Bunkers’ of Birkenau:³³⁰

“From May 15, 1944, on, a new gas chamber was set up, outside the camp enclosure itself. It was installed in a farm cottage divided into two parts, in which the detainees were gassed. From that time on, the bodies coming from this chamber were no longer cremated in the crematorium ovens, except in crematoria I and II [= II and III]. The bodies were placed in gigantic trenches, in which the cremation was carried out. It was done in this way: among the bodies, gasoline-soaked logs were put in and the fire was lit. This new method was introduced in the course of 1944 on account of an influx of deportees, because the normal crematoria were insufficient. With this new system, it was possible to burn 1000 persons [sic] in one hour whereas a crematorium oven would have taken 24 hours to achieve the same result.”

Bendel had learned the details of this story from the rumors that circulated immediately after the war. In his debut as a professional witness, on October 1, 1945, when he appeared as a witness for the prosecution at the Belsen trial, he limited himself to the following evasive hint:³³¹

“Q: How many crematoria were there?”

A: Four, and one which was called the ‘Bunker’ which was finally a gas chamber. All were at Birkenau.”

In his declaration of October 21, 1945, however, there is not even that hint.³³² On March 2, 1946, when Bendel testified for the prosecution at the IG-Farben trial, his knowledge was still rather basic:³³³

“Q: How many gas chambers were there at Birkenau?”

³²⁹ Sigismund Bendel actually figures on the alphabetical list of transport no. 64, departed from Drancy on December 7, 1943. S. Klarsfeld, *Le Memorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*, Klarsfeld, Paris 1978, alphabetical list of transport no. 64 (the book does not contain page numbers).

³³⁰ Ministère de l’Intérieur. Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale. Procès verbal de l’audience de Sigismund Bendel du 7 octobre 1947. AGK, 153, p. 211.

³³¹ Raymond Phillips (ed.), *Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, William Hodge and Company, London-Edinburgh-Glasgow 1949, p. 135.

³³² NI-11390.

³³³ NI-11953.

A: Four crematoria and one Bunker [...]

Q: How many people could enter together into one crematorium?

A: Into crematorium 1 and 2, 2000 each, into crematorium 3 and 4, 1000 each and into the Bunker 1000."

In 1946, a book about Auschwitz was published in France that contained an account by Dr. Paul [sic] Bendel entitled "*Les crématoires. Le 'Sonderkommando'*" (The crematoria. The 'special unit'). Here, too, Bendel is rather taciturn on the alleged 'Bunker 2,' but he ventured to say that the alleged 'Bunker 2' had to be a farm cottage:³³⁴

"There were four crematoria, the fifth, called 'Bunker,' was a simple farm cottage converted into a gas chamber 'for the requirements of the cause.'"

At the time, he did not yet know that this "cottage" had to be a full-sized house.

What is curious is that Dr. Bendel, just like Dr. Nyiszli, claims to have been assigned to the so-called special unit by the same person – Dr. Mengele³³⁵ – at the same time – early June 1944 – but not only do the two physicians, in their testimonies, not mention one another, but on the subject of 'Bunker 2' (and not only on this point) they have given us totally contradictory accounts.

6.2.4. André Lettich

Doctor André Lettich was deported from Angers (France) on July 20, 1942, and arrived at Auschwitz on July 23 to be registered under ID no. 51224. A doctor, he worked at hospital blocks nos. 7 and 12. After September 1942, from an unspecified date onwards until March 1943, Lettich claims to have worked as a physician in the so-called special unit; in March 1943 he was transferred to the Gypsy camp. In July 1943 he was sent to the hygiene institute of the Waffen-SS, where he worked as a bacteriologist. Lettich was evacuated from Auschwitz on foot on January 18, 1945.

In 1946 he published a report entitled "*Thirty-four months in the concentration camps. An account of the 'scientific' crimes committed by the German doctors,*"³³⁶ in which he devotes an entire chapter to his life in the so-called special unit. The most important section reads as follows:³³⁷

"One day, we^[338] heard of a Kommando (special Kommando) where they were looking for a physician and – it was said – where they did not suffer from hunger. Seeing that we were getting sick, we asked to be called

³³⁴ Amicale des Déportés d'Auschwitz (ed.), *Témoignages sur Auschwitz*, Edition de l'Amicale des Déportés d'Auschwitz, Paris 1946, p. 160.

³³⁵ "Dr. Mengele gave me the honor of sending me to the crematorium." R. Phillips (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 331), p. 131.

³³⁶ André Lettich, *Trente-quatre mois dans les Camps de Concentration. Témoignage sur les crimes "scientifiques" commis par les médecins allemands*, Imprimerie Union Coopérative, Tours 1946.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

³³⁸ Lettich writes using the *pluralis majestatis*.

there, as doctor[s], to the block where this Kommando was housed. We had believed that the 'Sonderkommando' was a Kommando that was simply burning the corpses, but as soon as we entered and came into contact with our co-detainees, we learned of its real task. They, these co-detainees, were the ones who took care of the death service when the trains arrived and the new transports departed from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Belgium, Holland, and France, men, women, and children had to be taken directly and immediately to the gas chambers and burned. Right there we had the opportunity to gather the most detailed account of the barbaric acts committed by the SS.

This is how we went ahead: [...]

Up to the end of January 1943, there were no crematorium ovens at Birkenau. In the middle of a small birchwood, some 2 km from the camp, there was a little house, looking quaint, in which a Polish family had lived before they were driven out or murdered. At over 500 meters from there, there were two barracks: the men went to one side, the women to the other. Very politely, very kindly they were told 'you have come a long way, you are dirty, you must take a bath, undress quickly.' Towels and soap were handed out and, suddenly, the beasts broke through and took on their real shape: this human herd, these men and women, were forced by violent beatings to go out naked, in summer as well as in winter, and had to walk those several hundred meters up to the 'shower room.' Above the door, there were the words³³⁹ 'Brausebad' [shower-bath]. On the ceiling one could even see shower-heads that had been placed there, but which had never squirted any water. These poor innocent people were squeezed together tightly one against the other, and at that point they would panic: they finally understood what was to be their fate, but the beatings and the pistol shots soon calmed them down and finally all went into the chamber of death. The doors were closed, and ten minutes later the temperature was sufficiently high to allow the vaporization of the hydrogen cyanide, because that was what the delinquents were gassed with. The German barbarians used 'Cyklon B,' a diatomaceous earth impregnated with hydrogen cyanide at 20 percent. Now, through a little window, SS Unterscharführer Moll threw in the gas. One could hear the most horrible cries, but after a few moments there was complete silence. After 20–25 minutes, doors and windows were opened for ventilation and the corpses were immediately taken to the trenches to be burned, but not before the dentists had pulled out any gold teeth from their mouths. One also checked if the women had not hidden any valuables in their intimate parts, and their hair was cut and collected for some industrial use. The efficiency of this gas chamber did not appear to be high enough. One could gas only 400–500 persons per day.

³³⁹ Plural in the original text.

Now, with the great scheme to destroy all its enemies that the Greater Reich had devised (and one knows well how numerous these enemies were), in August 1942 one had begun to build the crematorium ovens. From the ground up, four crematorium ovens were built: ultramodern in design, as only the Germans were able to conceive them. Huge chimneys towered above them like those of factories. Of those four ovens, two had nine hearths and the other two had six. On each hearth one could burn six corpses at a time in about fifty minutes. Altogether, 180 corpses reduced to ashes in one hour. Really advanced German technology. To give the reader an idea of the destructive power and the size of those ovens, suffice it to say that, to fan the flames, each hearth was equipped with an electric blower of 12 horse-power. At the end of February, those ovens were ceremoniously inaugurated. [...]

In this way, we have been able to watch, for nearly three years, transports coming to Auschwitz from all parts of Europe disappear and vanish in the flames and the smoke rising to the sky above Auschwitz. Without exaggeration, one can set at four or five million the number of victims who perished in this way in this death camp. A 'colossal' execution worthy of the German Kultur.^[340]

Realizing what role the Sonderkommando played, we were repelled and tried to leave this Kommando by all means.

And those miserable ones in the Sonderkommando, who had imagined that by virtue of those horrid tasks, to which they had been forced by threats of death, they would be able to be themselves saved, they did not suspect the fate that German 'technology' had reserved for them. In order for the veil of secrecy to be well spread over all these horrors, those slaves of death were housed in a separate block, shut off from any information about their future. Having come from afar, condemned to silence and carefully watched, they disappeared without a trace in total mystery. These unpleasant witnesses, who were present, in fact, at the undressings and the gassings and who then 'liquidated' the corpses, could one day have too loose a tongue, therefore every three or four months, German prudence liquidated them in turn. The labor squads were thus radically and definitely renewed.

We managed to obtain our transfer and were assigned as doctor to the Gypsy camp in March [1943]."

First of all, one can say that André Lettich not only did not know the designation 'Bunker' (nor 'little red house' or 'little white house'), but also that he did not know that there had to be two such 'Bunkers,' something absolutely dumbfounding for a detainee claiming to have worked in the 'special unit' as a physician between late 1942 and early 1943. The description given by the witness regarding the gassing cottage does not fit either 'Bunker 1' or 'Bunker 2,' anyway. The existence of "two barracks" "over 500 meters" away, while it

³⁴⁰ Emphasis in original.

does agree with Szlama Dragon's declaration in the Soviet deposition, is limited to this isolated fragment of the propaganda story. Finally, Lettich places the cottage "*some 2 km from the camp*" and explains the presence of two barracks by the fact that one was for men and the other for women.

The description of the cottage is also completely in contradiction with the 'official' version by Dragon. Lettich asserts that the word "*Brausebad*" was written above the door, whereas for Dragon the sign "*Zum Baden*" (and not "*Brausebad*") was attached, not above the entrance door but on the inside of the entrance door and, in further contradiction, on the inside of the exit door of the cottage. Together with the literary theme of the "*Brausebad*," Lettich also takes up the corresponding theme of the "*shower heads*" attached to the ceiling of the gas chamber. This chamber, moreover, had "*windows*," which were opened for ventilation, and had a capacity of 400–500 victims per day: both of these assertions are in contradiction with those of Dragon.

The eminently fictional character of Lettich's testimony shows through no less clearly when he speaks of the Birkenau crematoria. He declares that two "*ovens*" – i.e., crematoria II and III – had "*nine hearths*" (= ovens), in keeping with the rubbish disseminated by Vrba and Wetzler in their report,³⁴¹ while the other two "*ovens*" (crematoria IV and V), on the other hand, had six "*hearths*" (= ovens) each, which is wrong as well.³⁴² The cremation capacity indicated by this witness – 180 corpses per hour – is of course technical nonsense. Lettich then asserts that "*to fan the flames, each hearth was equipped with an electric blower of 12 horse-power.*" Actually, the blowers of the three-muffle-ovens of the crematoria (Druckluftanlagen) were not meant "*to fan the flames*," but to feed air for combustion to the corpses, and were powered by a three-phase engine of 1.5 hp. This rubbish was also repeated by Miklos Nyiszli who wrote:³⁴³

"They have switched on the gigantic blowers that fan the flames in the boilers [i.e., in the ovens]³⁴⁴. Fifteen blowers of this type are running at the same time! There is one next to each oven."

We have here a good example of independently converging – but wrong – statements.

Lettich also brings up to the anecdote of the so-called special unit being exterminated every three or four months by the SS who wanted to eliminate the witnesses to their crimes, but then patently retracts it when he says that he had himself transferred away from this so-called special unit without any difficulty.

Finally, his estimate of the number of Auschwitz victims – 4 or 5 million, "*without exaggeration*"(!) – speaks for itself.

³⁴¹ *Tatsachenbericht ueber Auschwitz und Birkenau*, Geneva, May 17, 1944. RL, WRB 61, p. 16.

³⁴² Crematoria II and III actually had 5 ovens with 3 muffles each, crematoria IV and V one oven and 8 muffles.

³⁴³ Miklos Nyiszli, *Dr. Mengele boncolórovosa...*, *op. cit.* (note 315), p. 32.

³⁴⁴ Nyiszli often uses a vague terminology: here "*kazánokban*," where "*kazán*" means "*boiler*" but it obviously stands here for "*hearth*" or "*oven*."

6.2.5. Adolf Rögner

Adolf Rögner, detainee no. 15465, wrote an exceedingly long account entitled “*Tatsachenbericht aus dem Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslager Auschwitz I, II und III i. O/S*” (factual account from the concentration and annihilation camp Auschwitz I, II and III in Upper Silesia), which was presented in evidence by the prosecution at the Polish trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison. Among other things, he provides us with the following description of one of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’:³⁴⁵

“Initially, there was as yet no railroad siding to the new gas chambers and crematoria, it was laid only during the course of the Aktion. But until it came to that, the gassings were carried out in the so-called ‘gray house.’ This was a former farmhouse inhabited by a Polish family, the owner had to relinquish the property. He was married and had children, but was put under pressure, regardless, being made to understand that one was quite ready to move him, too, into the Auschwitz I KZ, it was an attempt at coercion which, however, brought results.

There were three large rooms in this farmhouse, they were turned into small gas chambers. The tradesmen from all the workshops received the order to prepare these rooms. Especially thick doors were installed, closing hermetically, the windows were equipped with special shutters. The electricians’ shop, too, received an urgent order, the electrical installations had to be put up as fast as possible and confirmation of termination had to be given by 3:30 p.m.

There was no power line available, it had to be done by overhead cable. We had to give up that idea and run a 1000 meter ground-cable and feed it directly into the house, the installations were done in Anthygron, and everything had to be acid-proof, all this was done in a terrible hurry, and it worked, otherwise there would have been unpleasant reports.

Altogether, 5–600 people could be gassed at the same time in these three chambers. Outside the windows were tracks of a field-railroad leading to the mass graves that had been prepared, and the corpses would be covered there, because one could not speak of a burial, they were laid out in layers, 4–5 corpses one on top of the other, with chlorinated lime in between, and only a very thin layer of earth on top. The rain caused the whole thing to sink down and so one could clearly see that corpses had been interred there. Everywhere parts like noses, fingers or buttocks stuck out, in the heat of the summer the bodies would boil, one could never walk across one of those mass graves, it was like a roller-coaster, you would sway and slip. These mass graves were some 350 meters long and about 10 meters wide. Altogether, we brought 1.8 million corpses there.

How was a gassing carried out, this was different depending upon where it was done. Near the gray house there was a wooden barrack, this

³⁴⁵ Trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison (proces załogi), vol. 49, pp. 21-24. AGK, NTN, 131, pp. 21-24.

was destined to store the corresponding clothes, underwear and other things of the Jews. They had to undress there, were given each a towel and a piece of soap, and then go 'bathing'! Then they were led to the 'bath-rooms,' they entered, and the doors were closed right away, they were locked hermetically anyway. In those doors there was a so-called 'food trap,' the gas was thrown in through it. It was the gas 'Zuklon B' that was supplied for this purpose by the car-load from the firm Stab und Teschow [sic] in Hamburg. There were cans of 250 and 500 grams. There were also larger packs, in rubber-soaked cans. This gas was then thrown and so the gassing started.

It happened that the detainees thought it was something to eat, caught some of the gas thrown and swallowed it, the effect was terrible. I once talked about it with the detainee-physician Dr. Döring, who explained to me as follows: The gassing is very quick, the people inhale 7 or 8 times this toxic gas, then the lungs fill, they burst causing an immediate heart-attack. The gas tastes disgustingly sweet and it takes several days to get it out of your throat. I, too, had a taste of this by accident, when my workshop was gassed against insects.

After a quarter of an hour, the chambers would be opened, then the ventilations go into service, in this case [the case of the 'gray house'] the windows are opened and then some detainees start inspecting the corpses for gold teeth, implants and prostheses, finger and earrings. Everything had to be taken from the dead. Only then the corpses were allowed to be loaded on the waiting carts, which took them to the mass grave. For this work, the detainees wore rubber gloves and rubber aprons.

The Firm Tesch and Stabenow has already been prosecuted by the British military court and sentenced. This firm had also done the gassing of the detainee blocks because of the lice infestation of the whole camp.

In this gray house gassing was done for some time until the termination of the 4 new large and modern crematoriums in Birkenau-Auschwitz II!"

In his version of the propaganda story, Adolf Rögner – who writes after the Tesch trial (March 1946), of which he had knowledge – reworks the well-known literary themes and thickens them with new rich and fanciful elements from his imagination. His declaration does not allow us to establish whether he refers to 'Bunker' 1 or 2. Rögner does not even know that there ought to have been two gassing 'Bunkers' and therefore he mentions only one, which he calls "*gray house*" rather than 'white' or 'red' house. The story of the Polish family that had lived in it is pure fantasy. The witness states that the house contained three rooms, but this figure does not agree with either 'Bunker 1' (two rooms) or 'Bunker 2' (four rooms). The windows of these rooms were equipped with "*special shutters*" which would be "*opened*" during the ventilation.

According to the Polish deposition of Szlama Dragon, however, "*the windows were walled up.*" Also, the capacity of the three 'gas chambers' is in disagreement with Dragon's information: 500 – 600 persons at a time as against

1500 – 1700 or “fewer than 2000” (‘Bunker 1’) or “over 2000” (‘Bunker 2’). The existence of a single undressing barrack collides with both ‘Bunkers.’ The story of the gas chambers disguised as baths is a well-worn literary theme, but the system for feeding Zyklon B into the chambers that the witness adopts, although no doubt rather original, is also quite nonsensical: the Zyklon B was allegedly thrown into the rooms through a “*food trap*”! The story that the victims ate the Zyklon B, believing it to be food – granules of gypsum soaked in hydrogen cyanide! – is even greater nonsense. The toxicological effects of hydrogen cyanide mentioned by the witness are pure invention, as is its “*disgustingly sweet*” taste. The length of the mass graves that Rögner gives (350 meters) is silly and the assertion that 1,800,000 corpses were interred in these graves is simply ridiculous.³⁴⁶

If an existing Polish house had really been turned into a ‘gas chamber,’ then the labor mentioned by Rögner as well as others would indeed have been necessary, but as we have seen above, there is not the slightest trace of them in the documentation of the Central Construction Office.³⁴⁷

6.2.6. Wilhelm Wohlfahrt

Wilhelm Wohlfahrt was sent to Auschwitz on January 8, 1942. In March he was assigned to the Construction Office, where he was employed as a surveyor at Birkenau together with two other detainees. At an uncertain date he was sent to a different camp. Wohlfahrt, a Polish citizen who had lived in Warsaw, was called as a witness at the fourth hearing of the Höß trial and made the following deposition:³⁴⁸

“From that place, we could see what was going on at the so-called little red house, the first gas chamber at Birkenau. From a distance of 400–500 meters, we observed through the lenses of the [surveying] instruments the naked bodies of the gassed that were loaded onto carts from the sides of the little houses.^[349] They were, for the most part, women and children. The carts were so full that very often the heads of the corpses were dangling towards the grave. At the time, the hair of the women was not yet shorn because very frequently it was hanging down. My companions and I began to watch closely and to note everything that went on, so that whoever might survive would be able to testify. About two months later, with another group, I went near the little red house out of curiosity and looked at the place where they had thrown the corpses. Those graves measured about 20–30 meters. [The corpses] were arranged in the ground, one with his head one way, the next one the other way. They had been sprinkled with a thin

³⁴⁶ For a more detailed analysis of the credibility of Adolf Rögner as a witness see Gernar Rudolf, “*From the Records of the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial*”, parts 1 through 4, *The Revisionist*, 1(1,2,3,4) (2003), pp. 115–118, 235–238, 352–358, 468–472.

³⁴⁷ Cf. chapter 3.4.

³⁴⁸ Höß trial, vol. 24, pp. 210, 216–218.

³⁴⁹ “*z bocznych domków*”

layer of lime, leveled and covered with another layer. At that time, detainees were digging new graves [...]

In 1944, when I was still at the camp, while doing surveying work at Birkenau and making use of the fact that the second gas chamber was inactive, we did work near the little white house, and I then had an opportunity to see the arrangement of the temporary little house, where the people had been murdered. I have a sketch of the whole area. On the outside doors there was a sign saying 'To the disinfection' and on the inside, on the side opposite that door, 'To the bath.' From this one can surmise that the poor people who entered that room were being deceived. Behind the building there was a track for carts, little wagons with which [the corpses] were immediately taken away.

Presiding judge: Does the witness speak of the little red house?

Wohlfahrt: There were two cottages, one they called red [cottage] because it was built of brick, the other one was plastered and they called it white [cottage].

P.: Were gassings done in both?

W.: Yes.

P.: Can you indicate the location of the cottage, seeing that you are familiar with measuring?

W.: I can do that precisely. The red cottage was more or less to the west of the third sector at Birkenau,^[350] at a distance of 200–300 meters. Near that cottage there was a clearing with graves. That cottage was demolished in 1943, when I went there at that time^[351] the whole area had been plowed and the cottage was gone.

P.: Was the cottage visible or was it surrounded by the forest?

W.: The red cottage was visible, whereas the white cottage was surrounded by woods, furthermore, on the side towards the camp, [surrounded] by branches to conceal any movement that might go on there [...].

P.: What did the inside of that white cottage look like? What signs were there?

W.: There were no signs, it was rough. [...]

P.: What was the capacity of that structure?

W.: Four rooms and, although it was made of brick, I think it was straw-thatched; it must have been a barn that had been made into a house. Then it was redone in such a way that there were three rooms in the main part, and in the annex^[352] a fourth [room]. Each room had a door on either side and little windows of 50–60 centimeters.

P.: How many people could it take in?

W.: The floor area was around 30 [square] meters, about 4 meters by 7–8. Each room [could contain] over 100 persons.

³⁵⁰ BAIII.

³⁵¹ The witness does not indicate the month.

³⁵² "przybudówki"

P.: Hence about 400 at one time?

W.: Yes."

The witness belonged to the improvements section of the construction office, which was associated with the surveying section. His name appears, in fact, in a document dated August 26, 1943. It is the list of detainees of the planning office of the Central Construction Office, who were employed outside the sentry chain. The 16 detainees employed at the "*construction office improvements*" are listed, and among them, specifically, the Polish detainee no. 25439.³⁵³

He had therefore effectively enjoyed a certain freedom of movement, but that does not mean that he had actually seen the 'Bunkers.' This is excluded, last but not least, by his description. He states that the "*red cottage*" ('Bunker 1') was located "*more or less to the west of the third sector of Birkenau, at a distance of about 200–300 meters,*" whereas the house allegedly transformed into a homicidal 'Bunker' stood less than 50 meters from the fence of BAIII. Regarding the location of 'Bunker 2,' on the other hand, the witness says nothing at all, other than that the corpses of the gassed were loaded on carts "*from the sides of the little houses*" which, according to the official version, did not exist. The structure of the "*white cottage*" ('Bunker 2') is also in disagreement with that claimed by Szlama Dragon. Whereas Dragon also mentions four rooms turned into gas chambers, the house itself contained only three according to Wohlfahrt, the fourth being located in an "*annex.*" For him, those rooms all had the same size (4 by 7–8 meters) whereas – according to Dragon – all four had different sizes.³⁵⁴

6.3. Later Accounts

For a long time, the two depositions of Szlama Dragon on the gassing 'Bunkers' at Birkenau remained inaccessible to the public at large: until now only the brief extract of the Soviet deposition which appeared in the "*Communication of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation and the Research of the Crimes of the Fascist-German Invaders and Their Associates,*" published on May 7, 1945, in *Pravda* had been known; it was presented as a deposition by the witnesses Henryk Tauber and Szlama Dragon.³⁵⁵

"In the beginning of the camp activity, the Germans had two gas chambers, which were three kilometers apart from each other. Next to them stood two wooden barracks. The persons who arrived with the transports were led to the barracks, undressed, and were then taken into the gas

³⁵³ "Kommando Baubüro. Liste der ausserhalb der Postenkette beschäftigten Häftlinge," August 26, 1943. RGVA, 502-1-26, p. 150.

³⁵⁴ Cf. chapter 9.2.

³⁵⁵ *Pravda*, May 7, 1945, n. 109. The article was later accepted as proof for the prosecution at the Nuremberg trial (document URSS 008).

chamber. [...³⁵⁶]. Up to 1500–1700 persons were crowded into the gas chambers, then the SS, wearing gas masks, threw [in] Zyklon through openings. The gassing took 15–20 minutes, then the corpses were pulled out and taken on carts to the trenches where they were burned.”

The article was published in various languages. The English translation appeared as early as May 29, 1945,³⁵⁷ and in 1945 there was also a translation into French.³⁵⁸

As we shall see in chapter 7, in the succeeding years the official historiography set the central propaganda theme of the homicidal gassings in two ‘Bunkers’ but embellished it with rather scant particulars.

However, the witnesses who decided to ‘speak out’ in the 1960s and the 1980s knew precious little of even those rare details. Therefore in their tales they often had to reinvent the fictional scenario of the gassing ‘Bunkers’ from scratch. In the pages that follow, we shall examine the witnesses who fall into this category.

6.3.1. Dov Paisikovic

On October 17, 1963, in Vienna, Dov Paisikovic wrote a report on his experience as a member of the so-called special unit at Auschwitz. As he states frequently, Paisikovic (born at Rakowec, then in Czechoslovakia, on April 1, 1924) was deported to Auschwitz from the ghetto at Munkacs (Hungary) in May 1944 and was registered with ID no. A-3076. However, according to Danuta Czech’s *Chronicle*, the ID nos. A-2846 through A-3095 were assigned to 250 Dutch Jews coming from the Westerbork camp.³⁵⁹ On the third day, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Moll made his appearance in the sector BIIC, where Paisikovic stayed, and selected 250 robust men. Of these, 100 were sent to crematorium III; as for the others, Paisikovic relates the following:³⁶⁰

“The others had to march on to the so-called Bunker V (another farmhouse in which gassings took place). There, SS Hauptscharführer Moll received us; he had gone there on a motorcycle, in a white uniform. He addressed us with the words: ‘You will get grub here, but you will have to

³⁵⁶ In the complete report prepared by the Soviet interrogators there appears the following sentence: “on the entrance door to the gas chamber, externally, there was the inscription ‘to the disinfection,’ and on the exit door, internally, ‘entrance to the bath.’” Сообщение Чрезвычайной Государственной Комиссии по установлению и расследованию злодеяний немецко-фашистских захватчиков и их сообщников (Communication of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Ascertainning and Investigation of Crimes Committed by the German-fascist Invaders and Their Associates), GARF, 7021-116-103, p. 45.

³⁵⁷ Extraordinary State Commission for the Ascertainning and Investigation of Crimes Committed by the German-fascist Invaders and Their Associates, “Statement”, in: *Information Bulletin*, Embassy of the Soviet Socialist Republics (Washington, D.C.), vol. 5, no. 54, May 29, 1945.

³⁵⁸ Extraordinary State Commission for the Ascertainning and Investigation of Crimes Committed by the German-fascist Invaders and Their Associates, “Oswiecim (Auschwitz). Le camp où les nazis assassinèrent plus de quatre millions d’hommes,” in: *Forfaits hitlériens, documents officiels*, Ed. des Trois Collines, Geneva-Paris, 1945.

³⁵⁹ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 779.

³⁶⁰ ROD, c[21]96, p. 1.

work.' We were taken to the other side of Bunker V, and while we could not see anything particular in the front, we saw in the back what this Bunker was used for.

A pile of naked corpses was there, the corpses had swollen, and we were ordered to carry them to a pit that was about 6 meters wide and 30 meters long and that contained corpses already on fire. We tried to take the corpses to the place indicated. But that was too slow for the SS. We were savagely beaten, and one SS man ordered 'one man will carry one corpse.' Not knowing how to do this, we were beaten again, and then the SS man showed us that we had to seize these corpses by the neck with a crook and drag them over. We had to do this work until 18 hours [6 pm]. At noon, we had thirty minutes of rest. Food was brought but none of us wanted to eat. Then we had to line up again. We were led to the Birkenau camp section [BII]d, Block 15 – an isolated block. That night, we were tattooed with our detainee numbers.

The next day, we had to march out again, the one group of 100 to crematorium III and the 150 of us to Bunker V. Our work did not change. It stayed like that for eight days. Some of us threw themselves into the fire because they could not go on. If I should estimate their number today, I should say eight or nine. A rabbi was among them."

On August 10, 1964, Paisikovic gave a long account which was taken down by Tadeusz Szymański, curator of the Auschwitz Museum.³⁶¹ Attached to the report are 2 pages containing 4 sketches of "Bunker 5."³⁶² The witness describes it as follows:³⁶³

"[...] there were 150 persons who were taken to crematorium 4 (V),^[364] the other 100 were led farther away, to 'Bunker 2.' It was a farmhouse consisting of 3 rooms. As we approached the house, I saw three windows and three doors. The doors were very strong and had bolts, which attracted my attention, and they had nothing in common with the normal doors of a farmhouse. The house was thatched with straw. On the other side of the house there were doors as well. As far as I can remember there were also three doors on that side. The rooms had a concrete floor. When I was made to stop – just like the others – in front of that house, a Haupt-scharführer arrived – I later learned that his name was Moll. He moved around on a heavy motorcycle. Moll told us in no uncertain terms that we had to work here, but would also get food. Moll took us to the back of the house, where we saw the hell of Auschwitz that no normal human being could imagine: there was an enormous pile of corpses stacked up like hay. Moll started to scream at us to get us to work. He told us to take the corpses from the pile to a trench that had already been dug. Four of us took one corpse, two by the arms and two by the legs. When we came near

³⁶¹ APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia*, vol. 44, pp. 85-113a.

³⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 111f. Cf. documents 15 and 16.

³⁶³ APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia*, vol. 44, pp. 87f.

³⁶⁴ In this account, the witness uses explicitly the numbering 1-4 for the Birkenau crematoria

the trench, which was 30 meters long and 10 meters wide, we noticed that on the bottom there was wood, logs. Near us I saw another trench that was already on fire; the one to which we were taking the corpses had just been dug. At that moment an SS man pounced on us and started to hit us, yelling that each of us should take one corpse. He showed us many walking sticks with the knob bent into an arc and showed us how we should work: he put the curved part under the neck of a corpse and dragged it across the ground behind his back. We now had to do the work like that."

The victims were taken to "Bunker 5" in groups of 300, escorted by 8–10 SS soldiers.³⁶⁵ Paisikovic did this work for two weeks.³⁶⁶ The four sketches (on two sheets) attached to his story were done by Tadeusz Szymański in the presence of Jan Mikulski, judge at the Central Commission for Investigation into the Hitlerian Crimes in Poland, in accordance with the description by Paisikovic, who signed, on each of the two sheets, a declaration to the effect that the sketches were in conformity with his declarations. The first sheet contains three sketches.³⁶⁷ The first sketch³⁶⁸ is a floor plan of "Bunker 5": the front part (at the bottom) shows three entrance doors and three small windows for the introduction of Zyklon B. In the rear are shown only three doors.

The second³⁶⁹ is a front view of "Bunker 5." The roof is covered with straw, and on the front wall the three doors and the three small windows are indicated. The little circles on the doors no doubt represent mechanical levers for closing (which the witness wrongly calls "bolts"). On the side of the house runs the fence of the 'Bunker' area.

The third³⁷⁰ shows the backside of the 'Bunker' with the three doors but without windows.

The fourth sketch³⁷¹ represents the area near "Bunker 5," which is located against the enclosure in the upper part of the drawing. In the center there are two cremation trenches – a new one (to the left) and an old one in operation (to the right). The area shown is a rectangle measuring 100 by 70 meters.

None of these sketches shows any orientation, and the position of "Bunker 5" with respect to the Birkenau camp is not indicated. However, judging from the ruins of the alleged 'Bunker 2' the drawings are roughly oriented north-south (actually the axis is about 340°), but they have different perspectives: the first two drawings are seen from the south, the third and fourth from the north. The third drawing has a perspective similar to Olère's drawing.³⁷² Comparing those two drawings, we can note the following differences:

1) House

– chimney present on Olère's drawing, absent on Paisikovic's.

³⁶⁵ APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia*, vol. 44, p. 89f.

³⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 90.

³⁶⁷ Cf. document 15.

³⁶⁸ Cf. document 15, top.

³⁶⁹ Cf. document 15, middle.

³⁷⁰ Cf. document 15, bottom.

³⁷¹ Cf. document 16.

³⁷² Cf. document 14.

- side of the house: Olère has a single window, Paisikovic 3 doors and 3 windows.
 - front: Olère shows a door with a sign “*Dezinfektion*” above it. Paisikovic shows nothing at all, the wall is completely bare, no doors, no windows, no signs.
 - tree shown on Olère’s drawing, not shown on Paisikovic’s.
- 2) Barrack: the barrack drawn by Olère is absent on Paisikovic’s drawing.
- 3) Trenches: Olère has drawn the beginning of a trench roughly running east-west; the two trenches on Paisikovic’s drawing, on the other hand, run north-south.

Paisikovic’s only contribution to the propaganda story is one of terminology: “*Bunker V*,” the alleged new designation of ‘Bunker 2’ in 1944, was coined by R. Höß³⁷³ but had remained totally unnoticed.³⁷⁴ This designation, later picked up by Filip Müller, was used after that only by Jean-Claude Pressac, who coined the new term “*Bunker 2/V*.”³⁷⁵

The sketches mentioned also contrast with the deposition by Szlama Dragon. The drawing done by engineer Nosal in accordance with Dragon’s Polish deposition presents, in fact, 4 rooms, but the sketch done by Tadeusz Szymański based on Dov Paisikovic’s story shows 3 rooms. For Dragon, the 4 rooms all had different sizes, for Paisikovic, the 3 rooms all had the same size. For Dragon, one of the long walls of the house had 4 entrance doors and a small window for the introduction of Zyklon B, the opposite wall had three exit doors and 4 small windows, and one of the short walls had an exit door; for Paisikovic, on the other hand, one of the long walls had three entrance doors and 3 small windows, the opposite wall 3 exit doors and no windows, and the two short walls no doors and no windows.

When it comes to the capacity of the ‘Bunker,’ Dragon sets it at 2000 to 2550 persons, Paisikovic at 300 persons.

Finally, the sketch of the area of “*Bunker 5*” is in disagreement with the on-site findings: it is shown in the form of a rectangle, whereas in reality the area around the house allegedly turned into ‘Bunker 2’ (or “*Bunker 5*”) had the form of a pentagon.³⁷⁶

It would seem that Paisikovic was unaware of the literary motif of the camp railway, because he asserts that the corpses were moved to the cremation trenches by seizing them by the throat with a curved stick and dragging them along the ground – a decidedly impractical way of transporting tens of thousands of victims every day over a distance of some 100 feet!

³⁷³ Steven Paskuly (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 37.

³⁷⁴ The designation “*Bunker V*” is unknown even to Franciszek Piper. Cf. his paper “*Bunkry – prowizoryczne komory gazowe*,” in: various authors, *Auschwitz 1940-1945...*, *op. cit.* (note 2), vol. III, *Zagłada*, pp. 113-122.

³⁷⁵ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz:...*, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 171.

³⁷⁶ Cf. chapter 9.1.

One should note that in 1942–43, when it was allegedly necessary to move fewer than 800 corpses per day,³⁷⁷ the camp administration is said to have decided to lay a narrow-gauge camp railroad from ‘Bunker 2’ to the alleged cremation trenches to transport the bodies, but in 1944, when ‘Bunker 2’ (or “*Bunker 5*”) allegedly exterminated thousands of Hungarian Jews every day³⁷⁸ and the bodies had to be taken to the “*cremation trenches*,” the camp administration resorted to the system of ... walking sticks!

6.3.2. Franciszek Gulba

Franciszek Gulba was interned at Auschwitz on February 11, 1941, and received ID no. 10245. In November 1944 he was transferred to Buchenwald. On December 2, 1970, he wrote a long report in Polish, which he deposited with the Auschwitz Museum, as registered by Tadeusz Iwasko. I have translated the passages which refer to the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’³⁷⁹

“One day, the Birkenau Lagerführer, Schwarzhuber, came to the penal company. I already knew him from [my time at] Auschwitz, where he was Fritsch’s substitute. Schwarzhuber called me out. This happened after the roll call but before the details moved out for work. He asked me, using the polite form ‘sie,’ whether I had built roads at Auschwitz. I answered in the affirmative. He ordered me to go in the direction of the Königsgraben [royal ditch]. At the level of the future crematoria III and IV there was a straw-covered house that had been turned into a gas chamber. But there was no access [road]. Schwarzhuber ordered me to go there, adding that someone from the Bauleitung would arrive presently and tell me what to do. That was probably in early August 1942, but I don’t remember the exact date.

When I was at the site, I saw a steam roller. The driver was a civilian. I asked him what he was doing there. He answered that he was to roll out a road but did not see it. I explained to him that not far from there the detainees of the penal company^[380] were still at work, about 500 of them at that time. It consisted then mostly of Jewish detainees from France.

I looked around when, suddenly, a motor-car arrived. An SS officer who worked at the Bauleitung got out. He already knew my name. He told me that I was to build a road at that place – but I did not know how. He answered that detainees from the S.K.^[381] would be assigned to me to do the

³⁷⁷ The maximum number of persons allegedly gassed during the activity of the two ‘Bunkers’ in the years 1942–1943 was in January 1943, about 45,700, an average of $(45,700 \div 2 \times 31) = 737$ persons for each ‘Bunker.’ Data derived from the *Kalendarium* of Danuta Czech.

³⁷⁸ During the deportation of the Hungarian Jews a full 6,800 persons per day are stated to have been burned in the open air, the better part of whom are said to have been gassed in ‘Bunker 2.’ Cf. in this respect my article “*Supplementary Response to John C. Zimmerman on his ‘Body Disposal at Auschwitz’*” online: www.vho.org/GB/c/CM/Risposta-new-eng.html.

³⁷⁹ APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, t. 70, pp. 50–52.

³⁸⁰ In Polish “*Karina Kompania*.”

³⁸¹ “*Strafkompanie*,” penal company.

work and that the construction material for the road (bricks) would be brought by detainees, who were demolishing a couple of houses and some barns in the area. We decided to put down a layer of bricks, then some gravel, which would be rolled, and finally sand on top. On the sides we were to dig a ditch with vertical brick walls to sustain it. The officer told me that the road had to be ready within three days.

After he left, the equipment was delivered: some of the detainees of the S.K. were assigned to the demolition of the buildings mentioned and to the transportation of the bricks. Work proceeded quickly, but on the third day we were still far from having finished. We had done a stretch of 150 meters, but there were still another 300 to be done.

In the afternoon three trucks full of women arrived from somewhere. Some days earlier, near the gas chamber cottage, a large excavator had been at work. Deep trenches had been dug. The cottage itself stood among a few rather tall trees. Towards the trenches, in the winter time, red firs had been planted to hide the trenches.

Inside the house there were doors opening onto a corridor from which other doors led into two rooms, to the right and to the left of the corridor. These rooms also had doors which opened directly to the outside, toward the trenches. I remember that earlier, the ceilings in that building had been taken out and replaced by a concrete slab. A bricklayer Kapo, a German detainee who was part of the S.K., had supervised that work. His name was Zimmer.

The house, if I remember rightly, was made of brick, but the roof was covered with straw. That I recall very well. The whole house was painted white. In the new ceiling openings had been left from which, in the center, the gas was thrown. The Kapo bricklayer told me about this.

I shall go back to the day when the three trucks arrived. They advanced even though the road had not yet been finished. The house – the gas chamber – stood some 50–80 meters away from the road. When the trucks stopped, the women were unloaded. The trucks disappeared. The SS personnel ordered the women to go into the house. They refused and did not want to follow the order. The SS unleashed the dogs – there were several, four or five – and set them on to the women. The dogs fell on them like wild beasts. It was a horrible sight. The dogs tore into the abdomens and yanked out the bowels, biting into their backs and their hands. The women let out screams and moans and in a panic ran towards the doors. After that, we had to pick up the women who were lying on the ground. I saw all that with my own eyes because I stood fewer than a hundred meters from that spot. The trees were high and quite sparse and thus did not hide the house from view. Of course, the same scene was observed by the detainees working on the road. The women were still quite well fed and wore civilian clothes. Among them I did not notice any children. In my opinion, that was the first gassing in the Birkenau zone.”

On December 30, 1974, Franciszek Gulba wrote a letter to the International Auschwitz Committee at Warsaw, in which he gave the following account:³⁸²

“In April 1942 I was moved to Birkenau, camp BIIb, with the penal company. The penal company, in which I served, had been assigned between early May and the 20th of the month to dig ditches in the camp. At that time, over by the [later] crematoria, some 50 meters [outside] the fence, the foundations for a concrete slab had been completed to a height of a meter and a half and were partly covered by boards. Only a few civilians were at work there, one of them whom I knew would throw me pieces of bread over the fence.

One morning in early August 1942, after the roll call, Lagerführer Schwarzhuber came to the penal company, checked everyone and asked me whether I had built roads at Auschwitz, which I confirmed. He then took me to the camp office and sent me to the road from the present Birkenau monument^[383] towards crematorium IV.

An officer from the Bauleitung came up and with him I determined how to build the road with a solid pavement. The entire penal company, some 600 men, was assigned to that task. On the third day, near the Bunker 2 farmhouse, which was in that area, three trucks with women detainees arrived, and the first gassing was carried out in that Bunker. That must have been on August 10, 1942. Where could the first cottage, turned into Bunker 1, have been at that time? I wish to add here, when I was still at Auschwitz in the penal company, I once worked as a bricklayer with a German Kapo (Zimmer Hainc [Heinz]) who was transforming that second farmhouse into Bunker 2. He described that Bunker in detail and drew it for me. But he did not tell me anything about this other farmhouse [Bunker 1].”

The variation on the propaganda theme of the ‘Bunkers’ presented by Gulba exhibits new details which, however, place it completely at variance with the other versions.

The date of the first homicidal gassing in ‘Bunker 2’ – around August 10, 1942 – is in disagreement with the official date of June 1942. The description of the ‘Bunker’ is original and fanciful: the house was traversed by a corridor with a gas chamber on either side. The ceiling had been removed and a concrete slab put in instead while, nonetheless, the house kept its straw roof! The gas was not introduced into the gas chambers from the side, through little windows in the wall, but from above, through openings in the slab. In the letter of December 30, 1974, Gulba affirms that in May 1942, “*the foundations for a concrete slab had been finished to a height of a meter and a half and were partly covered by boards*” and he identifies this building with ‘Bunker 2.’ The witness therefore saw the outside walls on which the slab would have had to be placed, but then, he says, ‘Bunker 2’ was being built from the ground up; that is at variance with what he says in his story, that the ‘Bunker’

³⁸² APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, vol. 70, p. 70.

³⁸³ The monument situated between the ruins of crematoria II and III.

was an existing building, in which the old ceiling was replaced by a concrete slab.

Until 1970 Gulba did not even know the official term ‘Bunker.’ He only learned it at the end of 1974, when the International Auschwitz Committee sent him their “*Biuletyn Informacyjny*” (Information Bulletin) no. 9, which contained an article speaking of ‘Bunkers.’³⁸² From the same source he also learned of the (alleged) existence of ‘Bunker 1’! The story of the building of the access road to ‘Bunker 2’ by order of the Auschwitz Construction Office is simply a literary trick to justify his self-styled ‘eyewitness’ testimony: as we have already seen, no report about the construction of the camp in 1942 mentions that job.

6.3.3. Filip Müller

This witness was deported to Auschwitz from Slovakia on April 13, 1942, and registered under the ID no. 29136. A month after his arrival, he was transferred to the special unit of crematorium I and later to the crematoria at Birkenau, where he stayed until January 1945, when he was moved to Mauthausen and later to Melk. His testimony of 1979 refers to 1944:³⁸⁴

“There was great activity also in the whitewashed farmhouse, separated from the camp of Birkenau by a wooded area which was now bunker 5.”

*“In addition, the farmhouse, which had served as a place of extermination in 1942, was put in running order. Its four rooms served as gas chambers while an additional four cremation pits were dug outside. The changing rooms were located in three wooden barracks, and the whole complex was known as bunker 5.”*³⁸⁵

*“[...] while on the site of bunker 5 with its four gas chambers corpses were burnt in four pits.”*³⁸⁶

*“[...] mass extermination in bunker 5 had ceased altogether. For some time now no corpses had been burnt in the pits behind crematorium 5. But the ovens in this crematorium were operating again. As we had feared there was another selection. It came on 7 October.”*³⁸⁷

*“The hot summer had ended and now it was autumn. For some time now pits had not been used for burning corpses, [...]”*³⁸⁸

Even as late as 1979, Filip Müller had only a very superficial and incoherent knowledge of the propaganda story of the ‘Bunkers.’ His summary account adds nothing new: he has taken over the designation “Bunker V” from Paisikovic, whereas the number of rooms in the house (four) and the number

³⁸⁴ F. Müller, *Eyewitness Auschwitz. Three Years in the Gas Chambers*, Stein and Day, New York 1979, here quoted from the 1999 reprint by Ivan R. Dee, Chicago, p. 124.

³⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

³⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 143.

³⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 153.

³⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 160.

of cremation trenches (four as well) stem – indirectly no doubt – from the Polish deposition of Szlama Dragon. The number of undressing barracks (three), on the other hand, has been taken from the declarations of Rudolf Höß.³⁸⁹

6.3.4. Moshe Garbarz

Moshe Garbarz was deported to Auschwitz from Drancy on July 17, 1942. In 1983 he published his souvenirs, written up by his son Elie, which contain an account of the ‘Bunkers.’

One unspecified day, while working with the electricians’ detail, he and six other detainees were allegedly picked out by an *Unterscharführer* who had them follow him. He tells in the following words what he claims to have happened then:³⁹⁰

“On arrival, all seven of us, without exchanging a word, understood why our SS man had been so kind. I immediately had to throw up. We saw two large rectangles traced out on the ground some 20–30 meters wide and 50–60 meters long. In one of them, there were red stains. In the middle there were, at regular intervals, three posts with spotlights on top. The other rectangle was only sketched out on the ground, the earth had a normal color and at the places of the posts had been dug three holes.”

Garbarz’ unit had to set up the posts and install spotlights on top. The next day he came back for work at the same site. Garbarz says:

“We had seen a kind of barn, closed on three sides, of the type where the farmers store their hay, and not far from there three or four pretty buildings, like country houses, of which only the first, fairly close, was clearly visible. The convoys arrived, adult men and small children together, women, girls, and babies together. They moved, completely naked, in groups of twenty towards the cottage. Even from a distance, we could see that they were not scared. They were led by an odd-looking group in white, four men, then two SS [men].

*When the persons had entered the cottage, a heavy door was closed on them. When the door had been well locked, an SS [man] walked by with a tin-can (the tin-can that I saw looked exactly like a paint can) and disappeared from view, hidden by the house. Then we heard a clanking sound of an opening, more like a trap than like a window. Then two more clanking sounds, the prayer *Shma Israel* sounded, then we heard some screams, but only very faintly.*

One by one, at the last moment, before vanishing behind the door, the people understood. I saw one group of men resisting. The event had been foreseen: a detail of four or five persons waiting near the door pushes them in while an SS [man] shoots them in the head. The outside of the cottage was so ordinary that such an incident was very rare. Over seven days, I

³⁸⁹ Cf. chapter 6.5.3.

³⁹⁰ Moshé and Elie Garbarz, *Un survivant*, Éditions Plon, Paris, 1983, pp. 109-116.

only saw one revolt with my own eyes. But others did occur because several times, from a distance, we heard the characteristic noise of a point-blank shot."

Garbarz then states that the corpses were taken to the mass graves by means of a camp railroad with "little flat cars" like "rotating platforms," on which the bodies were stacked "like flour sacks, five across, five lengthwise." He also mentions a night unit assigned to excavating the mass graves. On the fourth day, Garbarz claims to have managed to get near the door of a gas chamber: he could see the corpses and realized that, as a kind of euthanasia, the mothers "had strangled their children"! He recapitulates:

"Thus, the hole was gigantic, laid out to bury several thousand Jews. On the other hand, if it had contained only a few corpses, the earth would not have been stained with blood. Now, four houses and twenty persons per house were insufficient to fill such a basin."

Garbarz quotes, finally, a "direct witness, Erko Hajblum," deported from Beaune-la-Rolande and registered as no. 49269, who had told him:

"When the first crematorium oven became operational, the victims were recovered to be burned: I was part of the Kommando made to dig out the dead, thousands of dead."

Garbarz adds:

"Two months later I met a detainee still employed at digging out the dead. Not just mud: the ground was frozen. They had to break the ground and the dead with pick-axes."

Garbarz is a latter-day witness who knew the propaganda story of the 'Bunkers' only from second-hand or third-hand accounts and did not even go to the trouble of finding out what his predecessors had to say. He thus let his imagination run riot, inventing a rather dull story at variance with the official version, and it is therefore surprising that he was considered serious by Jean-Claude Pressac.³⁹¹ The witness asserts, in fact, that there were four gassing houses, each of which could take in only twenty victims at a time!

To say nothing of the assertion that the corpses removed from the mass graves were burned in the new crematorium and that the exhumation was still going on in the winter of 1942/1943, when "*the ground was frozen.*"

6.3.5. Milton Buki

On January 14, 1965, Milton Buki appeared as a witness at the 127th session of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial. He declared the following about the 'Bunkers':³⁹²

"President: Where were gassings done in 1942?"

Buki: I was put into the special unit on December 14, 1942. Our first task was to burn the corpses of the preceding special unit. The striped

³⁹¹ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ...*, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 163f.

³⁹² H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 325), vol. 1, pp. 95-96.

clothes of those detainees were all over the place. The corpses were burned in trenches. There were as yet no crematoria. The gassings were done in little whitewashed houses. Our unit was split up into special units I and II. From our transport 200 detainees had been selected for the special unit. Later, special units I and II were enlarged.

P: How long were the two little houses used for gassing?

B: Until the crematoria were built.

P: Were there gassings every day?

B: Yes, most days, day and night.

P: How did the incineration run, when the crematoria were not yet built?

B: SS men with dogs were guarding the arrivals. They had to undress and line up. Then the door to the farmhouse was opened, it was 'walk up!' and the dogs were turned on the people. Not all would go in each time. Sometimes there were too many. In the end it was always the sick and elderly who remained. They were shot outside, dressed.

P: Then what happened?

B: The door was screwed shut. Then the gas was thrown in through the window. There was a specialist for that. A car with a red cross also came up. This car was present at every gassing.

P: Were there any doctors around?

B: Yes."

On December 15, 1989, in Jerusalem, Buki released a notarized declaration from which Pressac published the passages referring to 'Bunker 1'.³⁹³

"On 10th December 1942, I... was arrested by the Germans and transported to Auschwitz where I arrived on the 12th of that month...

The next morning at 5 o'clock, an SS officer accompanied by several men ordered us to go outside and took us to a brick farmhouse on the edge of a wood. In front of this house there were about 40 corpses of shot (?) men. We loaded these bodies onto trolleys mounted on narrowgauge rails. The door of the house was then opened by an SS man. We saw that the interior was full of corpses, some lying some standing and others hanging onto one another. About twenty minutes or perhaps half an hour after the door was opened, we were given the order to remove the bodies and load them on the trolleys.

The bodies were all naked and some had blue stains on them. We took the trolleys to a grave about 40 metres long and I dank about 6 metres wide which was about 100 metres (actually 300 to 400) from die house. Before the grave there was another group of deportees who threw the bodies into the hole... We learned that we formed part of a group called a 'Sonderkommando' whose job was to transport the bodies of the gassed to the grave...

³⁹³ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ...*, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 163. Omission ellipses, emphases, and comments in parentheses in the text are Pressac's.

While, on the first occasion, we were taken to the house after the gassing had already taken place, later we were already there when the convoy arrived. Under these conditions I was able to see the whole process. The men, women and children were made to undress in a shed near the house. They were then obliged to walk very quickly or even run between two ranks of SS who had dogs. In this way they reached the open door of the house and went in. They were told that it was simply a shower for disinfection purposes, after which they would be admitted to the camp to work there under normal conditions. When the interior of the house was absolutely full, the door was closed. Doctor Mengele who was often (present) or another doctor replacing him, gave an SS man the order to inject the gas. To do this he climbed several steps by the side wall of the house and introduced through a little chimney (opening) the contents of the can that he opened with a knife. About twenty minutes after the injection of the gas, the door was opened and the work of removing the bodies commenced about half an hour afterwards. After being taken back to Block 11, we could see the flames that consumed the bodies in the grave.”

Milton Buki claims to have arrived at Auschwitz on December 12, 1942, and that the SS selected from his transport 200 persons for the so-called special unit. According to Danuta Czech, Buki, who had ID number 80312, became a member of the so-called special unit that had been set up on December 6, 1942.³⁹⁴ Hence, Buki would have arrived at Auschwitz with the same transport as Dragon, but the dates are in disagreement – December 7 for one, December 12 for the other. On the other hand, if we follow Dragon, the new special unit was formed on December 10 and started to work the next day when Buki was not yet at Auschwitz.

It is certainly possible for a witness – even both witnesses – to be wrong about the dates, but the contradictions in their accounts are far more serious than that, as we shall see.

Buki asserts that the first job of the new special unit was to burn the corpses of the preceding special unit. Obviously, this concerned “about 40 corpses of shot men” that he saw on his first day at work with the new special unit. Dragon, however, does not mention this disgusting job at all, which is moreover at variance with the official version of this alleged event. In fact, if we follow, the *Auschwitz Chronicle*, the preceding special unit, made up of 300 men, was gassed in crematorium I on December 3, 1942,³⁹⁵ and besides, the witness Jankowski affirms that their corpses were burned in the ovens of that crematorium.³⁹⁶ Hence, there were 300 members of the special unit, not only about forty; they were gassed and not shot; and their corpses were burnt in crematorium ovens and not in cremation trenches.

The witness uses also another literary theme of the propaganda story, that is: the presence of Dr. Mengele at ‘Bunker 1’; the latter, as has been pointed

³⁹⁴ D. Czech, *Kalendarium... , op. cit.* (note 13), p. 352.

³⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 349.

³⁹⁶ T. Świebocka et al., *op. cit.* (note 296), pp. 41f., p. 48.

out already, arrived at Auschwitz long after that ‘Bunker’ had been demolished.

Buki had previously given two depositions in January 1946. The first, dated January 4, was before a section of the U.S. War Crimes Division at Linz, Austria. This deposition, drawn up in English, is entitled “*Atrocities of SS Oberscharführer in Auschwitz Camp*”³⁹⁷ and concerns exclusively the alleged atrocities of SS *Oberscharführer* “*Hustek*” or “*Hustek-Erbers*.”³⁹⁸ Here, Buki makes no mention of his presumed activity near the so-called ‘Bunkers.’

The other deposition is dated January 7, 1946, and concerns Maximilian Grabner, the head of the Political Section at Auschwitz. It was drawn up at the Police Directorate of Vienna and is in German. The witness declared:³⁹⁹

“[I] Was deported to the Birkenau camp in 1942 as detainee, and within a few days of my arrival at the camp [I] was assigned to the special unit that had to do work in and around the crematorium.

My work consisted of moving the corpses from the gas chambers to the various incineration sites (crematorium, cremation pits). This I did until November 1944 [when] the gassings were stopped.

The gassings occurred in the following way:

After the arrival of a transport, a selection was carried out on the platform of the station, in the presence of Obersturmführer Grabner. They were told to undress quickly and totally, under the pretext that they would be taken to a bath. Those who did not undress quickly enough were brutally beaten with clubs by the SS, besides, the heat in the gas chambers was so great that most people were numbed before they actually died. Here, too, Obersturmführer Grabner was sometimes present. The gassing as such took 6–8 minutes, and the rooms were opened after half an hour, whereupon the corpses – sometimes so entangled they had to be torn from one another – [were] transferred to the incineration.

But before they were burned, the women’s hair was cut and all corpses possessing gold teeth were divested of them. These objects were thrown into a particular box, which was immediately taken to the Political Department, of which Maximilian Grabner was the head.

Grabner participated in the ill-treatment of the people before the so-called bathing; he was always dressed exceedingly pedant[ically] and walked around with polished boots, his hands crossed behind his back, and beat the people or kicked them with [his] feet.

My declarations made above correspond fully and completely to the truth and I affirm this by a signature with my own hand.”

³⁹⁷ Trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison, vol. 45a, p. 64.

³⁹⁸ Probably Josef Houstek, of whom it is known only that he was promoted to *Rottenführer* on October 3, 1941. Norbert Frei, Thomas Grotum, Jan Parcer, et al. (eds.), *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1940-1945*, K.G. Saur, Munich 2000, p. 70.

³⁹⁹ Trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison, vol. 45a, p. 79.

There is another handwritten document by Buki, but it is a simple postcard, in which he informs the Vienna Police Directorate that he has changed residence.⁴⁰⁰

In 1946, his memory still fresh, Buki did not yet know anything about the so-called ‘Bunkers’ of Birkenau, and one cannot object that he did not speak about them because his deposition concerned Maximilian Grabner: if the latter, in fact, had been implicated in the homicidal activity of the crematorium (the witness uses this term always in the singular as if there had been only one crematorium at Birkenau),⁴⁰¹ he would be all the more implicated in the alleged homicidal activity of the ‘Bunkers,’ and by stating that Grabner dealt out his heavy kicks also to those ‘selected’ for the ‘Bunkers,’ he would have aggravated the latter’s situation.

6.3.6. Maurice Benroubi

The following testimony by Maurice Benroubi was made public by Jean-Claude Pressac.⁴⁰² He informs us that the witness was born at Saloniki on December 27, 1914, was arrested in France on July 16, 1942, and deported on July 20 to Auschwitz, where he arrived on July 23 and was given ID no. 51059. On January 17, 1945, he was evacuated from the Jawischowitz camp. Benroubi was assigned to the grave-diggers at an unknown point in time. Pressac does not give the date of his deposition either:

“We left the camp. We passed through small clearings, a little wood. About every 300 metres there was a watch tower.

Suddenly, a deportee left the ranks and started running in the direction of the camp shouting ‘Nein, nein/no, no, I want to go back to the camp’. We stopped, an SS man shouted to him to come back. He did not obey, the SS shot him. Four deportees went to fetch him. Three hundred metres further on, another deportee did exactly the same as the first. I could not understand a thing...

... Ten minutes later, I saw in the distance big heaps of corpses, as if there was a death factory near by. As we approached, we could see them better. They were all mixed up together like wooden dummies. Some had their cheeks torn. Their gold teeth had been extracted. There were women, children, babies.

We marched 200 metres and stopped in a clearing. Two SS officers were there and gave orders to the SS men. Further on about one hundred Sonderkommando men were pushing platforms of 3m by 2m mounted on wheels and on these platforms there were corpses lying one on top of the other. They put them in front of graves about 20m long, 3m wide and 2.50m deep.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

⁴⁰¹ But in compensation he speaks of “cremation trenches” in the plural.

⁴⁰² J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ...*, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 162f. Omission ellipses are Pressac’s. I have omitted his inserted comments.

There were about ten graves ready to receive the martyrs. Parallel to these open graves there were some that had been covered with earth and these extended over about 300 metres. It could not have been long since they were covered over. On the earth in places there were trickles of light coloured decomposed fat mixed with blood. After receiving orders, the Capos split us into groups. Some of our comrades took picks and shovels and jumped into the graves. As for me, I went with other comrades to join the Sonderkommando to transport the corpses like them. The men of the Sonderkommando received us with stone throwing and called us all sorts of names. They laughed and amused themselves like criminals, making themselves accomplices of the SS to please them. Basically, it was that, the nazi regime... all of a piece.

In this Kommando, the Capos, the SS and the Sonderkommando all hit us, and threw us on the heaps of bodies to laugh at our fear. The SS fired on us and every day we had to take to assassinated comrades back to the camp to be counted at the evening roll call.

At midday the Sonderkommando ate separately and we ate far from them, almost a double ration and a few potatoes. There was also a distribution of bread from a convoy, stale and even mouldy. Some comrades exchanged non-mouldy bread for mouldy in order to have a bigger quantity. Little pools of water formed in the graves and as we were very thirsty, we quickly jumped down and lapped up the water and climbed out again very fast. We were reduced to the state of animals...

One morning, we had hardly arrived and were getting ready to pick up the picks and shovels, when an SS who was waiting for us ordered the guards to keep marching and to follow him. We crossed the entire clearing and took the track along which the wagons arrived...

We arrived in another clearing. There were two big concrete blocks at least 20m wide and perhaps as many long. Near these blocks there were three mountains of bodies. One of men, one of women and one of children under ten.

The Sonderkommando men received us as on previous occasions with stone throwing and abuse. We stopped in front of the big heaps of corpses and the Capos made us understand that we had to load the corpses on the wagon platforms and transport them to the empty graves. We rushed to the wagons and started working like mad... for what mattered most was to get away from the gas chambers...

One morning, the doors of the Bunkers, as they called them, were open. I noticed that there were shower heads and along the walls clothes hooks. I remember that a comrade made signs to me to make me understand that we should never look in that direction, which meant also, 'if you don't want to be shot at by a sentry, don't look'. In fact I saw that all the comrades were working with their backs to the Bunkers to avoid giving even the slightest glance towards the two extermination Bunkers...

One day, arriving at work I saw electricians installing lamp posts by the empty graves and fitting big lamps. I immediately realised that there were also going to be night shifts...

The same day, 4th September 1942, after the roll call, there was a 'selection' and contrary to what normally happened every time there was a selection, this time the nazis chose the strongest, the most healthy.

We waited a good hour before departing. A commrade said to me: 'What are you doing amongst us ? Didn't you hear the order that those who worked in the Sonderkommando were not to step out of the ranks?' I was dumbfounded...

After two hours march we arrived at the Jawischowitz camp."

Pressac then relates what Benroubi told him during an interview, about which he gives no details. This is how the witness described the 'gas chamber':

"The Bunker was a brick-built house, with the windows filled in... We had to turn our backs to the Bunker when we picked up the corpses, never look at the gas chambers...

Twenty metres from me, there was a door still open, of the rolling or sliding type, and beyond it on one side a ground floor door through which we could see shower heads. From the back no writing was visible. The Sonderkommando took the people out of the gas chambers and twenty metres away made them into separate piles of women, children and old men."

Benroubi, too, has tried to fill in with his imagination his defective knowledge of the propaganda story of the 'Bunkers.' Thus, he describes "two large concrete blocks at least 20m wide and perhaps as many long," which agrees with the official version neither in the number of gassing installations (two at the same site rather than one), nor in the material of which they were made (concrete instead of bricks), nor in the dimensions (about 20 by 20 m, instead of about 15 by 6 [Bunker 1] or 17 by 8 [Bunker 2]). The sliding door, too, is a figment of the witness' imagination – later picked up by Dr. Kremer⁴⁰³ – whereas the shower heads are among the canonical literary themes of the propaganda.

The literary variations of Maurice Benroubi, Milton Buki, and Moshe Garbarz are moreover so imprecise that it is impossible to know even whether the authors are talking about 'Bunker 1' or 'Bunker 2,' and it is only by calling on his imagination Pressac that attributes them to 'Bunker 1.'

6.4. The Latter-day Witnesses

Between 1985 and 1993 the Israeli writer Gideon Greif interviewed several former Auschwitz detainees who asserted that they had been members of the

⁴⁰³ Cf. chapter 6.5.9.

so-called “Sonderkommando.” He then recounted his interviews with seven ex-inmates in a book published in 1995.⁴⁰⁴

The witnesses Josef Sackar, Jaacov Gabai, Shaul Chasan and Leon Cohen all belonged to a transport of Athenian Jews that arrived at Auschwitz from Athens on April 11, 1944. Among those interviewed were also Szlama Dragon (then spelling his name Shlomo) and his brother Abraham.

With the exception of Szlama Dragon none of the witnesses had made a deposition at the Auschwitz trial or at the trial of the camp garrison, or afterward, or had written an account of his experience. They were all complete unknowns who had “kept silent” for more than forty years!

As we shall see below, fully four witnesses out of the seven introduced a decidedly new note into the official propaganda version: the ‘Bunker’ (they knew no later additional specifications, such as “2” or “2/V”) was not the alleged Polish house turned into a gas chamber, but one or more cremation trenches!

6.4.1. Josef Sackar

The witness arrived at Auschwitz on April 11, 1944,⁴⁰⁵ with a Jewish transport from Athens and was registered with ID no. 182739. After having spent three weeks in the quarantine camp BIIa, he became a member of the so-called special unit and was assigned to ‘Bunker 2.’ He relates the following about his first day with this Kommando:⁴⁰⁶

“I remember the first day very well. We were in the D-camp, and one night we were taken behind the outermost crematorium building, where I saw the most gruesome thing I have ever experienced in my life. A small transport had arrived that day. We did not have to work, we were taken there only to get used to the sight. There were excavated trenches, called ‘Bunkers,’ to burn the corpses. They brought the corpses from the gas chambers to those ‘Bunkers,’ threw them in, and burned them in a fire.”

“The outermost crematorium” was crematorium V; therefore the witness placed ‘Bunker 2’ in the yard of that crematorium!

When asked “*Can you describe the ‘Bunker’?*” the witness answered:⁴⁰⁷

“Yes, it was a large pit, to which the corpses were brought and then dumped in. The pits were deeply excavated, wood had been piled up at the bottom. From the gas chambers they brought the corpses here and threw them into the pits. The pits were all outside, in the open air. There were some pits, in which corpses were being burned.”

The witness makes no mention at all of the house with the alleged gas chamber, so that from his statements one does not even understand whether

⁴⁰⁴ G. Greif, *Wir weinten tränenlos... Augenzeugenberichte der jüdischen “Sonderkommandos” in Auschwitz*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln Weimar Wien 1985.

⁴⁰⁵ He speaks erroneously of April 14.

⁴⁰⁶ G. Greif, *op. cit.* (note 404), pp. 9f.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

the corpses burned in these ‘Bunker’-pits came from the crematoria or from the ‘Bunker’-house. He does not indicate the number of pits either.

6.4.2. Jaacov Gabai

This witness, too, arrived at Auschwitz with the transport of April 11, 1944, and was registered with ID no. 182569. He too claims to have been assigned to the so-called special unit. With respect to the topic of interest he declared:⁴⁰⁸

“From the end of April and throughout the month of May, several transports of Hungarian Jews came to Birkenau [every day?]. There were so many people in the transports that the capacity of the crematoria was too low to handle them all. So pits were made, and in this way one could burn another thousand every day. My group from the special unit worked in the wood next to the ‘Saubäudegebäude’ [incomprehensible, perhaps sauna building] opposite crematoria III–IV. Pits were arranged there to burn the corpses that the crematorium itself could not handle. Those pits were called ‘Bunker.’ I worked there for three days. From the gas chamber, one brought the corpses to the Bunker and burned them.

The Bunker was in the middle, among trees, so one could not see what happened there.

The method of cremation was as follows: the corpses were put down on a layer of wood, then more wood and boards was laid on them and so on, three stories or more. Then an SS man came, poured gasoline on top, threw in a match – and everything went up in flames. About 1000 corpses were burned per hour. The fat from the corpses was sufficient for the fire. One put down a kilogram of coal and two boards, lit up, fire, among the bodies.”

Not even this witness speaks explicitly of the ‘Bunker’-house, rather, according to him, the corpses burning in the pits were those of Jews gassed in the crematoria!

We can judge his credibility not only from what he says about the ‘Bunker’-pits and about their cremation capacity (1,000 corpses per hour!), but also from the following assertion:⁴⁰⁸

“One had to burn 24,000 Hungarian Jews every day.”

To say nothing of his description of Zyklon B and gaseous hydrogen cyanide:⁴⁰⁹

“When he [an SS man] threw in the gas from above, it spread blue [i.e., as a blue cloud]. The material itself came in blue cubes, which dissolved on contact with air, liberating a gas that caused immediate suffocation.”

Hence, Zyklon B was composed of blue cubes that dissolved on contact with air into a blue gas. Just as all the others like him, the witness thought that

⁴⁰⁸ G. Greif, *op. cit.* (note 404), p. 132.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 141.

“*Blausäure*” (literally ‘blue acid’, vernacular German for hydrogen cyanide) was itself blue and gave off blue vapors, whereas it actually is a colorless liquid;⁴¹⁰ the porous carrier, on which it was adsorbed for the manufacture of Zyklon B, on the other hand, was made of gypsum, as is well known.

The literary motif of the blue vapors of hydrogen cyanide was later taken up by Richard Böck.⁴¹¹

6.4.3. Eliezer Eisenschmidt

The witness came to Auschwitz on December 8, 1942, with a transport of Jews from Grodno and received ID no. 80764. The next day, he was assigned to the so-called special unit. He worked “*for half a year*” from “*arrival until the new crematoria were put into service in May-June 1943*”^[412] at ‘Bunker 1.’ However, according to the official historiography this building was demolished in March 1943!

Eisenschmidt, too, believed that the term ‘Bunker’ referred to the “*pits*” instead of a building:⁴¹³

“They themselves then threw the corpses into the pits. The pits, or ‘Bunkers’ as we called them, were large and deep.”

The witness does not follow his alleged colleague Jaacov Gabai’s absurd statement regarding the cremation capacity of 1,000 corpses per hour, declaring in this regard:⁴¹⁴

“The cremation of corpses in a pit took 24 hours, sometimes even a day and a half.”

In compensation, he perpetrated another absurdity, one scarcely mentioned by his colleague⁴¹³

“The fuel for these cremations was basically the fat from the corpses.”

This is a real revolution in the field of cremation!

When Greif asked him: “*Can you describe this first ‘primitive’ gas chamber in the former farmhouse?*” the witness replied:⁴¹⁴

“There was a sign on the door saying ‘shower bath.’ There were two entrances; the victims went in through one and the corpses were taken out through the other. The sign mentioned hung on this other door, which was exactly opposite the entrance door.”

This description is at variance with the ‘official’ one, inasmuch as it rests upon the existence of a single gas chamber. According to Szlama Dragon, in fact, ‘Bunker 1’ was split up into two rooms, each with its own door, which

⁴¹⁰ In an official questionnaire for civilian disinfectors we read: “*Q.: Does hydrogen cyanide have a definite color? A.: No, hydrogen cyanide is colorless both as a liquid and as a gas. Q.: Then why is it called Blausäure [blue acid]? A.: Because initially it was made from Prussian Blue.*” O. Lenz, L. Gassner, *Schädlingsbekämpfung mit hochgiftigen Stoffen, Heft 1: Blausäure*, Verlagsbuchhandlung von Richard Schoetz, Berlin 1934, p. 15.

⁴¹¹ Cf. chapter 6.5.7.

⁴¹² G. Greif, *op. cit.* (note 404), p. 180.

⁴¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 178.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 179.

thus served both as an access for the victims and to extract the corpses. These two doors, furthermore, were not located one in front of the other on two opposing walls, but side by side.

On the basis of this, the witness continues with his alleged eyewitness testimony:⁴¹⁵

“They took us into the yard, opened the door of the building – and our eyes turned blind.”

Here “*the door*” is the alleged door for the removal of the corpses. On the other hand, if the gas chamber had two doors, one does not see why it was not possible to take out the corpses from the entrance door as well.

The witness also mentions the alleged undressing barracks, for which he invented the new designation “*huts 3 and 4*.”⁴¹⁴

“They were all taken to huts 3 and 4, which served for undressing. They had originally been horse-stables.”

Here, the witness confuses the “*Pferdestallbaracken*” (horse stable barracks), a standard German barrack type, with actual stables!

6.4.4. Shaul Chasan

This witness, too, arrived at Auschwitz with the transport of April 11, 1944, and was given ID no. 182527. He, too, claims to have been assigned to the so-called special unit and to have stayed there for eight months.⁴¹⁶ Here is his account of his first job near ‘Bunker 2’:⁴¹⁷

“We looked around in the wood, and what did we see? A little farmhouse, an isolated hut. We got there, entered, and when they opened the door I saw the horror. The inside was full of corpses, from some transport, well over 1,000 corpses. The whole room chock-full of corpses.”

This “*farmhouse*” thus had a single gas chamber with a single door. According to the official version, on the other hand, there were four gas chambers in the house, each with two doors, eight doors in all.

But for this witness as well, the ‘Bunker’ is not the “*farmhouse*,” but a pit:⁴¹⁷

“We had to take out the corpses. There was, in the area, a basin, a deep pit, which was called ‘Bunker’.”

Asked by the interviewer “*Where was this basin?*,” the witness emphasizes:⁴¹⁸

“They called that ‘Bunker.’ Now, when I was at Auschwitz again, I could find neither the pit nor the house. That must have been behind crematorium IV [= V].”

Here, the witness places ‘Bunker 2’ in the yard of crematorium V! Then, too, at variance with the official version, there was a single ‘Bunker’-pit,

⁴¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 247.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 228.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 229.

which was located “a few meters, perhaps thirty meters” from the gas-chamber;⁴¹⁸ such a distance would have completely obviated the need for a narrow-gauge railroad for the transportation of the corpses, mentioned by his colleagues.⁴¹⁹ And this is what he says about the ‘Bunker’-pit:⁴¹⁸

“The pit was very deep, I think some four meters. [...] the fire burned day and night, and we had to throw in corpses all the time.”

If the pit had been that deep, the water would have filled it to at least three meters, because at the time, in the vicinity of ‘Bunker 2,’ the water table was at a depth of 0.30 to 1.20 meters.⁴²⁰ The depth stated by the witness serves merely to explain the enormous cremation capacity of the pit, as can be seen clearly from the declaration of Leon Cohen about the placement of the corpses in layers (layers of wood and corpses) in a pit (cf. below).

On the other hand, the cremation “all the time” in the pits is in contradiction with the declarations of the other witnesses, like Dragon, who said:⁴²¹

“We took out the ash from the pits, but only 48 hours after the cremation.”

The witness also makes use of the sinister propaganda story of people thrown alive into the cremation pits:⁴²²

“After these cremations, so I remember, one night a truck arrived full of old people, sick, unable to walk, and with their clothes and all they were dumped from the truck, the way you dump gravel, directly into the pit – alive! I saw that twice – once on the first day of my work with the special unit, and then again later when more transports arrived – they threw these people alive into the bunkers – and burned them alive.”

For the description of this scene, the witness took his inspiration from two pictures by David Olère, which show an SS soldier tossing children into a cremation pit directly from a truck parked right next to its edge.⁴²³ It is not an accident that Gideon Greif’s book is illustrated with numerous pictures by Olère including the one showing ‘Bunker 2.’⁴²⁴ The two pictures mentioned above do not appear in it, but they were no doubt known to all the Israeli witnesses. To make up for this, there is a picture illustrating a similar scene:⁴²⁵

“The SS man Moll shoots young women and throws them into a cremation pit of crematorium IV.”

We shall conclude with a gem about the gas chamber of crematorium II which, by itself, shows the reliability of this witness:⁴²⁶

“Sometimes, poison gas was left over, and we could have been suffocated ourselves by inhaling this gas.”

⁴¹⁹ For example, from E. Eisenschmidt, *ibidem*, pp. 177f.

⁴²⁰ Cf. in this respect my article “Open Air Incinerations in Auschwitz: Rumor or Reality?,” in: *The Revisionist*, 1(1) (2003), pp. 14-17.

⁴²¹ G. Greif, *op. cit.* (note 404), p. 69.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁴²³ S. Klarsfeld (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 298), p. 40.

⁴²⁴ G. Greif, *op. cit.* (note 404), p. 66.

⁴²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 152.

⁴²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 236.

*“Yes, it did happen that another [member of the detail] and I wanted to inhale gas the moment they opened the gates of death. Life there was no longer worth living. I planned that with someone else who was working there with me. But, in the end, we walked out, lay around gasping for air and were able to breathe again.”*⁴²⁷

Hence, the witness and his colleagues entered the ‘gas chamber’ without a gas mask and worked while holding their breath!

6.4.5. Leon Cohen

This witness arrived at Auschwitz with the Jewish transport from Athens on April 11, 1944, and was registered with ID no. 182492. He claims to have been assigned to the so-called special unit and sent to work at ‘Bunker 2.’⁴²⁸

“The Germans took us not to the buildings with the incineration installations but to the incineration pits. I saw several carts there, next to the pits, and very close by [I saw] a building with a small door. Later, I realized that they were asphyxiating people there with gas. We waited outside some 15 minutes and then opened the doors, having been ordered to do so by the Germans.

The corpses fell out in clusters, and we started to pack them on the carts. Those were small open carts the way you have them in coal mines. Much smaller than railroad cars. The corpses were taken to the pits. In the pits, the corpses were arranged in this way: one layer of women’s and children’s corpses, then a layer of wood, then a layer of men and so on until the pit – which was a good three meters deep – was full. Then the Germans poured gasoline into the pit. The mixture of dead bodies and wood caught fire immediately.”

The witness knows neither the official term for the gassing ‘building’ nor the one invented by his colleagues (‘Bunker’=pits). His original contribution to the propaganda story is the arrangement of the bodies in the cremation pits, based on the silly belief that the bodies of women and children burned better than those of adult men and could thus function as fuel for the latter! So much so that the first layer in the pit was not wood, but the bodies of women and children! As we have seen above, the legend of the autocombustion of corpses by means of corpse fat developed from this belief.

He, too, moreover – like the others of his kind – has fallen into the trap of the “*Blausäure*,” because he asserted that Zyklon B “*looked like small blue-green stones*.”⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 248.

⁴²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 266f.

⁴²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 271.

6.4.6. Szlama (Shlomo) and Abraham Dragon

Gideon Greif has expressed his admiration for the prodigious memory of these two brothers, whom he interviewed in the summer of 1993:⁴³⁰

“Both brothers possess an excellent memory.”

But twenty-one years earlier, in Vienna, at the 26th session of the Dejacortl trial (March 2, 1972), Szlama, after having confused crematorium I and ‘Bunker 2’ the previous day, had to admit:⁴³¹

“I can’t remember [that] today, after 30 years...”

Somewhat miraculously, then, in 1993 Szlama remembered things he could not recall in 1972! Thus the prodigious memory that had so astounded Gideon Greif simply depended much more on the fact that, this time, Szlama Dragon was more careful, and had reread attentively his Polish deposition of 1945; this was all the easier as the interview took place at Birkenau⁴³² and the deposition was kept at the Auschwitz Museum.

Still, the two brothers made statements that clash violently with the official image of the SS at the camp. They were assigned to the so-called special unit on December 9, 1942, and were taken to ‘Bunker 2’ the day after. But on that very day, Szlama attempted suicide by slitting his wrist with a piece of glass, and therefore could not go on working.⁴³³ He was transported to Block 2, where the detainees of the special unit were housed, and then the following happened:⁴³⁴

“For this, they selected the sick and the weak. Luckily, I belonged to the injured and the weak, and so I was selected. I asked for my brother to be assigned to the room detail as well [...] thus we remained in Block 2 and did not go out for work.”

Hence, Szlama was not only not “selected” for the ‘gas chambers’ as a dangerous witness to SS mass murder who was, to top it all, unable to work and weak, but instead received medical treatment, was transferred to barracks clean-up, and even managed to have his brother assigned to the same work! Abraham then tells a story no less surprising:⁴³⁵

“While we were still working at the pits, one of the guards beat one of our comrades. We dropped our tools and declared we would not go on working. We thus made a small revolt. And what happened? They immediately called in higher officers. Someone by the name of Hößler arrived and asked us what was the matter. We told him while doing this awful work we were being beaten to boot. They could kill us, but we would not go on working. Hößler calmed us down and said we would no longer be beaten.

⁴³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

⁴³¹ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ..., op. cit.* (note 4), p. 172.

⁴³² G. Greif, *op. cit.* (note 404), p. 49.

⁴³³ *Ibidem*, p. 73. We should remember that in the Polish deposition he had stated that he had become ill.

⁴³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

⁴³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

He immediately ordered additional food brought us. And they no longer beat us.”

Therefore, this revolt of the special unit was not drowned in blood, but rather Höbller calmly accepted the requests of the insurgents, Jews allegedly doomed to be killed soon anyway! At that time SS *Oberscharführer* Franz Höbller was head of detainee labor (*Arbeitseinsatzführer*); in that capacity, he had no jurisdiction over the crematorium personnel (the so-called special unit), and so this kind of event can only be explained in the context of normal relations between the SS and the detainees, and not at all as part of a policy of extermination.

Abraham describes his escape from a ‘selection’ of 200 detainees of the special unit who were to be sent to Majdanek to be murdered in that camp as follows:⁴³⁶

“I became ill. The SS did not want to reveal that this transport went to their death. So it was said ‘the sick will not go along. You will have to stay here. There, they need men who can work.’”

According to the official version, registered inmates at Auschwitz were killed because they were sick, but Szlama and Abraham, on the other hand, two more dangerous witnesses to the SS mass murder, were saved precisely because they were sick! Here we have a ‘selection’ the other way around.

As far as the destination of the ‘selectees’ is concerned, Abraham reveals:⁴³⁶

“They had taken them to Lublin – locked [them] in a railroad car and somehow – I don’t know how – pumped in gas.”

A brand-new method of extermination! On top of this, the official Polish propaganda has them not go to Lublin-Majdanek but to Stutthof.⁴³⁷

Let us go back to the ‘Bunkers.’ In consequence of what has been related, the brothers Dragon worked a single day (the 10th) near the alleged ‘Bunker 2’ in December 1942, and Szlama worked there another two days in 1944:⁴³⁸

“At the time, we worked near Bunker 2 day and night. I myself worked there for two days.”

This means that altogether Szlama Dragon spent three days near ‘Bunker 2.’ But thanks to his prodigious memory he still managed to give to the Poles and the Soviets those detailed accounts that we have already discussed! During the interview, he furnishes additional details:⁴³⁹

“Snow fell while we marched. We came to an open field, at the end of which there was a building that looked like a horse stable, with rough doors and a little further up a white farmhouse with a straw-thatched roof.”

⁴³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

⁴³⁷ Cf. C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *Concentration Camp Stutthof and Its Function in National Socialist Jewish Policy*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, IL, 2003, pp. 69-73.

⁴³⁸ G. Greif, *op. cit.* (note 404), p. 83.

⁴³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 63.

He then confirms that their march led them actually “*over the snow*,”⁴⁴⁰ something absolutely normal for a month of December at Auschwitz. But then how could those four cremation pits (ca. 20 by 7–8 by 3 meters) have operated with the groundwater, the firewood frozen, in the snow, and with more snow falling?

Szlama goes on to say that when “*the door*” opened after the gassing “*one sensed the sweetish taste of the gas*.”⁴⁴¹ Apparently, no one had told him that hydrogen cyanide actually smells of bitter almonds⁴⁴² and is therefore not sweetish!

6.4.7. Shlomo Venezia

This witness holds the record for keeping silent, having held his peace for nearly 45 years!⁴⁴³ He acquired a certain fame in 1995 when an interview he gave to a certain Fabio Iacomini appeared in Italy; it was entitled “*The testimony of Salomone Venezia, survivor of the special unit[s]*.”⁴⁴⁴ His “*Testimony given to S. Melania on January 18, 2001, on the occasion of the first Day of Memory*,” was also published on the web.⁴⁴⁵ In January 2002, finally, Shlomo Venezia gave another interview to a certain Stefano Lorenzetto.⁴⁴⁶

Shlomo Venezia, born at Saloniki in 1923, was arrested in Athens on March 24, 1944, and later deported to Birkenau, where he arrived on April 11 and was registered with ID no. 182727. He claims to have been assigned to the so-called special unit, but has given two contradictory accounts of his first day at work with this group. According to the first account, he was sent to crematorium III,⁴⁴⁷ but in the interview published by *Il Giornale*, Shlomo Venezia described his first day at work with the so-called special unit in an entirely different way:⁴⁴⁸

“The next day [May 6, 1944] we had to pass through a grove of trees. We arrived in front of a shabby-looking farmhouse. Woe to anyone who moved or breathed. All in a corner waiting. Suddenly, we heard voices in the distance: entire families with little children and grand-parents. They were forced to undress in the cold. Then they had to enter the cottage. Up came a small truck with the sign of the Red Cross, an SS man got out, opened a little trap with a tool, and dropped in a can of some stuff, about two kilos. He closed [the trap] and walked away. Ten minutes later, a door

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 65.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

⁴⁴² *Enciclopedia medica italiana, op. cit.* (note 143), p. 1402.

⁴⁴³ Regarding this witness, I refer to my *Olocausto: dilettanti a convegno*, Effepi, Genova 2002, pp. 150-160.

⁴⁴⁴ In: “*Ragionamenti sui fatti e le immagini della storia*.” *Mensile di Storia Illustrata*, June 1995, pp. 30-37.

⁴⁴⁵ www.santamelania.it/approf/shlomo/shlomo.htm.

⁴⁴⁶ “*Io, l’ultimo dei Sonderkommando addetti ai crematori di Auschwitz*,” in *Il Giornale*, Jan. 13, 2002, p. 1 and 16.

⁴⁴⁷ “*La testimonianza di Salomone Venezia...*,” *op. cit.* (note 444), p. 35.

⁴⁴⁸ “*Io, l’ultimo dei Sonderkommando ...*,” *op. cit.* (note 446).

opposite the entrance was opened. The Kapo called us to take out the bodies. We had to push them into the fire in a kind of swimming pool 15 meters away.”

This version refers to the so-called ‘Bunker 2.’ The witness does not know that, according to the official version, this ‘Bunker’ was put back into operation for the arrival of the Hungarian Jews at Auschwitz, *i.e.*, after May 17, 1944. The same is true for the alleged incineration “*pool*.” Nor is the witness aware that the alleged ‘Bunker 2,’ again according to the official version, on its reactivation was divided up into 4 rooms and had 4 entrance and 4 exit doors, to say nothing of 5 traps for the introduction of Zyklon B. Thus, it does not make sense to speak of “*a door opposite the entrance*.”

Besides, the expression “*to undress in the cold*” not only clashes with the season (May 6) but is also at variance with the official version, according to which two barracks had been erected near ‘Bunker 2,’ in which the victims would undress. Furthermore, the gastight traps of the disinfestation chambers (and those of the alleged homicidal gas chambers) were not opened “*with a tool*” but with a simple butterfly bolt. It is not clear how Shlomo Venezia could have determined that “*about two kilos*” of Zyklon B were introduced into the cottage, because Zyklon B came in various sizes, from 100 grams to 1500 grams of hydrogen cyanide. Moreover, 2 kg of hydrogen cyanide in the entire volume of the alleged gas chambers would have yielded a theoretical concentration of about 7.5 grams per cubic meter – some 25 times as high as the immediately lethal concentration, which causes death within 3 minutes. Therefore, if Venezia and his companions had gone in “*ten minutes later*” they would have dropped dead within less than a minute!

6.5. The Contributions of the SS Witnesses

In this section, we shall examine the version of the propaganda story of the Birkenau gassing ‘Bunkers’ as told by SS witnesses immediately after the Second World War. In this context, we should rather speak of the non-contributions by the SS witnesses, because none of them, starting with Rudolf Höß, has furnished any new and important details that could have been incorporated into the official version. This is not surprising, because what the SS witnesses knew of the propaganda story about the ‘Bunkers’ is nothing but the reflection of what their interrogators knew. And this is true not only for this topic of the extermination allegation.

In the preceding section we saw that the article on the Extraordinary Soviet Investigation Commission on Auschwitz appeared in *Pravda* on May 7, 1945, and was available in an English translation as early as the end of that month. And from November 1944 onwards, the so-called *War Refugee Board Report*¹⁹² had been circulating. In 1945, the American and British secret services

were already in possession of various reports of ex-detainees at Auschwitz,⁴⁴⁹ and over 100 written or verbal declarations were submitted as evidence at the Belsen trial, which lasted from September 17 through November 17; the accused was SS *Hauptsturmführer* Josef Kramer, who had been commander of the KL Auschwitz II–Birkenau camp and later of Bergen-Belsen. The majority of those witnesses were former Auschwitz detainees, such as Ada Bimko and Charles Sigismund Bendel.

But it also happens that – as in the case of Maximilian Grabner – the interrogators knew nothing of the ‘Bunker’ story and that, therefore, the witnesses has nothing to say about it either.

6.5.1. Maximilian Grabner

Maximilian Grabner was head of the Political Department of the Auschwitz camp between May 1940 and September 1943. In his first deposition after his arrest, that of September 1, 1945, he relates the history of the mass extermination allegedly perpetrated at Auschwitz in the following way:⁴⁵⁰

“From early 1942 onwards, detainees at Auschwitz were murdered by gassing, initially in Block 11. I have seen these gassings myself, the SS went around equipped with gas masks, the detainees, 20 to 40 of them, were herded into the cells. Then the cells were made tight and put under gas. Later the gassings were done in the old crematorium, opposite the SS infirmary. In addition to detainees selected for this, the police, the Gestapo, and the Wehrmacht brought in people. Holes were drilled into the concrete ceiling of the bunkers, through which the gas (Zyklon) [sic] was fed. The bunker had a capacity of 700–800 people. Next to the bunker was the crematorium, in which the dead were burned immediately.

Such gassings took place several times a week. Inmates who had been picked out for this special labor unit worked in the old crematorium and helped with the gassing. This labor unit was itself gassed after some time and replaced by new detainees. I myself, or my assistant, in our capacity as head of the Political Department, was informed about each one of these gassing actions.

By order of the camp commander, SS Obersturmbannführer Höß, 4 modern crematoria were built during the winter of 1942/43, as the old crematorium was no longer performing. Together with these 4 crematoria there existed another 4 crematorium halls with a capacity of 2000 persons each. The gassings were ordered by Office Group D of the SS Economic

⁴⁴⁹ For example: “*Jewish Survivors Report. Documents of Nazi Guilt. No.1 Eighteen Months in the Oswiecim Extermination Camp.*” received from “*Jewish Central Information Office*” in May 1945 (ROD, e[21]09); United Nation War Crimes (Research Office). Statement by Ochshorn on massacres of Jews in concentration Camps, of September 1945 (NO-1934); affidavit of Werner Krumme of September 23, 1945 (NO-1933).

⁴⁵⁰ GARF, 7021-108-34, pp. 26-26a.

and Administrative Main Office in Berlin. The head of this section was SS Brigadeführer Glück[s]. [...]

While I was head of the Political Department at Auschwitz, some 3–6,000,000 persons were murdered in this or a similar way.”

The Police Directorate of Vienna, which interrogated Grabner, had not yet been informed about the propaganda story of the ‘Bunkers.’⁴⁵¹ Therefore the witness, in spite of his obvious eagerness to collaborate and his wondrous ‘confessions,’ said nothing of these. As Reitlinger would say, the assertion of the alleged extermination of three to six million people at Auschwitz is laughable, as is his claim that “*during 1941–42 alone, some 300,000 dead were interred in one go,*”⁴⁵² or his claim to have sabotaged two crematoria at Birkenau by pouring motor oil into the chimneys.⁴⁵³

6.5.2. Hans Aumeier

Hans Aumeier, SS *Hauptsturmführer* at the time, was transferred to Auschwitz on February 16, 1942, and was First Commander of the Detainee Camp of the main camp until August 15, 1943.⁴⁵⁴ From October 1943 onwards he was commander of the concentration camp Vaivara in Estonia, and in February 1945 commander of concentration camp Mysen in Norway, where he was arrested by the British on June 11, 1945.

As did Josef Kramer,⁴⁵⁵ H. Aumeier experienced the power of distortion of the Allied propaganda. Initially, he did not understand what the British interrogators really wanted from him and therefore did not know what his best defense strategy might be. In his first declaration, at Oslo on June 29, 1945, he wrote:⁴⁵⁶

“In the Main Camp there was a crematorium consisting of two ovens.^[457] Corpses were burned there. The crematorium was under the responsibility of the head of the Political Department and the camp surgeon. During my time, 2 or 3 crematoria were under construction at Birkenau. I

⁴⁵¹ As we have seen in the preceding section, the self-styled member of the “*Sonderkommando*” Milton Buki, knew nothing about the so-called ‘Bunkers’ when he was questioned about Maximilian Grabner by the Vienna police directorate on January 7, 1946.

⁴⁵² Declaration by Grabner on September 12, 1945, GARF, 7021-106-34, p. 25.

⁴⁵³ “*Bericht über das Lager Auschwitz*” by Grabner, dated September 17, 1947. Trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison, vol. 53b, p. 361.

⁴⁵⁴ The following day, August 16, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Schwarz took over the post of “*1. Schutzhaftlagerführer*” from Aumeier, who had been transferred to Riga. *Standortsonderbefehl* of August 18, 1943. GARF, 7021-108-54, p. 124.

⁴⁵⁵ In his first interrogation, J. Kramer affirmed that the stories of the gassings, told by the witnesses, were “*false, from beginning to end,*” but later, in the subsequent declaration, he adopted completely the ‘truth’ on trial: the axiomatic existence of the gas chambers. Indeed, as J. Kramer’s own defense counsel, Major Winwood, stated: “*the gas chambers existed, there can be no doubt about that.*”

⁴⁵⁶ PRO, File WO.208/4661, Report “*Gefangener Oslo, den 29 Juni 45,*” p. 5. These documents were discovered by D. Irving, who has published them on his website: www.fpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/Aumeier/.

⁴⁵⁷ The third oven was installed in April 1942.

have no knowledge of gas chambers and during my time no detainee was gassed. At the time of my transfer, there were some 54,000 detainees at Auschwitz and Birkenau, among them about 15,000 women and children. Detainees who fell ill were moved to the infirmary, which was under the exclusive responsibility of the camp surgeon."

But soon H. Aumeier would be compelled to understand. The British handed him a questionnaire which included the following questions:⁴⁵⁸

"f) Precise details about Birkenau

g) Gassings (with all details), number of daily and total victims

h) Confession about own responsibility in case of gassings. Who carried them out (names) and who assigned these people to the task."

H. Aumeier thus realized that the 'gassings' were deemed an unquestionable and undeniable fact by the British interrogators, and he simply adjusted his defensive tactics accordingly. In the "*Report about the interrogation of prisoner No. 211, Sturmabführer Aumeier, Hans,*" dated August 10, 1945, one can read:⁴⁵⁹

"The interrogator is satisfied that the major part of the material of this report is in conformity with the truth as far as the facts are concerned, but the personal reactions of Aumeier and his way of thinking may change a bit when his fate gets worse." (emphasis added)

It is therefore clear that the British interrogators had in mind their own 'truth' about Auschwitz, to which Aumeier simply had to adjust, only such an adjustment being 'satisfactory' to them. For his part, as soon as Aumeier grasped the situation, he became very 'cooperative.' It is in this context that his report of July 25, 1945, should be evaluated. He speaks of homicidal gasings and also the 'Bunkers,' the topic that most interests us here:⁴⁶⁰

"In the meantime, at Birkenau near the burying area, the construction office modified two empty houses into gas chambers. One house had 2, the other 4 gas chambers. The houses were called bunker 1 and 2. Each chamber accommodated 50–150 persons. In late January or early February [1943]⁴⁶¹ the first gassings were carried out there. The detail was called SK (Sonderkom.), it was directly attached to the LK [camp commander] under the direction of U. Grabner and was itself led and managed by U. Hessler [Höbller]. The area was signposted and designated as security area, furthermore surrounded by the Kommando with a sentry chain of 8 men. [...]

Near the bunkers I and II, 2 barracks had been set up, and the dets. had to undress in them and were told that they would go to the delousing and

⁴⁵⁸ PRO, File WO.208/4661. Questionnaire "*Freiwillige Aussage des Kriegsgefangenen Hans Aumeier*" = voluntary statement by the POW Hans Aumeier.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, Report no. PWIS Det (N)/18 Report on interrogation of prisoner no. 211 Stubaf. Aumeier, Hans; Akershus prison – Aug. 10, 1945.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, Report by H. Aumeier of July 25, 1945, pp. 7f.

⁴⁶¹ Briefly before that, Aumeier stated: "*According to my memory, it was in the month of November or December 1942[sic!] when the first gassing of about 50-80 Jewish inmates occurred.*"

the bath. Then they were led into the chambers. These chambers had vents in the side wall.

The gassings took place under the direction of the physician as described above. The bunkers were regularly opened only the day after. The following day, gold teeth were broken out from the corpses, as directed by a dentist or a medic; later the women's hair would also be cut. After that, the corpses were burned in pits as already mentioned."

What strikes us here in this respect, is the use of the term "*bunkers I and II.*" As we have already seen, the term 'Bunker' was coined at Auschwitz during the Judge Jan Sehn's investigation no later than April 1945. Is it possible that the British interrogators knew at least a summary of the Polish investigations of Auschwitz? In my opinion this is not only possible but certain. Aumeier 'confessed,' like S. Jankowski,⁴⁶² that the first gassing had taken place in November or December 1942 in the mortuary of crematorium I⁴⁶¹ – more than a year later – and in a different location – than what official historiography maintains. By order of Himmler given during summer of 1941, the Jews who were unable to work or ill were to be gassed, but, as Rudolf Höß stated:⁴⁶³

"the crematorium was too small and could not cope with the incinerations so that during the construction of the crematoria at Birkenau gas chambers were built as well."

If Höß was right, however, then the Birkenau crematoria would have been designed from the very beginning with homicidal gas chambers – a thesis which, at the time, was unquestionable, but which today, after the studies of Jean-Claude Pressac, no specialist accepts anymore, not even Robert Jan van Pelt.⁴⁶⁴

Aumeier, on the other hand, maintains that the first gassings in the 'Bunkers' were carried out as late as January or February 1943, which is a glaring contradiction to the date assumed by official historiography. But if he was to testify about the alleged, very first gassing in Auschwitz and any subsequent gassings in the Bunkers, he had to place those events during the time of his presence in Auschwitz, that is, between February 1942 and August 1943. Thus his time shift.

Finally referring to crematorium II, Aumeier writes:⁴⁶⁵

"In front of the crematorium, also for undressing, a barrack had been set up."

As I have stressed elsewhere,⁴⁶⁶ this story was invented by Henryk Tauber on May 24, 1945, to attribute a 'criminal' purpose to the presence of a barrack

⁴⁶² "*Aussage von Stanislaw Jankowski (Alter Feinsilber)*," in: T. Świebocka et al., *op. cit.* (note 296); also *Hefte von Auschwitz*, special issue I, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz, 1972, p. 48.

⁴⁶³ PRO, File WO.208/4661. Report by H. Aumeier of July 25, 1945, pp. 5f.

⁴⁶⁴ R.J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 118), p. 72.

⁴⁶⁵ PRO, File WO.208/4661. Report by H. Aumeier of July 25, 1945, p. 9.

⁴⁶⁶ "*The Morgues of the Crematoria at Birkenau in the Light of Documents*," in: *The Revisionist*, 2(3) (2004), pp. 271-294.

in front of crematorium II on Birkenau map no. 2216 of March 20, 1943 in his testimony before Judge Sehn.⁴⁶⁷

Speaking of the alleged first gassing in the mortuary of crematorium I, moreover, Aumeier writes that this installation was “*in camp I*,”⁴⁶⁸ but the splitting up of the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex – ordered by Himmler and resulting in the Auschwitz camp becoming Auschwitz I or camp I (Auschwitz II/camp II = Birkenau, Auschwitz III/Lager III = all outer installations) – came into force on November 22, 1943,⁴⁶⁹ and could therefore not be known to Aumeier, who had left Auschwitz three months earlier.

On July 25, 1945, when Aumeier wrote the above-mentioned report, the British were fully engaged in the preparation of the Belsen trial, which started less than two months later, on September 17. The “*Regulations for the trial of war criminals*” had been established as early as June 18.⁴⁷⁰ Hans Aumeier was later extradited to Poland and sentenced to death at the trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison (December 22, 1947). On that occasion, the British government also transmitted the files on the arrest of the defendant to Poland. In doing so, the British were returning the favor they had received from the Poles, since it is quite clear that the above declarations of Aumeier can only be explained by his knowledge – and that of his British interrogators as well – of the propaganda ‘truth’ fabricated by the Soviet Commission of Investigation and merely perfected by Judge Sehn.

In any case, the British certainly received evidence for the Belsen trial from the Soviets, for example the Soviet film on the liberation of the camp, which was accepted in evidence as no. 125.⁴⁷¹

6.5.3. Rudolf Höß

The former commandant of Auschwitz was arrested by the British on March 11, 1946. Three days later, he was interrogated for the first time and stated the following regarding the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’:⁴⁷²

“Two old farmbuildings, which were situated rather out of the way near BIRKENAU, were made airtight and provided with strong wooden doors. The transports were unloaded at a siding in BIRKENAU. Prisoners fit to work were picked out and brought to the camps. The luggage was left and was later taken on to the stores. The others, who were meant to be gassed, were marched to the one km. distant plant. The sick and people unfit to walk were taken there in lorries.^[473] In front of the farmhouses everybody

⁴⁶⁷ Statement of H. Tauber of May 24, 1945. Höß trial, vol. 11, p. 136.

⁴⁶⁸ PRO, File WO.208/4661. Report by H. Aumeier of July 25, 1945, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁹ *Standortbefehl Nr. 53/43* of November 22, 1943. GARF, 7021-108-54, p. 48.

⁴⁷⁰ R. Phillips (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 331), p. 647.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 231.

⁴⁷² NO-1210, pp. 4f. of the transcript.

⁴⁷³ A sentence located here in the German version of this document was left out in the English version: “*For transports arriving at night, everybody was transported on trucks.*” Further omissions in the English version are indicated as romans in brackets.

had to undress behind walls made from branches. On the doors was a notice saying 'Disinfectionsraum' (dis-infection chamber). The Unterfuehrer on duty had to tell the prisoners [through interpreters] to wach[sic] their kit in order to find it again after having been deloused. This prevented disturbances [from the start]. Then they were undressed, they went into the room according to size, 2-300 at a time. The doors were locked, [screwed tight] and one or two tins of CYKLON B were thrown into the room through holes in the wall. It consisted of a rough substance of Prussic acid. It took, according to the weather 3 - 10 minutes. After an hour later the doors were opened and the bodies were taken out by a commando of prisoners, who were permanently employed there, and burned in pits. Before being cremated, gold teeth and rings were removed. Firewood was stacked between the corpses and when approximately 100 bodies were in the pit, the wood was lighted with rags soaked in parafin. When the fire had started properly more bodies were thrown on to it. The fat which collected in the bottom of the pits was put into the fire with buckets to hasten the process of burning [especially] when it was raining. The burning took 6 - 7 hours. The smell of the burned bodies was noticed in the camp even if the wind was blowing from the west.^[474] After the pits had been cleared the remaining ashes were broken up. This was done on a cement plate where prisoners pulverised the remaining bones with wooden hammers. The remains were loaded on lorries and taken to an out of the way place on the Weichsel and thrown into the water."

This description was more or less in keeping with the knowledge of the propaganda 'truth' about Auschwitz that the British interrogators had at the time. Höß himself stated during his trial how the British extracted his first 'confession' from him:⁴⁷⁵

"When I was interrogated for the first time in the British Zone [of Germany], those examining me said to me, all the time, that five - six - seven million people must have died in the gas chambers; all the time they bombarded me with huge numbers such as these, and I was obliged to provide some data, in order to establish how many were put to death in the gas chambers, and the interrogators told me that there must have been at least three million. Under the suggestive influence of these large figures, I arrived at the total of three million."

The means by which those first 'confessions' were extracted from him are described explicitly by Höß during his imprisonment in Poland:⁴⁷⁶

"During the first interrogation they beat me to obtain evidence. I do not know what was in the transcript, or what I said, even though I signed it, because they gave me liquor and beat me with a whip. It was too much

⁴⁷⁴ A fairly unconvincing assertion, because the alleged cremation trenches were to the northwest of the camp.

⁴⁷⁵ State of Israel Ministry of Justice, *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann. Record of Proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem*. Jerusalem 1993, vol. III, p. 1310.

⁴⁷⁶ Steven Paskuly (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 179.

even for me to bear. [...] After a few days I was taken to Minden [...]. There they treated me even more roughly.”

Hence, like Hans Aumeier, Rudolf Höß said what the British interrogators wanted him to say on the basis of their propaganda ‘truth’ about Auschwitz, the difference being that we know for sure that the former Auschwitz commandant was tortured.⁴⁷⁷ After his extradition to Poland, Höß quickly adjusted to the Polish ‘truth.’

In the paper “*The Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Concentration Camp Auschwitz*” he states:⁴⁷⁸

“We [Höß and Eichmann] drove around the Auschwitz area to locate a suitable place. We thought the farmhouse at the northwest corner of Birkenau near planned Section III would be suitable. The house had been abandoned, and it was hidden from view by the surrounding trees and bushes and not too far from the railroad. The bodies could be buried in long, deep pits in the nearby meadows. We didn’t think about burning them at this time. We calculated that in the space available in the farmhouse, approximately eight hundred people could be killed using a suitable gas after the building was made airtight. We later found this to be the actual capacity.” A few pages further on, Höß adds:⁴⁷⁹

“I am unable to recall when the destruction of the Jews began – probably in September 1941, or perhaps not until January 1942. At first we dealt with the Jews from Upper Silesia. These Jews were arrested by the Gestapo from Katowice and transported via the Auschwitz-Dziediez railroad and unloaded there. As far as I can recall, these transports never numbered more than a thousand persons.

A detachment of SS from the camp took charge of them at the railroad ramp, and the officer in charge marched them to the bunker (I) in two groups. This is what we called the extermination installation.

Their luggage remained on the ramp and was later brought between the DAW (German Armaments Works)^[480] and the railroad station.

The Jews had to undress at the bunker and were told that they would have to go into the delousing rooms. All of the rooms – there were five of them – were filled at the same time. The airtight doors were screwed tight, and the contents of the gas crystal canisters emptied into the rooms through special hatches.

After half an hour the doors were opened and the bodies were pulled out. Each room had two doors. They were then moved using small carts on special tracks to the ditches. The clothing was brought by trucks to the sorting place. All of the work was done by a special contingent of Jews (the

⁴⁷⁷ For details, cf. Robert Faurisson, “How the British Obtained the Confessions of Rudolf Höss,” *Journal of Historical Review* 7(4) (1986), pp. 389-403.

⁴⁷⁸ Steven Paskuly (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 29.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 31.

⁴⁸⁰ Comments in parentheses added by Paskuly; this translation is wrong. *Ausrüstungswerke* = equipment/outfitting factory, in contrast to *Rüstungswerke* = armament factory.

Sonderkommando). They had to help those who were about to die with the undressing, the filling up of the bunkers, the clearing of the bunkers, removal of the bodies, as well as digging the mass graves and, finally, covering the graves with earth. These Jews were housed separately from the other prisoners and, according to Eichmann's orders, they themselves were to be killed after each large extermination action."

This alleged gassing occurred in the alleged 'Bunker 1;' therefore, according to Höß, the 'Bunker' was already functioning in September 1941 or at the latest in January 1942! Not only that, but he says that it had five gas chambers, not just two, literally confusing it with 'Bunker 2.'

In her *Auschwitz Chronicle* Danuta Czech dates this alleged gassing – with specific reference to Höß' passage just quoted – to February 15, 1942 (arrival date of an alleged transport of Jews from Beuthen), but because 'Bunker 1' did not exist at the time, she has it take place in crematorium I!⁴⁸¹

Höß goes on:⁴⁸²

"During the spring of 1942 we were still dealing with small police actions. But during the summer the transports became more numerous and we were forced to build another extermination site. The farm area west of Crematoriums IV and V,^[483] which were built later, was chosen and prepared. Five barracks were built, two near Bunker I and three near Bunker II. Bunker II was the larger one. It held about 1,200 people."

During the trial session of March 11, 1947, Höß finally adapted himself to the Polish 'truth' and its terminology, speaking explicitly of 'Bunker 1' and 'Bunker 2':⁴⁸⁴

"From that time on, gassing was moved out of the camp, to Bunker 2. That was a farm cottage, which had been arranged for the purpose. It was split up into individual rooms by means of wooden gastight doors. There were small openings, from which the gas was fed once the rooms were full of people. We also did it that way later, when, in the spring of 1942, transports of Jews arrived from eastern Upper Silesia, from the Government General, and from Germany. [...]

Near the farm cottage, at Bunker 2, there were trenches that were originally mass graves. The corpses were dragged out of the gas chamber and burned in these trenches."

The obvious difference between the British and the Polish versions of Höß' 'confessions' is thus further proof of the fact that they expressed the propaganda orientation of the respective interrogators.

⁴⁸¹ Danuta Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 174f.

⁴⁸² Steven Paskuly (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 32.

⁴⁸³ The original German text mentions "III and IV," which was changed by Paskuly to match the common numbering of all crematoria.

⁴⁸⁴ Höß trial, AGK, NTN, 105, pp. 114f.

6.5.4. Pery Broad

SS *Rottenführer* Pery Broad worked in the Political Department of Auschwitz from June 18, 1942 on, reporting to Grabner. He was arrested by the British on May 6, 1945, and released in 1947. On July 13, 1945, he wrote a report which was never registered by any of the commissions investigating German war crimes and thus never received any kind of registration number; thus it disappeared for nearly twenty years, suddenly to resurface at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial.

Jean-Claude Pressac, referring to Broad, states that “*the form and tone of his declaration sound false*” and that “*its present literary form is visibly coloured by a rather too flagrant Polish patriotism*” and that “*the original manuscript of his declaration is not known;*”⁴⁸⁵ therefore, as a historical source, it is not worth much.

In his first declarations,⁴⁸⁶ Broad never mentions the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’ As far as I know, he made his first allusion to those alleged installations at the end of 1947.⁴⁸⁷

“I learned through SS people that the majority of the persons destined to be gassed was taken directly to Birkenau, where there were two farmhouses converted into gas bunkers. The capacity of those two temporary gas bunkers was about 800–1000 persons.”

The report of July 13, 1945, the only copy of which was introduced almost twenty years later at the Frankfurt trial, on April 20, 1964, and acknowledged by Broad himself⁴⁸⁸ to have been manipulated, was published by the Auschwitz Museum in 1968.⁴⁸⁹ He mentions ‘Bunkers’ at Birkenau, but Broad had stated that he had been an “*eye witness*” only to a homicidal gassing in the old crematorium. His narrative of alleged gassings in the ‘Bunkers,’ in fact, is based only on rumors, which certainly did not derive from his superior, Grabner, who was completely unaware of them. Actually, we are dealing here with the propaganda rumors that we have examined above. Pery Broad (and the British, for whom he wrote his report) had only a rather fragmentary knowledge of the propaganda stories about the ‘Bunkers,’ and he brings up only some poorly digested elements of them. First and foremost the term ‘Bunker,’ but without the appropriate numbers 1 and 2,⁴⁹⁰ and the white color, a vague allusion to the allegedly ‘white cottage’ of ‘Bunker 2,’ ascribed, however, to both houses:⁴⁹¹

“At a certain distance from the Birkenau camp, which was growing by leaps and bounds, there were two farmhouses, nice and clean, separated from each other by a small wood, in the middle of a lovely landscape. They

⁴⁸⁵ *Auschwitz: ..., op. cit.* (note 4), p. 128. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁸⁶ Declaration of September 14, 1945, NI-11397. Interrogation of March 2, 1946, NI-11954.

⁴⁸⁷ Declaration under oath by Pery Broad of October 20, 1947; NI-11984.

⁴⁸⁸ H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 325), vol. I, pp. 537 and 539.

⁴⁸⁹ Staatliches Museum Auschwitz (ed.), “*Erinnerungen von Pery Broad,*” in: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, no. 9, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz, 1966, pp. 7-48.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

were white-washed gleaming white, covered by cozy straw roofs and surrounded by local fruit-trees.”

The narrative is not without bloopers, such as:⁴⁹²

“The SS services in charge probably did not realize that the inhabitants of the little village of Wohlau, not far away on the other side of the Vistula river, were often witnesses to those scenes of nightly horror. In the bright glow coming from the pits with their burning corpses they were able to distinguish the procession of naked shapes marching from the undressing barracks to the gas chambers. They heard the screams of the people bestially whipped but not wanting to enter these halls of death, heard the shots, with which all those were put to rest who could not be pushed in for lack of space.”

Wohlau was the German name of Wola, a village another 3 km to the southwest of the house, which is called ‘Bunker 2’ in the official historiography and was the closer of the two: how could its inhabitants see what allegedly happened so far away? The village closest to the alleged ‘Bunkers’ was Jedlina, which was right across from Birkenau on the other side of the river, at a distance of some 1.5 km from the ‘Bunkers.’ Although based only on rumors, Broad’s narrative makes him appear ubiquitous, and that proves the fictional character of his story.

6.5.5. Friedrich Entress

Dr. Friedrich Entress served as a physician at Auschwitz from December 11, 1942, through October 20, 1943. By his position and the period of his stay at Auschwitz he should have been well acquainted with the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’ He has this to say about them, in a “*sworn statement*” he gave in the Landsberg prison on April 14, 1947:⁴⁹³

“The first gassings at Auschwitz-Birkenau began in the summer of 1942. They concerned gassings of Jews from Poland and Russia. [...] Two old farmhouses were used as the first gas chambers; they had been modified specifically for the gassings. The construction work was done by the SS construction office. The windows were walled up, the inner walls removed and a special door put in, which sealed the room air-tight.

The capacity was laid out for about 300 people. The detainees had to undress in a barrack nearby and were led into the gas chamber from there. Once the door was closed, the gas (Zyklon B) was thrown into openings, which could be closed, by three SS men. These SS men wore gas masks and had been specially trained in the use of the gas. A camp physician had to be present at each gassing, because army rules about the handling of poison gases specified this for the protection of the SS personnel.

⁴⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁴⁹³ NO-2368, pp. 4f.

After 5 minutes, the initial screams and moans died down. Another 25 minutes later the doors were opened, and a command of detainees, wearing gas masks, then removed the corpses. Under the direction of an Unterscharführer specifically determined by Dr. Lolling, the dental gold was taken out, the detainees were loaded onto little carts and taken to the pits, which had earlier been dug by a detail of detainees. When the corpses had been buried, the gas chambers were cleaned and were then ready for the next transport.”

By 1947 the essential elements of the propaganda story of the ‘Bunkers’ had already spread far and wide, but Dr. Entress did not yet know the ‘official’ name of those two old farmhouses: ‘Bunker.’ Furthermore, he places the start of the alleged gassings in the summer of 1942 instead of the spring. In contradiction with the ‘official’ version of Szlama Dragon, furthermore, the inner walls in both farm houses had, according to F. Entress, been knocked down and there was a single gastight door, hence in both houses there was one ‘gas chamber’ of equal capacity – 300 persons – a figure likewise at variance with those adopted by S. Dragon.

The witness’s assertion that the transformation into alleged gas chambers was carried out by the SS construction office is completely wrong, as we have seen above.

6.5.6. Hans Erich Mußfeldt

SS-Oberscharführer Erich Mußfeldt⁴⁹⁴ was assigned to Auschwitz from August 15, 1940, through November 15, 1941, at which time he was transferred to the concentration camp Lublin-Majdanek. In May 1944 he was again assigned to Auschwitz, where he was in charge of crematoria II and III until mid-August. Then he was sent to the front.

Mußfeldt was one of the accused in the trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison. The Supreme National Tribunal of Poland sentenced him to death on December 22, 1947.

During the preparation of the trial, he was interrogated by Judge Jan Sehn on several occasions; in his interrogation on September 8, 1947, he declared the following:⁴⁹⁵

“As I have already explained, on February 19, 1943, I was sent from Majdanek to Auschwitz to study [the technique] of the burning of corpses in open-air pits. On that occasion I was accompanied to Auschwitz by the medic /SDG/ SS-Oberscharführer Entress,^[496] who was to inform himself about delousing and the killing of persons by means of gas in the Ausch-

⁴⁹⁴ The misspelling “Muhsfeldt” occurs in the trial papers and has been frequently adopted in subsequent writings. It probably resulted as a faulty transcription of the sz of the old German handwriting Sütterli.

⁴⁹⁵ Interrogation of Erich Mußfeldt on September 8, 1947. AGK, NTN, 144, pp. 91f.

⁴⁹⁶ Anton Enders (or Endress), SS-Oberscharführer, disinfectant on the medical staff (SDG) at Majdanek.

witz gas chambers. The commander of the Majdanek camp, Florstedt, had given us a letter for the Auschwitz camp command. For that mission, we reported to the then commander of Auschwitz Rudolf Höß. The latter directed us to the first Schutzhaftlagerführer, SS-Hauptsturmführer Aumeier. Aumeier showed me the drawing of a pit for the burning of corpses, explained it, and added that the corpses there burned perfectly. He then sent me to the Political Section. The head of this section, Grabner, delegated one of his subordinates, Bogner [Boger], who then took us by truck to the place where the corpses of those who had been gassed were burned in pits in the open air. This was at Birkenau, at a place called Bunker 5. The Kommandoführer who directed those activities (I do not remember his name) explained to us how the people were gassed and their corpses burned. At that time, the corpses in the pit were nearly burned and the gas chamber was empty. It was a brick structure, a farm building of sorts transformed into a gas chamber, split up into 4 smaller rooms on the inside.

From the front, an entrance door led into each room; in the back of each room there was a door, through which the corpses were thrown on the carts of a narrow-gauge railway. Each room had openings for the introduction of Zyklon. In all the rooms of Bunker 5, 1000 – 1500 persons could be gassed at the same time. During the visit by myself and Entress, no gassings took place, because there were no transports.”

The most curious aspect of this deposition is the designation “Bunker 5”. As I have indicated above, this designation was invented by Rudolf Höß, who wrote that Bunker 2 was “later” – that is in 1944 – called “Bunker V.”³⁷³ This is the genesis of the story (initially concocted by D. Paisikovic) of the redesignation of the alleged gassing installation as “Bunker 5” when it was reactivated in 1944 (if we interpret R. Höß’ adverb “später” (later) in this way).

Mußfeldt was of course aware of the charges against him and hence of the main testimonies assembled by Jan Sehn in the preceding years. However, Mußfeldt misunderstood this point when he asserted that ‘Bunker 2’ was called “Bunker 5” as early as February of 1943. Such a change, for 1943, is even more mysterious than for 1944.

The description of “Bunker 5” is clearly copied from Szlama Dragon; Mußfeldt only reduced the capacity of the four ‘gas chambers.’ He does not even mention the alleged ‘Bunker 1’ and its incineration pits, and speaks, regarding “Bunker 5,” of a single pit, in which the incineration had nearly come to its end. The next day, the two sergeants returned to Lublin;⁴⁹⁷ hence Mußfeldt did not in fact see the cremation pits in operation, and Enders did not witness any activity in the gas chambers – but then, what on earth were they doing at Auschwitz?

The story of the cremation pits had an unforeseen development. Mußfeldt stated that Aumeier had shown him a drawing of a cremation pit and ex-

⁴⁹⁷ Interrogation of Erich Mußfeldt on September 8, 1947. AGK, NTN, 144, p. 92.

plained its operation to him, adding that the corpses there burned “*perfectly*.” However, when Mußfeldt, back at Lublin, wanted to put into practice what he had learned at Auschwitz, it turned out that in such a pit “*cremation was not effective enough*”; he therefore built, on his own initiative, enormous grids made of truck chassis resting on rocks: 100 corpses doused with methanol were put on top, with wood underneath. In this fashion, he burned about 9,000 corpses until October 1943,⁴⁹⁸ thus some 100 corpses in two and a half days on average.

But then how could the Birkenau cremation pits swallow up thousands of corpses every day?

6.5.7. Hans Stark

SS *Unterscharführer* Hans Stark arrived at Auschwitz around Christmas of 1940. Initially *Blockführer*, he was later, in June 1941, assigned to the Political Department of the camp. In the summer of 1942 he was made SS *Oberscharführer*, and in November of the same year was transferred away from Auschwitz.

Stark was interrogated on April 23, 1959, by the criminal department of the police of Cologne (on behalf of the Landeskriminalamt of Baden-Württemberg) during the preparation of the Frankfurt trial. On the subject of the ‘Bunkers’ he made the following statement:⁴⁹⁹

“Furthermore, I was charged with the reception of incoming transports at Birkenau from about summer of 1942 onwards, i.e., to receive the lists of new arrivals from the accompanying guard unit and to check the numbers [of deportees]. The selection took place immediately on arrival, i.e., the able-bodied deportees were separated from the others. The unfit persons, mainly the elderly, the sick, children and babies were taken to the gassing rooms which by then existed. They consisted of 2 wooden houses that had been prepared accordingly. [...]

The gassing rooms were situated not overly far from the unloading area and the persons destined to be gassed were led there by us. I myself was present a few times during the transfer of persons destined to be gassed.

If I remember rightly, those first gas chambers – the wooden houses I have indicated – were built between Christmas 1941 and March 1942, while I was away on a training assignment, for they were ready when I returned to Auschwitz and the first gassings were taking place. [...]

I am unable to give details regarding the capacity of those first two gas chambers at Birkenau, I thus do not know how many persons could be gassed each time in each g.[as] chamber. I do not think, though, that they could have accommodated more than the gas chambers near the small

⁴⁹⁸ Interrogation of Erich Mußfeldt on August 14, 1947, AGK, NTN, 144, p. 67.

⁴⁹⁹ Transcript of the interrogation (Vernehmungsniederschrift) of Hans Stark, Köln, April 23, 1959. ZStL, ref. AR-Z 37/58 SB6, pp. 949-951.

crematorium. For gassings, at which I was present, it never happened that for a [given] transport several gassings were performed in succession in the chambers, so that in my opinion a maximum of 500 persons could have been gassed for any one transport. In Birkenau, too, the gas was poured into the gassing rooms by medics through existing openings.”

From this account it is obvious that H. Stark had only a very superficial knowledge of the pertinent propaganda story. He not only does not know the alleged official designation of ‘Bunker,’ but, clumsily confusing the alleged wooden undressing barracks with the brick houses, he invents “*wooden houses*” for the gassings. Where they were, how they were made, how many ‘gas chambers’ they contained, where the “*existing openings*” for the Zyklon B were located, how the ‘gassings’ took place, how the corpses were taken out and what their fate was – all the things that a real witness would have been able to describe – are prudently glossed over by Stark. As opposed to this, his statement regarding the initial employment of the two “*wooden houses*,” between the end of 1941 and March of 1942, is partly at variance with the official historiography, because it could apply to ‘Bunker 1,’ but certainly not to ‘Bunker 2.’

In addition, his ignorance of the alleged extermination capacity of the installations and the number of those gassed is not really believable for a witness assigned to verifying the numbers of arriving deportees.

Hans Stark’s confession can be easily understood: various witnesses, Erwin Bartel for instance, were accusing him, and so his defensive strategy made led him to accept the general lines of the accusation, while denying his personal involvement or attributing it to higher orders. At the end of the 1950s, the Holocaust dogma was already well in place, and no defendant would have dared to cast doubt on it, lest he be considered a hopeless Nazi and sentenced more severely.⁵⁰⁰

6.5.8. Richard Böck

SS *Unterscharführer* Richard Böck served as a driver at Auschwitz from 1941 until the evacuation of the camp. On November 2, 1960, during the preparatory phase of the Auschwitz trial, he was interrogated and gave a detailed and colorful account of the ‘bunkers’, which is worth setting out in full.⁵⁰¹

“One day, it was in the winter of 1942/43, H[öb]linger] asked me if I would like to go along to see a gassing action. He would pass me off as his assistant in the ambulance, because otherwise it was strictly prohibited to be present there. So we went to the motor pool, took the ambulance, and

⁵⁰⁰ On Hans Stark see also Germar Rudolf, “*From the Records of the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, Part 7*,” *The Revisionist* 2(4) (2004), in preparation.

⁵⁰¹ Interrogation of Richard Böck of Nov. 2, 1960. Preparation of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, ref. 4 Js 444/59, vol. 29, pp. 6881-6883. The original pages of the report were published by G. Rudolf in the article “*Aus den Akten des Frankfurter Auschwitz-Prozesses, Teil 4*,” *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung*, 7(2) (2003), p. 228.

went directly to Birkenau. We did not touch the Birkenau camp on that route. I cannot even say that I saw any part of the camp at that time.

The train stood in the open country somewhere between Auschwitz and Birkenau, and the detainees were just being unloaded. It was about 21:00 hours [9 p.m.]. Broad steps had been placed at the back of the trucks for the people to climb up. All vehicles were chock-full and could not have accepted any more. On the trucks, the people were standing. I did not see that a selection was done by an SS doctor or any other SS member. These [people] were all loaded [on the trucks] and taken to a former farmstead about 1.5 km away from the unloading area. I can no longer indicate the place precisely, because it was dark. Anyway, I did not see the Birkenau crematoria and I think that they were not yet in operation at the time. In any case, H. and I went to that place with the Sanka, following the trucks. When we arrived, the people had already been unloaded and had to undress in several barracks near that old farmstead. When they came out from the barracks, naked, they were told that they should go into the building that had a sign 'Desinfektion.' This building was the former farmstead that had been transformed at that time into a gassing room. As far as I can remember, it [the inside] was well laid out in concrete all around and had gates on both sides that were made of wood, I believe. H. had previously told me that the incoming transports were being gassed in this room. Besides, those gassing actions were something every one of us knew about.

I remember that this transport consisted of Dutch Jews – men, women and children – who were all well dressed and looked like wealthy people.

I have to correct something here. The modified farmstead had only one gate, consisting of two leaves. The 'Desinfektion' sign was not attached to the building either but stood a few meters away from it, like a signpost. They had set up this sign to make the people believe they would be disinfected here.

Once the total transport had entered that building – some 1000 persons, I think – the gate was closed. Then an SS man, a Rottenführer I think, came to our Sanka and took out a gas can. With this can he went to a ladder which stood on the right side of the building, seen from the door. I noticed that he was wearing a gas-mask when he went up. When he had reached the end of the ladder he opened a circular trap made of steel plate and poured the contents of the can against the wall when he hit it while pouring. At the same time, I could see brown dust coming out of the opening. Whether that was gas, I cannot say. When he had closed the little trap, indescribable screams came from that room. I simply cannot describe how these people screamed. That went on for 8–10 minutes and then everything was quiet. A little later, the gate was opened by detainees and one could still see a bluish mist floating above a pile of corpses. The corpses were so strongly interlaced that it was impossible to say to whom the individual limbs and body parts belonged. This allows one to understand how indescribably horrible the agony of these persons must have been.

I was surprised, though, to see that the detainees who had to move the corpses out entered the room without gas masks even though this blue mist, which I thought to be gas, floated above the corpses. The corpses were loaded onto farm carts [rack-carts] and pushed away by detainees. Where the corpses went, I could not see. It did not see a crematorium either. [...]

I remember well that the Sanka was marked with a 'Red Cross' sign on the sides. That vehicle, though, was never used as an ambulance, but only for this purpose, for camouflage."

Richard Böck, too, had a very sketchy knowledge of the propaganda story of the 'Bunkers' and therefore constructed it around those few elements he knew. What he did not know was not only the 'official' terminology, but also the alleged existence of another 'Bunker,' which he should have been aware of because, in his own words, the alleged homicidal gassings "*were something every one of us knew about.*" Therefore he was unable to say whether his 'eyewitness account' referred to 'Bunker 1' or 'Bunker 2' – which is important if we want to judge his credibility – and his description tends even to exclude 'Bunker 2.' In fact he stated that he had not seen a crematorium, but the road leading to the 'Bunker' passed near crematoria II and III, and he would have seen them. Therefore, his account ought to refer to 'Bunker 1.'

The period during which all this takes place – the winter of 1942–43 – is the same to which Szlama Dragon's testimony refers. We must remember that according to Dragon's account, 'Bunker 1' had two gas chambers, each one with two separate doors and two openings for the introduction of Zyklon B – square, 40 by 40 cm, and closed by a wooden trap – two on the same wall as the entrance door to one chamber, on both sides of it, while the other chamber had one to the right of its entrance door and one in the wall around the corner to the left.

Moreover, one reached the doors by means of stairs on the outside of the building, each one having 7 or 8 steps. But the "*farmstead*" described by Böck had a single gas chamber, a single door and a "*circular trap made of steel plate,*" never mentioned by other witnesses and clearly inspired by the covers of the ventilation vents of the disinfection chambers already studied.⁵⁰²

The "*factory*" was, moreover, "*well laid out in concrete all around*" but without the two outside stairs. Böck vaguely remembered that the official propaganda version required the presence of two undressing barracks near the 'Bunker' and, being unsure of the number, he spoke of "*several barracks.*" Other traces of propaganda in Böck's testimony are the sign "*Desinfektion*" set up in front of the "*farmstead*" like a road sign – which instead (if we follow Szlama Dragon's Soviet deposition) should have been attached to the entrance door of the 'Bunker' – and the term "*Sanka*" to designate the vehicle with the red cross, which Dragon called "*Sanker*" in the Polish deposition. On the other hand, he knows nothing of the narrow-gauge railroad with the corre-

⁵⁰² Cf. chapter 4.4.

sponding little carts for the transport of the corpses, for which he could only come up with handcarts, and he did not see the “cremation pits” either, which – according to P. Broad – the inhabitants of the village of Wola could clearly see from more than 3 km away!

But the tale of this ‘eyewitness’ reaches its peak with the description of the alleged gassing: Like so many other careless witnesses, R. Böck thought that the German term for hydrogen cyanide, “*Blausäure*” (literally, blue acid), derived from its blue color, and therefore invented the ridiculous story of the “*bluish mist*” he claims to have seen inside the alleged gas chamber.⁵⁰³ Not only that, but to add the absurd to the ridiculous, he claimed that the detainees removing the corpses (he does not yet know of the official term “*Sonderkommando*”) entered the gas chamber without gas masks after a gassing operation.

Böck was heard as a witness at the 73rd session of the Frankfurt trial (August 3, 1964), during which he modified his imaginative testimony, dropping the absurdities which I have indicated above, but adding other literary elements at variance with the official propaganda version: he mentions “*four or five large barracks*” set up as undressing rooms for the victims instead of the official two, and relates that an SS man assigned to the gassing had climbed up on the roof (“*ein SS Mann ist aufs Dach gestiegen*”) to pour Zyklon B into the corresponding “trap,” which instead should have been in one of the walls. With inexcusable negligence for a trial witness, Böck did not even familiarize himself with the official version of the ‘Bunkers,’ satisfied instead to have gleaned a few tidbits of information on this topic here and there, as for instance the officially more acceptable term “*Bauernhaus*” (farmhouse) instead of the unusual “*Bauernhof*” (farmstead) and the mention of a “*Graben*” (ditch, trench), which, however, was not for cremation:⁵⁰⁴

“*The corpses were loaded onto a handcart and taken to a ditch.*”

6.5.9. Karl Höblinger

As we have seen above, Richard Böck is said to have been present at the alleged gassing upon the invitation of his colleague Höblinger, who had asked him if he would like to be present at an extermination of Jews, even though this was “*streng verboten*” (strictly prohibited).⁵⁰⁵ The alleged source of this strange invitation also testified at the Auschwitz trial, at the 61st session, on July 3, 1964.

Karl Höblinger was attached to the motor pool of the Auschwitz camp administration between 1941 and 1943.⁵⁰⁶ He had the rank of an SS *Rottenführer*. He is said to have been present at the same gassing as the one de-

⁵⁰³ In the same way, D. Olère depicted the hydrogen cyanide vapors as a *blue mist* in a painting representing a homicidal gassing. S. Klarsfeld (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 298), p. 54.

⁵⁰⁴ H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 325), vol. I, p. 74. For a more detailed analysis of Böck as a witness and his statements see Germar Rudolf, “*From the Records of the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, part 4*”, *The Revisionist*, 1(4) (2003), pp. 468-472.

⁵⁰⁵ Interrogation of Richard Böck, *op. cit.* (note 501), p. 6881.

⁵⁰⁶ There was also a “*Fahrbereitschaft*” of Central Construction Office.

scribed by R. Böck, but his account in this respect is rather superficial and hurried:⁵⁰⁷

“Höblinger: I was in the motor pool and drove the Sanka for the detainee transports.

Presiding judge: Did you drive at night as well?

H. : Yes, when transports of Jews arrived at the Birkenau ramp. Then I had to take the medics and the doctors to the ramp. Then we also went on to the gas chambers. The medics climbed up on a ladder there, they wore gas masks up there and emptied out the cans. I could see the detainees undressing, it was always quite peaceful and without suspicion. Everything went very quickly.

P.: How long did the gassing take?

H. : About one minute. When the gas arrived, one heard a scream of terror. After a minute, everything was quiet. The medical orderly brought the gas in cans.

P.: How were the victims taken to the gas chamber?

H. : The disabled Jews were taken to the gas chamber by truck. Five or six cars were used, they went a couple of times.

P.: Were the Bunkers lit up by means of automobile headlights?

H. : Yes.

Prosecutor Kügler: Was the defendant Klehr the head of medical orderlies?

H. : I don't know. We just used to call them the gassing guys.

Representative of co-plaintiffs Raabe: How long did a selection take, on average?

H. : It varied. An hour or an hour and a half, say.”

The witness had the same fragmentary knowledge of the propaganda story as his colleague Böck, but a less fecund imagination, and so he did not manage to make up a reasonable tale. The two or three literary elements he did know remain isolated in his account, he did not succeed in incorporating them into a literary whole. Therefore his account is extremely nebulous, obviously with the tacit approval of his interrogators.

6.5.10. Johann Paul Kremer

Doctor Johann Paul Kremer is commonly associated with the ‘Bunkers’ because of the notes in his diary and because of the declarations he made during the preparation of the Polish trial of the Auschwitz camp garrison. I have already dealt with those aspects in a different study, to which I refer the reader.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁷ H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 325), vol. I, p. 73.

⁵⁰⁸ *Special Treatment...*, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 75-87.

Here, I shall examine his testimony at the Frankfurt trial. He appeared before the court as a witness at the 51st session on July 4, 1964. Doctor Kremer, too, was very evasive, except for a few details, which he invented clumsily:⁵⁰⁹

“President: Where did the gassings take place at that time?”

Kremer: Old farmhouses had been modified into bunkers and provided with a sliding door that could be tightly closed. On top there was a trap. The people were led in undressed. They went in quite harmlessly, only a few resisted, they were taken to one side and shot. The gas was thrown in by an SS man appointed for that purpose. To do this, he climbed up on a ladder.

P.: Earlier you said that one could hear screams.

K.: Yes, they feared for their lives. They kicked against the door. I was sitting in the car.”

Doctor Kremer, too, knew only fragments of the official propaganda version – the terms farmhouse and ‘Bunker,’ the trap for the introduction of the Zyklon B, the ladder to reach it – but he did not offer any concrete detail except for the rather odd “*sliding door.*”

6.5.11. Horst Fischer

Horst Fischer was an SS doctor who was transferred to Auschwitz on November 1, 1942, with the rank of SS *Obersturmführer*. He initially served as SS troop physician and later as SS camp physician at the main camp. From November 1, 1943, until September 1944 he was camp physician at the Auschwitz III – Monowitz camp. After the war, he practiced his profession in East Berlin, where he was arrested and tried by the East German authorities. On March 25, 1966, he was sentenced to death and executed.⁵¹⁰ On October 19, 1965, Dr. Fischer was interrogated and spoke of a “*gas chamber disguised as a sauna.*” Here are the significant parts of his deposition:⁵¹¹

“For the first time, together with the SS garrison physician Dr. Wirths, I was present at an annihilation of detainees in late November, early December 1942 next to the sauna at Birkenau. Later, at intervals of about two weeks, depending on how the transports arrived at the ‘old ramp’ of the Auschwitz main camp, I was present at annihilation processes there in my capacity as SS physician on duty, until about May 1943. Based on those fortnightly periods and the six months, I should say that I was present about 12 times at this farmhouse, this gas chamber disguised as a ‘sauna’ at Birkenau.”

⁵⁰⁹ H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 325), vol. I, p. 72.

⁵¹⁰ Aleksander Lasik, “*Die Personalbesetzung des Gesundheitsdienstes der SS im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau in den Jahren 1940-1945,*” in: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, no. 20, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz, 1997, p. 306.

⁵¹¹ Interrogation protocol of defendant Dr. Fischer, Horst. Berlin, October 19, 1965, in: District Court (Landesgericht) Vienna, 3rd to 5th trial day in the matter against Gerd Honsik, ref. 20e Vr 14184/86 Hv 5720/90, p. 429.

Fischer's task was "to supervise the SS disinfectors during the feeding of 'Zyklon B' into the gas chamber," i.e., to apply first aid in case of an accidental poisoning. He had to stay on the site until the end of the "extermination process," which took 45 to 90 minutes. The defendant mentioned a single "undressing barrack," which stood some 150 meters away from the "sauna." Regarding the activity at that installation, he relates:⁵¹²

"During the period between late 1942 and the end of May 1943, the number of detainees arriving by train was up to 1500 persons on average, of whom, in my estimate, between 300 and 600 were selected for the gas chamber as 'unfit for work.' That number varied with the size of the transport."

The "sauna" had a single "trap," through which the Zyklon B was introduced. In this respect, he asserts:⁵¹³

"For one gassing process in the Birkenau 'sauna' only one can of 'Zyklon B' crystals was used, weighing about 2 kg. I have never observed that larger or smaller quantities were fed into this gas chamber."

The gas chamber, moreover, had a single very peculiar door:⁵¹⁴

"Then, the double-walled door was closed immediately."

Fischer later came back to that double-walled door, asserting:⁵¹⁵

"In the rear door – west side of the house – a round window had been installed for observation."

And this is what happened after the alleged gassing:⁵¹⁶

"The gas chamber was to be opened only after 20 minutes, to my knowledge. [...]"

As far as I remember, the gas chamber was opened after about 20 minutes, if a further extermination action had been scheduled. [...] The order for opening the door was given, to my knowledge, by SS Oberscharführer Moll, head of the detainee corpse unit. Both doors of the gas chamber were opened and stayed open for 10 to 15 minutes for the poison gas to escape from the gas chamber. There was no exhaust system in the 'sauna.' Now detainees pulled out the corpses, using poles, some 2 m long and having a curved iron hook at the end; those poles had been kept in the equipment store of the 'sauna'."

Even though it dates from 1965, when the propaganda framework of the 'Bunkers' was already well in place, this declaration is an obvious invention of the accused – on a theme that his German interrogators had imposed on him – based on the confused notions which he had absorbed over the twenty years since the end of the Second World War. For that very reason, he largely had to apply his imagination.

⁵¹² *Ibidem*, p. 430.

⁵¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 442.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 434.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 442.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 442f.

First of all, not being aware of the alleged official designations ‘Bunker 1,’ ‘Bunker 2,’ ‘little white house’ and ‘little red house,’ he invented the term “*sauna*,” which does not occur at all in any other testimony. Secondly, not only does he fail to say where that “*sauna*” was located, but it is not even possible to deduce from his account whether he was speaking of ‘Bunker 1’ or ‘Bunker 2,’ because Fischer’s description clashes violently with the official ones. It is worth mentioning that Fischer’s testimony refers to the same period as Dragon’s testimony.

Whereas for Dragon ‘Bunker 1’ housed two gas chambers, each with a separate door and two openings for the introduction of the Zyklon B, and ‘Bunker 2’ four gas chambers, each with two separate doors, and altogether five openings, Hans Fischer’s “*sauna*” had a single gas chamber with a single observation window and a double-walled door. The “*sauna*” had, moreover, a single opening. Having only a somewhat hazy knowledge of the official version, the accused extended the period of gassings in the “*sauna*” into May 1943, instead of letting it end in March when crematoria IV and II went into operation.

As for the Zyklon B, he repeats the designation “*crystals*” in vogue among the more daring witnesses and invents a can size of 2 kg, which never existed. For a room with a single opening and one door, 10–15 minutes of ventilation is ludicrous; within so short a time, the concentration of hydrogen cyanide in the gas chamber would have gone up rather than down, because the period during which a can of Zyklon B emitted gas was about two hours.⁵¹⁷

The reference to Moll as head of the “*detainee corpse unit*” (the accused knew absolutely nothing of the alleged official term “*Sonderkommando*”) is completely out of place, because SS *Hauptsturmführer* Otto Moll was head of the Birkenau crematoria from July to September 1944, and in 1942 was still only *Blockführer* of the *Strafkompanie* (penal unit) at Birkenau.⁵¹⁸ The system of extraction of the victims – with hooks attached to lances two meters long – is also a fanciful invention of the accused.

We have hardly to mention that no part of Fischer’s rubbish was later admitted into the ‘official’ framework of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’

6.6. Conclusions

The testimonies examined in this section can be divided into two major groups which, overall, show rather divergent characteristics. In the years immediately following the Second World War, the propaganda story was still being developed. The testimonies from that period conform to the knowledge of

⁵¹⁷ J. Graf, C. Mattogno, *Concentration Camp Majdanek. A Historical and Technical Study*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago, IL, 2003, pp. 127; W. Lambrecht, “Zyklon-B – eine Ergänzung,” in: *Vierteljahresshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung*, 1(1) (1997), pp. 1-5. Table on p. 3.

⁵¹⁸ A. Lasik, “Täterbiographien,” in: *Sterbebücher von Auschwitz*, K.G. Saur, Munich, New Providence, London, Paris 1995, vol. 1, pp. 290f.

the interrogators who imposed them on those questioned, each new confession adding to the official picture by contributing new ‘converging evidence’; the defendants, on the other hand, quite aware of the unavoidable fate that awaited them at the end of the trials under preparation, accepted them for merely tactical reasons or under direct torture, as in the case of Höß, adding new literary details here and there.

In the 1960s, however, as we shall see in the next chapter, the propaganda had become ‘history,’ and the interrogators therefore no longer needed to influence the witnesses, who then put together the few fragments of that ‘history’ known to them, and wove around them more or less gracefully a literary fabric that became the text followed by the witnesses at the Auschwitz trial and the trials that followed.

Part Three:
Propaganda Becomes Historical “Reality”

7. Making History Out of Propaganda

7.1. The ‘Bunkers’ in Soviet Investigations (February – March 1945)

The first attempt at making history out of the propaganda story of the gassing ‘Bunkers’ at Birkenau was undertaken by the Soviet commission of investigation in the period immediately following the liberation of the Auschwitz camps.

Between February 14 and March 8, 1945, the Polish experts Dawidowski and Doliński, together with their Soviet counterparts Lavrushchin and Shooer, wrote an account (“*Akt*”) of 17 pages on the extermination technique at Auschwitz. One section, entitled “*Incineration of corpses on pyres*” (“*Сжигание трупов на кострах*”), deals specifically with the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’ In its entirety, it reads as follows:⁵¹⁹

“a. Gas chamber n. 1 with the pyres

Shortly after the gas chamber in the first crematorium was put into service in the autumn of 1941, another two gas chambers were installed in the woods at a certain distance from the Birkenau camp. The first gas chamber, of a size of 8 by 10 meters and a floor area of 80 square meters, had two entrances and two exits. On the outside of the entrance doors a sign in German said ‘to the disinfection’ and on the inside of the exit doors ‘to the bath.’ Next to the doors, on the lateral wall, there were openings for the introduction of the Zyklon. Furthermore, there were two standard wooden barracks that served as undressing rooms.

This chamber, once the people were squeezed together in the way the Germans did it, could accommodate 800–1000 persons at one time. Assuming that, as resulted from the investigation, for the undressing, the poisoning, and the removal of the corpses from the chamber, the Germans needed 5–7 hours, it was possible to carry out three such operations within the course of 24 hours. Therefore, at maximum tempo, the Germans were able to poison no fewer than 2500 per day by means of the gas chamber n. 1. The corpses were transported, on five carts of a narrow-gauge railroad, to four trenches, 25–30 meters long, 4–6 meters wide, and 2 meters deep, in which they were put down in layers with wood and burned. This gas chamber and the pyres next to it operated for about one year and a half and were destroyed by the Germans in March-April 1943.

⁵¹⁹ Protocol. February 14 to March 8, 1945. City of Oświęcim. GARF, 7021-108, pp. 7-9.

b. Gas chamber n. 2 with the pyres

The second gas chamber measured 9 by 11 meters and had a total floor area of 100 square meters. It was installed along the lines of gas chamber n. 1. At maximum tempo, the Germans poisoned 3000 persons per day in this gas chamber, based on the same data as those of gas chamber n. 1. The corpses were transported to the pyres on four carts of a narrow-gauge railway, at times 4–6 were used. The activity of gas chamber n. 2 and its pyres was interrupted in April 1943, then started again in May 1944, and continued until October 1944. Therefore, this gas chamber and its pyres functioned for a total of one year and ten months.

c. Pyres near crematorium 5

From May to October 1944, the ovens of crematorium 5 stayed closed and the corpses of the persons poisoned were burned on three pyres located on the grounds of the crematorium.”

This description is obviously based upon Szlama Dragon’s deposition of February 26, 1945.

7.2. Location of the ‘Bunkers’

The most important problem that the Soviets had to solve in their attempt to establish the ‘Bunkers’ as historical fact was the location of the two “*cottages*”.

As we have seen in chapters 5 and 6, all the wartime testimonies and Szlama Dragon’s two depositions – the Soviet one of February 26 and the Polish one of May 10–11, 1945 – are extremely vague on this point.

The Soviets entrusted the task of determining the location of ‘Bunkers’ to a Polish engineer – Eugeniusz Nosal – the same man who later drew the three sketches of the ‘Bunkers’ attached to Dragon’s Polish deposition. On March 3, 1945, Nosal drew two maps of the western part of the Birkenau camp.

The first is a “*Map of the position of the chambers and the pyres for the incineration of corpses.*”⁵²⁰ On this map, “*gas chamber 2*”⁵²¹ (identified by the letter K) appears in the location later to become official, *i.e.*, at 200 meters to the west of the western fence of the Birkenau camp, at a level between the central sauna and crematorium IV. “*Gas chamber 1*” (similarly indicated by the letter K) is likewise located outside the camp, some 280 meters from the northern enclosure of BAIII, perpendicular to the two settling basins.

What was the Soviets’ evidence for their location of the two ‘Bunkers’? One might think they used Szlama Dragon’s deposition, given five days earlier. This, however, is highly improbable. In his deposition on the ‘Bunkers,’

⁵²⁰ “План района расположения крематориев, газовых камер и костров для сжигания трупов.” Cf. document 17. “План района” literally means “plan of the zone.”

⁵²¹ As we have already seen, the term ‘Bunker’ had not yet been introduced at that time.

Dragon provided many details, but he did not indicate, even in a general way, the locations of the two “cottages.” It would, after all, have been very simple for him to say that ‘Bunker 2’ stood some 250 meters west of the central sauna (or some 200 meters from the enclosure that ran along it),⁵²² and that ‘Bunker 1’ was located (according to the map in question) to the north of BAIII, less than 300 meters from the enclosure. It would have been even easier for Szlama Dragon to accompany the Soviet interrogators to the site where the two “cottages” stood. They would then simply have had to place them on the map. However, on this map the distance between the two alleged ‘Bunkers,’ as the crow flies, is about 1,100 meters – the real distance between the two points is actually about 900 meters⁵²³ – which matches neither the 3 km of Szlama Dragon’s Soviet deposition nor the 500 meters of his Polish deposition. Dragon obviously knew nothing about the location of the ‘Bunkers.’

To locate those ‘Bunkers,’ the Soviets instead used a German map dated June 1943,⁵²⁴ which engineer Nosal simply copied, but not very accurately. This results from a simple comparison of the two maps and, above all, from the presence, on both, of a settling installation made up of two trenches running east-west and of two series of 5 and 4 circular basins parallel to them at the north-west angle of the camp. This construction project, which first appears on the map of the Birkenau camp of October 28, 1942,⁵²⁵ was later abandoned; the installation eventually built, and still in existence, consisted of four parallel trenches running north-south some twenty meters to the west of the enclosure of BAIII of the camp, as shown by map no. 2215 of March 1943⁵²⁶ and by the American aerial reconnaissance photographs of May 31, 1944.⁵²⁷

Map no. 2501 of June 1943, copied by engineer Nosal, shows only two houses near the camp enclosure, namely those that the Soviets identified as the two ‘gas chambers.’⁵²⁸

This demonstrates that the basis for the location of the two ‘Bunkers’ was not an on-site inspection in the company of the alleged eyewitnesses (Szlama Dragon, first of all), but resulted from mere desk work.

And, in fact, on another German map of unknown number and date, but which certainly dates from 1944,⁵²⁹ the Soviets searched, with colored pencils, for four zones, two of which concerned crematoria II–III and IV–V.

⁵²² One should not forget that Szlama Dragon pretends to have also worked at ‘Bunker 2’ in 1944, when the central sauna already existed and was clearly visible from the ‘Bunker.’

⁵²³ The map drawn by the engineer Nosal, as we shall see below, contains a few inexact points.

⁵²⁴ “*Interessengebiet Lageplan. Plan Nr. 2501*” of June 1943. GARF, 7021-108-25, p. 10. Cf. document 18

⁵²⁵ “*Lageplan des Kriegsgefangenenlagers Auschwitz O/S. Entwässerungsplan. Plan Nr. 1782*” of October 28, 1942, drawn by detainee no. 46856, the Polish technician Peter Hopanczuk. VHA, Fond OT 31(2)/8.

⁵²⁶ Cf. document 2.

⁵²⁷ Cf. photographs 9 and 9a.

⁵²⁸ Engineer Nosal placed the house identified as the “*gas chamber 2*” at about 280 meters from the camp enclosure, whereas it was about 100 meters from it.

⁵²⁹ “*Lagebereich Kommandantur 1 und 2.*” GARF, 7021-108-36, p. 29. Cf. document 19.

The other two are described as follows on a sheet glued to the margin of the map:⁵³⁰

“In the blue circle: position of the separate gas chambers and the pyres for the cremation of the corpses next to them.”

The first circle comprises an area to the west of the central sauna which, while being contiguous with the one shown on the map drawn by engineer Nosal as the zone of ‘gas chamber’ no. 2 and its cremation trenches, is different from it. The second circle includes an area inside the camp, between the settling installation and the western enclosure.

Hence, on two different maps, the Soviets placed ‘Bunker 1’ as well as ‘Bunker 2’ in different positions.

This great uncertainty, less than a month after the liberation of the camp, when the traces left by the SS were still intact and could have been easily identified by anyone who had really worked in the ‘Bunkers,’ proves that in fact no one – starting with the alleged eyewitnesses, above all Szlama Dragon – knew anything about the location of the alleged extermination installations.

The second map drawn by engineer Nosal on March 3, 1945, is entitled “*Zone of the location of gas chamber no. 2 and of the pyres for the cremation of corpses at Birkenau.*”⁵³¹ It is a map of the area of ‘Bunker 2’ drawn to the scale of 1:1000. The legend at the bottom reads:

“Place where the Germans burned the corpses of those poisoned in the gas chamber on pyres. 5,900 square meters.”

On the left, above the road, there is a caption that reads “*road where the persons arrived from the railroad ramp of the camp for poisoning.*” Below it are two barracks with the following explanation: “*Barracks where they [the persons] undressed before entering the gas chamber.*”

The ‘gas chamber,’ i.e., ‘Bunker 2,’ is split up into 4 rooms in accordance with the deposition of Szlama Dragon. The relative explanation says, in fact, “*Gas chamber, split up into 4 parts.*” However, the orientation of the house is wrong, because it had its long side in a northwest direction, at an angle of about 70°, whereas on Nosal’s drawing the long side of the house runs northeast, at an angle of about 110°. As the ruins of the alleged ‘Bunker 2’ still exist, this major error by an engineer is rather strange. The 30–square meter basin (“*бассейн*”) that appears in the center of the map existed on the ground in March 1945 but is not shown on any German map. However, it, too, is drawn incorrectly because its long side was on the northwest, not the northeast. This basin is, moreover, the only trench shown on the map. It is clear that if six graves, each one 30–35 meters long, 7–8 meters wide, and 2 meters deep, with a total surface area of at least 1,260 square meters, had been part of an area of scarcely 5,900 square meters they could not have disappeared without a trace, even if they had been filled in and leveled. Therefore, Nosal’s drawing cate-

⁵³⁰ “*В синих кружках – места расположения отдельных газовых камер и костров при них для сожжения трупов.*”

⁵³¹ “*Район расположения газовой камеры N2 и костров для сожжения трупов в Биркенау,*” GARF, 7021-108-25, p. 12. Cf. document 20.

gorically refutes Dragon's claim of the existence of six cremation pits near 'Bunker 2.' In chapter 9 I shall return to this question.

7.3. The 'Bunkers' in Polish (May 1945 – November 1947) and German (1949 – 1965) Investigations

On September 26, 1946, the engineer Roman Dawidowski completed his expert report of 57 pages, which had been ordered by Judge Jan Sehn "*for the purpose of ascertaining,*" on the basis of inspections of the camp and German documents, "*what installations for mass exterminations of persons and for the obliteration of the traces of the crime may have existed in the area of the camp.*"⁵³²

The report, as far as the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau are concerned, is well documented (16 photographs and 8 drawings) and mentions several documents – later studied by Jean-Claude Pressac – which contain, in his words, "*criminal traces*" supporting the alleged existence of homicidal gas chambers in such installations.

However, Dawidowski dedicates barely 13 lines to the gassing 'Bunkers' at Birkenau. Because of the increase in incoming transports from March 1942 onwards, he writes, the gas chamber of crematorium I proved insufficient and therefore the cottages of the farmers Wiechuja and Harmata, who had been moved elsewhere, were turned into gas chambers:⁵³³

"These chambers were designated Bunker 1 and Bunker 2, cf. photographs no. 1, no. VIII, and IX. Two undressing barracks were set up near the cottages. On the outside of the entrance door to the chambers was attached a sign 'to the bath' and on the inside of the exit door one saying 'to the disinfection' to make [people] believe that the exit door led into another room. Actually, behind this door there was an open space where the corpses were loaded on carts, by which they were transported to the trenches to be burned.

The deposition of the witness Dragon contains a detailed description of the two Bunkers /attachment no. 17."

Hence, Dawidowski drew all his knowledge about the Birkenau 'Bunkers' from Dragon's deposition. He had not found even the slightest documentary hint of the existence of these alleged gassing installations. The "*Photograph no. I*" to which he refers is a map of the Birkenau camp in 1941, in which the later western zone of the camp does not appear – the crematoria, the personal property storage, and the sewage treatment plant bordering on BAIII. On this map,⁵³⁴ Dawidowski marked the positions of the 'Bunkers,' with "*VIII*" corresponding to 'Bunker 1' and "*IX*" for 'Bunker 2.' The positions of the two cot-

⁵³² Höß trial, vol. 11, p. 1.

⁵³³ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

⁵³⁴ Cf. document 21.

tages correspond roughly to those on Nosal's map drawn on March 3, 1945, so Dawidowski simply accepted the Soviet conjectures. Neither he nor Judge Jan Sehn felt the need to inspect the site of the alleged crime in the company of Dragon.

In 1946, Judge Sehn summarized his work on Auschwitz in a long article entitled "*The Oświęcim concentration and extermination camp.*" In chapter 15, "*The gas chambers,*" he writes:⁵³⁵

"In the fall of 1941, on a clearing in the wood of Brzezinka, a primitive gas chamber called Bunker 2 [sic] was set up in the cottage of a farmer who had been moved, and a couple of kilometers from it, likewise in the cottage of [someone] moved – another chamber called Bunker 1."

That same year, this article was revised for publication in English under the auspices of the "*Central Commission for the Investigation of the German Crimes in Poland.*" In that feature, the passage relative to the 'Bunkers' was modified thus:⁵³⁶

"After gassing had begun in 1941, the small crematorium could not hold all the corpses of the victims, so they were burnt in 8 open pits, dug for that purpose near the gas chambers and called 'Bunkers' 1 and 2."

Also in 1946, Filip Friedman, director of the "*Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland,*" published a book on Auschwitz in which he described the beginnings of the alleged extermination of Jews at Auschwitz in the following way:⁵³⁷

"The same year [1941] permanent gas installations were put into two peasant huts at Brzezinki (Birkenau). The bodies of the gassed people were buried near the huts. By the spring of 1942 the bodies began to rot and smell, and steps were taken to build a crematorium in which to burn the corpses."

Where the indictment against Höß (February 11, 1947) addresses the 'Bunkers,' it rests on Dawidowski's assertions: The SS transformed the cottages of the farmers Wiechujka and Harmata into gas chambers, calling them 'Bunker 1' and 'Bunker 2':⁵³⁸

"After the construction of the other crematoria with their gas chambers – it is added – the two Bunkers were taken out of service; Bunker 1 was demolished, the building of Bunker 2 was preserved and put back into service in May 1944."

Regarding this the written verdict of the Höß trial (April 2, 1947) contains the following passage:⁵³⁹

⁵³⁵ Jan Sehn, "*Obóz koncentracyjny i zagłady Oświęcim,*" in: *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce, 1946, p. 121.

⁵³⁶ "*Concentration and extermination camp at Oświęcim (Auschwitz-Birkenau),*" in: Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland. Warsaw 1946, vol. I, p. 88.

⁵³⁷ F. Friedman, *This Was Oswiecim. The History of a Murder Camp*, The United Jewish Relief Appeal, London 1946, pp. 18f.

⁵³⁸ AGK, NTN, 104, p. 79.

⁵³⁹ AGK, NTN, 146z, pp. 31f.

“From the spring of 1942, before the construction of the crematoria with their gas chambers, the gassing of persons in the area of the Brzezinka camp was transferred to the cottages of the Brzezinka farmers Wiechuja and Harmata, which had been appropriately rebuilt for this purpose and which were designated Bunker 1 and 2. The corpses of the persons who were gassed there were burned in the above-mentioned trenches. After the construction of the Brzezinka crematoria the two Bunkers were taken out of service; Bunker 2, which had been preserved, was put back into operation in May 1944 at the period of the greatest intensity of the gassings.”

The indictment in the trial of the camp garrison (November 1947) devotes little more than one line to the topic of the ‘Bunkers’: after the first experimental gassing in the fall of 1941, the gassings took place in crematorium 1 *“and then also in the so-called Bunkers 1 and 2 of Brzezinka [which had been] cottages of [inhabitants] transferred.”*⁵⁴⁰

Assigning to the farmer Harmata one of the two cottages that had allegedly been turned into ‘Bunkers’ was wrong, because the Harmata family lived in a completely different area.

Instead, there has never been the vaguest indication of the fact that the other house belonged to a farmer by the name of Wiechuja. Dawidowski even gets the names mixed up, by making the Harmata family the former owners of ‘Bunker 2,’ whereas one of the heirs later laid claim to ‘Bunker 1.’⁵⁴¹ That error was repeated in the indictment and the verdict of the Höß trial.

It is clear that the names of the two farmers were arbitrarily taken from among those who had been expropriated by the SS, merely to provide a fictitious proof for the location of the ‘Bunkers.’ This is confirmed by the fact that Harmata and Wiechuja (or a relative) appeared neither at the Höß trial nor at the trial of the camp garrison.⁵⁴² It is clear that testimony from members of the Harmata and Wiechuja families would have been essential in establishing once and for all the location of the ‘Bunkers’ and would have allowed an inspection of the sites.

In March 1949, the so-called Degesch trial was held in Germany, with Dr. Gerhard Peters, who had been the director of that firm, the major defendant. The verdict, dated March 28, 1949, shows that the propaganda story of the ‘Bunkers’ was still in the process of development and continued to enrich itself with new and wondrous details:⁵⁴³

“Witness Dr. M. observed two gassings in the gas chambers of the farmhouses. According to his statement, the victims initially believed they were going into a disinfection installation. Only when more and more peo-

⁵⁴⁰ GARF, 7021-108-39, p. 73.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. following section.

⁵⁴² Their family names do not appear on the list of the 206 witnesses at the Höß trial (AGK, NTN, 174, pp. 3-10), nor among the 401 witnesses of the trial of the camp garrison (AGK, NTN, 175, pp. 65-107).

⁵⁴³ Christiaan F. Rüter et al., *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen. Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945-1966*, Amsterdam, 1968-1981, vol. XIII, p. 134.

ple were being crowded into those rooms are they said to have become scared. After the chambers had been completely filled with people, it is said that there was a wait of another 10 minutes in order to reach a certain temperature. The traps are said to have been opened and the contents of Zyklon-cans poured in by the medic. It is said that ‘an enormous number’ of people had been crowded in, some 300–400 persons into each room. Ten minutes later everything was said to have been quiet.

There have apparently been erroneous opinions among the detainees at the time concerning the way the gas was introduced into the gassing rooms. Witness Dr. Au. stated the gas was fed into the room by means of a syringe attached to the can. Witness W. claims that the gas was admitted to the room by means of a blower installation. From hearsay, Dr. Str. states that the gas was blown into the room. Witness Rö. had heard that the gas was fed into the rooms through fake showers.”

During the Auschwitz trial at Frankfurt (January 1964 – August 1965), in spite of an enormous deployment of witnesses and means, the findings on the subject of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ were even less conclusive. On the official map of the camp, ‘Bunker 2’ does not appear at all, whereas ‘Bunker 1,’ called “‘*Rotes Haus*’ = *Bunker (Gaskammer)*” is located at about 340 meters from the western enclosure of BAIII. Furthermore, and this is even more serious – as Jean-Claude Pressac has pointed out⁵⁴⁴ – the four basins of the sewage treatment plant, which were in that part of the camp, are labeled as incineration trenches on the above-mentioned map. The legend, in fact, says: “*Place of cremation and mass graves.*”⁵⁴⁵

The verdict, in its vague generalities, demonstrates the inconclusiveness of the court’s findings:⁵⁴⁶

“*Before the transformation of the farmhouse had been completed, the killings by means of gas took place in the small crematorium. From summer 1942 onward the farmhouse that had meanwhile been turned into a gas chamber served as a place of annihilation. As its capacity did not suffice in the face of ever more numerous transports, another farmhouse in the vicinity of the first was converted into a gas chamber and used as an additional place of annihilation. The two chambers were called Bunker I and II. The corpses of those killed were initially interred in large pits and later cremated in long graves.*”

⁵⁴⁴ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ...*, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 165-170.

⁵⁴⁵ B. Naumann, *Auschwitz. Bericht über die Strafsache gegen Mulka u.a. vor dem Schwurgericht Frankfurt*, Athäneum Verlag, Frankfurt/Main-Bonn, 1965, p. 540; H. Langbein, *op. cit.* (note 325), pp. 930f.

⁵⁴⁶ C.F. Rüter, *op. cit.* (note 543), vol. XXII, p. 421.

7.4. Józefa Wińska's Declaration on the Location of 'Bunker 1'

On August 5, 1980, Józefa Wińska, born on February 25, 1924, and residing at Brzezinka, handed to the Museum of Auschwitz the following account, registered by Franciszek Piper, at that time curator of the Museum:⁵⁴⁷

"Before the war there were the following buildings on the land presently occupied by my house, and in its immediate vicinity:

A wooden house with a straw roof, in which my grandparents lived and later my parents and I with my sister Bronisława Wińska, two barns, one made of brick, the other of wood, and finally a single-story brick house, unplastered, covered with tiles, built in 1932–35 by Gryzek, son-in-law of my uncle, Józef Harmata, who lived there as well. In the mortgage papers, though, this house was registered in the name of my uncle Józef Harmata.

My uncle Józef Harmata died in 1943, my father Piotr Harmata in 1962.

The house of Józef Harmata and his son-in-law Gryzek, husband of Aniela Harmata, which was transformed into a gas chamber by the Germans, as I learned after the war, was 12 meters long and 9 meters wide. Along its whole width, there was a corridor. On the right were two living rooms, on the left, one room and a stable with an exit to the outside. Toward the front, each room had two windows. Around the house, there were tall fruit trees.

These buildings stood at about 100 meters from the country road which went to the village. In the immediate vicinity there was Grzybek's house, a residence, partly brick, partly wood, a stable and a barn. In 1941, the Germans sent us away, like the other inhabitants of the village. When I came back to that land after the war, in 1949, I observed that all the objects mentioned no longer existed. Several basins had been built across the old road. From the place where my uncle's house [had] stood, the roadbed of a narrow-gauge railroad went to the nearby wood.

The present road near my house runs parallel to the old road, across which the basins mentioned above had been built. The house built after the war, in which I live, stands where my father's wooden house used to be, but the old house was a few meters farther away, in the back of the village towards the wood. The place where Grzybek's building was is now covered with slag, and on the other side of the road is the monument to the Soviet prisoners. With this, the account ends."

Attached to the account is a sketch of Józef Harmata's house, the alleged 'Bunker 1',⁵⁴⁸ a topographical sketch showing its location,⁵⁴⁹ and four photographs taken in 1985 by F. Piper.

⁵⁴⁷ APMO, *Oświadczenia*, vol. 113, pp. 77f.

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. document 22.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. document 23.

Summarizing, before the Second World War (in the area north of the future settling basins) there were two houses and two wooden barns, i.e., the buildings numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the topographical sketch, which illustrates the testimony. These buildings did indeed exist. They appear on the German site map no. 1733 of October 5, 1942,⁵⁵⁰ but there is nothing to prove that one of them (the one closest to the future enclosure of the camp) was ever transformed into a homicidal gas chamber. According to her testimony, Ms. Wińska herself had only learned about this alleged fact “*after the war.*”

Obviously, Ms. Wińska had no proof that the house of her uncle Józef Harmata and his son-in-law Gryzek had been turned into ‘Bunker 1’ by the SS at Auschwitz. It seems evident that the words were put in her mouth by the Auschwitz Museum which had, in 1978,⁵⁵¹ on an official map of the Birkenau camp, arbitrarily positioned ‘Bunker 1’ at the very place she indicated in 1980 and now needed a fictitious ‘proof’ *a posteriori* to back up its claim. The choice of a member of the Harmata family is explained by the fact that – as we have seen in the preceding section – the verdict in the Höß trial had decreed that the Polish houses allegedly transformed into ‘Bunker 1’ and ‘Bunker 2’ belonged to farmers at Brzezinka (Birkenau) named Wiechuja and Harmata. It is clear that she came forward only because she had learned that the indictment and the verdict of the Höß trial had mentioned her uncle (Józef) Harmata as the proprietor of one of the houses allegedly transformed into ‘Bunkers.’

7.5. Wińska vs. Dragon: New Contradictions

After the declaration of Józefa Wińska, the Auschwitz Museum, based on this ‘proof,’ sanctioned the relocation of ‘Bunker 1’ from outside the camp – where engineer Dawidowski had placed it – to the inside, to the position that has now become official.

This, however, entails a serious historical problem: the sketch of J. Harmata’s house and that drawn by the engineer Nosal in accordance with the Polish deposition of Szlama Dragon are, in fact, totally at variance with each other. As I have already explained, the orientation of Nosal’s drawing is west-east. The two sketches attached to J. Wińska’s declaration are orientated in the same way. On the Wińska drawing, however, the long side of the lies along the west-east axis, while on the Dragon sketch it is placed north-south instead. This sketch, moreover, shows two flights of stairs, S1 and S2, consisting of 8 and 7 steps respectively: Therefore the floor of the house stood at about 1.5 meters above ground level, whereas that of J. Harmata’s house was level with the ground and had no stairs. It was divided into four rooms of

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. document 7.

⁵⁵¹ Cf. the map of the camp published outside of the text (between pp. 144 and 145) of the book edited by Józef Buszko, *Auschwitz (Oświęcim) Camp hitlérien d’extermination*, Editions Interpress, Warsaw 1978.

equal size, the two rooms on the west side being separated from the two on the east side by a corridor running north-south. To turn this house into ‘Bunker 1’ as described by Dragon and drawn by Nosal, it would have been necessary, first of all, to demolish the four side walls along the corridor, the two walls which separated the rooms on either side of the house, and to rebuild them a few meters away in order to obtain two rooms of different size!

This ‘Bunker 1,’ moreover, shows two details that run counter to a rational extermination operation: First of all, its two rooms were provided with a single door and two little windows each. Hence the ventilation that could be achieved by opening the door and the two windows was insignificant. This is even more valid for the room on the north side, the door and windows of which were located on the same wall.

Anyone who wanted to achieve efficient ventilation – even the most inept technician – would have placed the two doors in opposite walls.

In addition, the presence of only one door would obviously have hindered the clearing of corpses from the rooms.

The second detail is the existence of the two flights of stairs noted above, which certainly did nothing to facilitate the removal of corpses from the ‘gas chambers.’

7.6. The Timetable of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’

Elevating the propaganda legend to history brought with it another problem to be solved: that of the dates.

As we have seen above, the Polish-Soviet experts asserted that ‘Bunker 1’ had been in operation “*for about a year and a half*” and had been demolished in March-April 1943. It follows that it began operations in September-October 1941. ‘Bunker 2’ operated for “*a year and ten months*,” including six months in 1944, hence went into service in October of 1941.

In his article of 1946, Jan Sehn accepted these dates and asserted that the two ‘Bunkers’ had started operations in autumn 1941. Dawidowski gave March 1942 or ‘after March 1942’ for the beginnings of their operation. The verdict in the Höß trial mentions the spring of 1942 as the launch date.

In the first edition (1960) of the *Auschwitz Chronicle*, Danuta Czech tried to integrate the divergent dates, asserting that ‘Bunker 1’ had gone into service in January 1942 and ‘Bunker 2’ on June 30 of the same year.⁵⁵² In the 1989 edition of the *Auschwitz Chronicle*, Czech moved the inauguration of ‘Bunker 1’ to March 20, 1942, leaving that of ‘Bunker 2’ unchanged. Finally, Jean-Claude Pressac moved the starting date of ‘Bunker 1’ once again, to the end of May 1942.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵² D. Czech, “*Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau*,” in: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, no. 3, Staatliches Museum Auschwitz, 1960, p. 49 and 68.

⁵⁵³ Cf. chapter 1.6. above.

All the dates proposed are absolutely arbitrary, and are not corroborated by even the slightest circumstantial evidence.

8. The Development of the Official Historiography of the ‘Bunkers’

8.1. Early Historiographical Attempts

In the early 1950s official Holocaust historiography was still in its infancy. As we saw in the preceding chapter, the Polish texts translated into English and published right after the war were too terse to be used for an historical ‘reconstruction,’ because for Western historians the source was essentially the ‘confession’ of Rudolf Höß.

In 1951, Leon Poliakov published his *Bréviaire de la Haine*, in which he deals as follows with the ‘Bunkers’:⁵⁵⁴

“According to the historian Philip Friedman, this first large-scale experiment^[555] was made on September 15, 1941, near the hamlet of Birkenau (Brzezinka) which thereafter served as the exterminations site. Later in the year, according to Hoess, ‘the two farm buildings on one side of the road, near Birkenau, were made airtight and equipped with solid wooden doors.’ These were the first permanent installations. Their capacity was small, and they did not have a crematory; the bodies were burned in the open. Nevertheless, these installations were used to the end, and, unlike the better ones built later, were not destroyed in October 1944.”

Poliakov misinterprets what Friedman wrote (the latter knew well that Block 11 was not at Birkenau) and adds unfounded elements of his own.

In 1953, Gerald Reitlinger published his book *The Final Solution*. In spite of the enormous documentation compiled by the author, he devotes little more than a couple of incidental lines to the question of the ‘Bunkers’:⁵⁵⁶

“Work also began at two adjacent farm buildings, which became the gas chambers, but it was not till January, 1943, that the first *Bunawerk* factory was completed.”

The following year, Lord Russell of Liverpool simply recapitulated Höß’ assertions of March 14, 1946, in his book *The Scourge of the Swastika*.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁴ L. Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la haine. Le III^e Reich et les Juifs*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1951, pp. 228f. I am using the subsequent published English translation, which agrees with the original text: *Harvest of Hate. The Nazi Program for the Destruction of the Jews of Europe*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, N.Y., 1954, p. 200.

⁵⁵⁵ The alleged ‘first gassing’ in the basement of Block 11 of the Auschwitz camp.

⁵⁵⁶ G. Reitlinger, *The Final Solution. The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, Valentine, Mitchell, London 1953, p. 109

⁵⁵⁷ Lord Russell of Liverpool, *The Scourge of the Swastika. A Short History of Nazi War Crimes*, Cassell & Company LTD, London 1954, pp. 167f.

The first ‘historical’ framework was delineated by Ota Kraus and Erich Kulka, both ex-detainees of Auschwitz, who had already published a book on Auschwitz in 1946.⁵⁵⁸ The re-edition of 1957⁵⁵⁹ appeared in a German translation the following year.⁵⁶⁰ The authors had a second-hand knowledge of S. Dragon’s Polish deposition, which they enriched with their own inventions:⁵⁶¹

“Two small farmhouses of the village of Brzezinky (Birkenau) that the Nazis had evacuated were modified and set up as gas chambers in a primitive way; those houses were situated about half a kilometer to the west of the disinfection station. The houses were 6 by 12 meters in size and were split into four chambers, which could be closed by means of heavy doors; such a door was also located in the opposite wall [of each chamber]. In the upper part of another wall there was a small window with [iron] bars”

The authors then mention the signs on the two ‘farmhouses’ and an enclosure around them, and continue:

“In front of the house there were two windowless barracks, 9 by 40 meters in size; those were the undressing rooms.”

Then follows the description of the transport of the alleged victims, who were gassed in the following way:

“As soon as the chamber was full – and they squeezed up to 150 persons into that space of 18 square meters – they slammed the door, screwed the bolts tight, and poured the poison in through the little window in the wall. Then they closed the window hermetically, and for a few minutes one could hear only screams and moans. After something like half an hour they opened the back door of the chamber.”

Kraus and Kulka thus considered the two ‘Bunkers’ to be perfectly identical and placed both of them to the west of the central sauna, giving them dimensions of 6 by 12 meters and retaining the division into four equal rooms of 18 square meters each – all this at odds with the official ‘historical’ version. The dimensions of the undressing barracks were practically those of a horse stable barrack, of which they had an original drawing and which measured 9.56 by 40.76 meters. This was the only item later appropriated by the official historiography. The presence of a single little window – with bars, to boot – was a rather infelicitous invention, however, because it is difficult to see how a can of Zyklon B could have been fed through such a grid.

The work of Kraus and Kulka only echoed the Soviet propaganda; they even defended the Soviet claim that four million died at Auschwitz,⁵⁶² a figure devoid of any scientific value.

In 1961, Judge Jan Sehn published a terse summary of Szlama Dragon’s Polish deposition without, however, mentioning his source:⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁸ O. Kraus, E. Schön [Kulka], *Továrna na smrt*, Prague 1946.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, *Továrna na smrt. Dokument o Osvětími*, Naše Vojsko-SPB, Prague 1957.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, *Die Todesfabrik*, Kongress Verlag, Berlin 1958.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 111-113.

⁵⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 172f.

⁵⁶³ J. Sehn, *Oświęcim-Brzezinka (Auschwitz-Birkenau) Concentration Camp*, Wydawnictwo Pracownicze, Warsaw 1961, pp. 125f.

“From 1942 on, massive transports of Jews began arriving at Auschwitz; the gas chamber of crematorium I proved inadequate for their liquidation. Consequently, two more gas chambers were installed for this purpose in two houses of farmers who had been moved. These gas chambers were called Bunker 1 and Bunker 2. In their vicinity, two undressing huts were set up. Bunker 1 had two gas chambers, into which some 2,000 persons could be squeezed at one time.

The victims undressed in the huts in the woods and went naked from there to the gas chamber. There were four gas chambers in the small house designated as Bunker 2. In both Bunkers the gas chambers had separate entrances and exits. On the entrance door there was a sign saying ‘to the baths,’ on the inside of the exit door it said ‘to the disinfection.’ There was an open space outside that door, in which the bodies removed from the gas chambers were piled up. In both Bunkers, the openings for the gas were set in the side walls.”

A year earlier, however, Danuta Czech had published the section of her *Auschwitz Chronicle* dealing with 1942, which contained two succinct entries on the subject of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’ The first, referring generally to January 1942, reads:⁵⁶⁴

“[They] started to kill Jews from Upper Silesia by means of gas. This happened in the so-called Bunker 1, a farmhouse modified for the purpose, which was situated in the northwest corner of what became BAB III of Birkenau. The corpses of those killed were shovelled under in mass graves in a meadow in the woods.”

The second entry appears under the date of June 30, 1942:⁵⁶⁵

“Because of the great number of Jewish transports destined to be murdered, Bunker 2 was put into operation by modifying for this purpose another country house situated on the meadow in the woods to the west of the future crematorium III.”

The information presented was very brief, but in compensation Czech had, in a widely distributed publication that carried much weight among the specialists of the day, provided the watchword for the official historiography: the two farmhouses allegedly converted to homicidal gas chambers were to be called ‘Bunkers.’

In 1981, Georges Wellers presented a brief collection of testimonies (Broad, Höß, Lettich) on the ‘Bunkers,’ but without even a minimal attempt at a historical ‘reconstruction.’⁵⁶⁶

Two years later, Wellers outlined the first official ‘historical’ framework with claims to scholarship. He wrote the chapter “*Auschwitz*” for a major collective work, in which he devoted a section of seven pages to “*The Birkenau*

⁵⁶⁴ D. Czech, *op. cit.* (note 552), p. 49.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

⁵⁶⁶ G. Wellers, *Les chambres à gaz ont existé. Des documents, des témoignages, des chiffres*, Gallimard, 1981, pp. 104-108.

'Bunkers'.'⁵⁶⁷ His most valuable contribution was to have dusted off Dragon's deposition of May 10–11, 1945, which then became the reference point of the new 'historiographical' framework of the 'Bunkers.'

As far as I know, the first and the only complete published version of Szlama Dragon's deposition is as an attachment to Franciszek Piper's study *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz*.⁵⁶⁸

8.2. Jean-Claude Pressac's Contribution

With his 1989 study on Auschwitz, Jean-Claude Pressac has provided us with an essential contribution to the historicization of the propaganda legend by devoting two specific chapters to 'Bunker 1' and 'Bunker 2.'⁵⁶⁹ Pressac has the merit of having made use of Szlama Dragon's Polish deposition, of having published little-known testimonies (such as those of Milton Buki and Maurice Benroubi), and the drawing by David Olère that we have analyzed earlier, as well as the two maps drawn by the engineer Nosal on March 3, 1945. He has, moreover, inspected, photographed, and furnished a drawing of the ruins of 'Bunker 2.'

All this, however, is quite insufficient to confer any historiographical value on his essay, because it is superficial and lacks critical spirit. His entire demonstration of the reality of the 'Bunkers' is based, in fact, on mere testimonies – which are contradictory, to boot. A sound historiographical approach would have entailed an internal criticism of the individual testimonies to establish their degree of credibility, and a comparative analysis of all testimonies to determine the level of their agreement on the essential facts. Instead, Pressac limits himself instead to dry comments on the testimonies and leaves things at that.

In the treatment of 'Bunker 1' he calls upon the testimonies of Rudolf Höß, Pery Broad, Szlama Dragon, Maurice Benroubi, Milton Buki, and Moshe Garbarz. He concludes:⁵⁷⁰

"Without any material traces, the location [...], internal organization [...], and the arrangement of the different annexes of Bunker 1 will never be clearly elucidated."

Furthermore:

"Its purpose, the extermination of human beings by gassing, cannot be called into question, if only because of the constant repetition of an identical process in the accounts of the former prisoners [...]."

This claim is wrong and unfounded inasmuch as it relies on a specific concordance which does not exist at all, while the general concordance, as we

⁵⁶⁷ Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, Adalbert Rückerl *et al.* (eds.), *Nazi Mass Murder*, Yale, New Haven 1993, p. 147-152.

⁵⁶⁸ *Op. cit.* (note 270), pp. 203-225.

⁵⁶⁹ J.-C. Pressac, *Auschwitz: ..., op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 161-170, 171-182.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 165.

have seen above, is nothing but the theme derived from the propaganda story, devoid of any specifics.

To be specific, the testimonies used by Pressac in fact don't even in agree on such essential points as the number of buildings making up the complex of 'Bunker 1' (Dragon: 1 house, 1 barn, 2 barracks; Benroubi 2; concrete structures; Buki: 1 house and 1 barrack; Garbarz: 3 or 4 houses and 1 barn; Höß: 1 house and 2 barracks), the capacity of the "gas chambers" (nearly 2000 persons for Dragon; 800 for Höß; 20 for Garbarz), the manner in which the Zyklon B was introduced (Dragon: through a window; Garbarz: through a trapdoor; Buki: through a little chimney) or the dimensions of the trenches (30 by 7 by 3 m for Dragon; 40 by 6 m for Buki; 20–30 by 50–60 m for Garbarz and 20 by 3 by 2.5 m for Benroubi). As Pressac himself notes, the latter two witnesses "*worked almost side by side as from 4th September 1942, without ever getting to know one another.*"⁵⁷¹ This is the level to which "*the constant repetition of an identical process*" is reduced.

Pressac's chapter on 'Bunker 2'⁵⁷² is based on the testimonies of Szlama Dragon, Pery Broad, Rudolf Höß, Miklos Nyiszli, Filip Müller, and Olère. Here too, Pressac abandons a critical and comparative analysis of the testimonies to launch into unfounded commentaries, as in the cases of Olère and Nyiszli. In his book *Les crématoires d'Auschwitz*, Pressac, true to his ambitious project of "*an historical reconstruction, which will at last free itself from oral or written testimonies that are always fallible,*"⁵⁷³ put aside all testimonies and attempted a documentary approach to the topic of the 'Bunkers,' with inevitably frustrating results. As we have already seen, the most important argument of his 'historical reconstruction' – the claim that the barracks "*for the special treatment of the detainees,*" BW 58, mentioned in Bischoff's "*Explanatory report concerning the construction project concentration camp Auschwitz O/S*" of July 15, 1942, were the alleged undressing barracks of 'Bunker' 1 and 2 of Birkenau⁵⁷⁴ – has no historical foundation. On the other hand, Pressac's claim that Bischoff, urged by Höß, took the idea of a parallel design of the 'gas chambers' of 'Bunker 2'⁵⁷⁵ from the article "*Entlausung mit Zyklon-Blausäure in Kreislauf-Begasungskammern*" is pure fantasy.

Finally, Pressac's interpretation of the third and final document he uses to demonstrate the historical reality of the 'Bunkers' – the fact that on the map entitled "*Overview of landscape survey of the area of interest of CC Auschwitz*" dated June 2, 1943, an area labeled "*off limits*" indicates "*the zone where Bunkers 1 and 2 and their burying trenches were located*"⁵⁷⁶ – is utterly nonsensical, because at the time this map was drawn, according to the Polish historiography also accepted by Pressac, the two 'Bunkers' had ceased their ac-

⁵⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

⁵⁷² Deriving his inspiration from F. Müller, Pressac coined the designation "*Bunker 2/V.*"

⁵⁷³ J.-C. Pressac, *op. cit.* (note 139), p. 12.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 51f.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, document 21 and its legend outside of the text.

tivities (as early as March-April 1943) and the graves had been filled in and leveled. Therefore, by June 2, 1943, there was no reason for closing off the zone of the alleged ‘Bunkers.’ Not to speak of the fact that the area designated “*off limits*” cut across the western limit of the camp at a point 720 meters from the northwest corner, i.e., at the level of crematorium IV at an angle of about 25°, and therefore ‘Bunker 2’ and its alleged graves remained *outside* the limits of the area “*off limits*”!

8.3. Franciszek Piper’s Contribution

The process whereby the propaganda story of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ became ‘history’ terminates with the six pages of text which Franciszek Piper devoted to these questions in his essay “*Bunkers – provisional gas chambers.*”⁵⁷⁷ This paper, although essentially based on the Polish deposition of Szlama Dragon, should have been the definitive scientific version of the argument. There is also an English summary of this essay, including archival references that do not appear in the Polish text.⁵⁷⁸

In his description of ‘Bunker 1,’ Franciszek Piper mentions a survey map which is said to give not only the exact dimensions (15 by 6.3 meters) but also the precise location of the building. This document corresponds to negative no. 21416/7 of the Auschwitz Museum archives.⁵⁷⁹

The dimensions given do not agree with those stated by Józefa Wińska in her declaration of August 5, 1980, recorded by Franciszek Piper himself as being 12 by 9 meters. The map⁵⁸⁰ shows three houses, two facing each other labeled 18 and 19, none of which corresponds to the dimensions indicated by Piper.⁵⁸¹ Moreover, Piper does not say which of the three houses was ‘Bunker 1.’

Even if there may exist a certain similarity to the area of the alleged ‘Bunker 1’ when we consider document 7, there is, however, a difference in two important points: the absence of the road leading to the village of Birkenau, which should appear to the left of the three houses, and the presence of a third house below houses 18 and 19, which is not documented on any known map of Birkenau. Nor is this house shown on the topographical map 1:25,000, sheet no. 4828/4 “*Oświęcim*,” which instead shows houses 18 and 19 as well

⁵⁷⁷ F. Piper “*Bunkry...*”, *op. cit.* (note 374). The work has been translated into German: Waclaw Długoborski, Franciszek Piper (eds.), *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*, Verlag des Staatlichen Museums Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim 1999. The corresponding section (“*Die Bunker: provisorische Gaskammern*”), is on pp. 158-169 of vol. III.

⁵⁷⁸ F. Piper, “*Bunkers – Provisional Gas Chambers*,” in: Y. Gutman, M. Berenbaum (eds.), *op. cit.* (note 134), pp. 161-164.

⁵⁷⁹ F. Piper, *op. cit.* (note 141), p. 178, note 27, and p. 161.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. document 24.

⁵⁸¹ According to Piper, the floor plan of ‘Bunker 1’ was a rectangle with its long side (15÷6.3=) 2.3 times as long as its short side; on the map, the three houses, from north to south, have ratios of 1.4, 1.3 and 1.1 respectively.

as the house designated as 'Bunker 2' by the official historiography, together with the house in front of it.

Comparing this map with the map of February 4, 1942, we see that the survey map mentioned by Piper covers a zone of about 400 by 200 meters that lies some 500 meters to the north of the Birkenau camp.⁵⁸² This zone appears also on map no. 2215 of March 1943.⁵⁸³ Here, the second house from north to south bears the number 581 given by Central Construction Office, the third one is 583. There was another house in front of it, numbered 582, which does not appear on Piper's map because that map was cut off to the south between the two houses.

House 18 of the survey map shows, at its upper right hand corner, an annex, which is also found in the second house (corresponding to house 581) on the map dated February 4, 1942, and this is further confirmation of the fact that the survey map in question refers to this area.

Therefore, even the location of the three houses is totally at variance with Józefa Wińska's declarations, because the official position of 'Bunker 1,' according to the Auschwitz Museum, is as it appears on the map of Birkenau published in Danuta Czech's *Auschwitz Chronicle*.⁵⁸⁴ Piper's reference to the above-mentioned survey map is nothing but a blatant attempt to cloak his siting of the houses in a semblance of apparent scientific evidence.

Piper devotes just six lines to the activity of 'Bunker 2' in 1944, which should be the best-documented period. He does not even mention the number of the cremation trenches or of the undressing barracks, limiting himself to stating that during the deportation of the Hungarian Jews, 'Bunker 2' was re-activated,⁵⁸⁵ a few pits ("*kilka dołów*") were dug and "*new undressing barracks*"⁵⁸⁶ were built.

From the historiographical point of view, Piper's treatment of the Birkenau 'Bunkers' is even less consistent than Pressac's, but he enjoys the authority conferred upon him by his prestigious position at the heart of the Auschwitz Museum, which adds an official seal to his writings.

8.4. R.J. van Pelt's Contribution

Robert Jan van Pelt has proposed an original interpretation of the origin of 'Bunkers' that merits consideration. He writes:⁵⁸⁷

"Kammler visited the camp on Thursday, 27 February 1942. In a letter written to Topf a week later, Bischoff related that Kammler had decided

⁵⁸² Cf. document 25.

⁵⁸³ Cf. document 2.

⁵⁸⁴ Cf. document 1.

⁵⁸⁵ As I have already mentioned, Piper was unaware of the designation "*Bunker V*" invented by R. Höß and picked up by D. Paisikovic and F. Müller, and of "*Bunker 2/V*" as coined by Pressac.

⁵⁸⁶ "*nowe baraki-rozbiernalnie*", F. Piper, "*Bunkry...*", *op. cit.* (note 374), pp. 121f.; cf. Piper "*Bunkers – Provisional Gas Chambers*," *op. cit.* (note 134), p. 164.

⁵⁸⁷ R. J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 134), p. 145.

during that trip that the back-up incinerations were to be canceled 'and that the five triple-muffle furnaces ordered by the letter of October 22, 1941, correspondence register number 215/41/Ho must be constructed in the prisoner of war camp.' In other words, the crematorium that had been intended for the main camp was now to be built in Birkenau."

Van Pelt then observes that Jean-Claude Pressac attached no significance to this decision, whereas Danuta Czech in her *Auschwitz Chronicle* mentions neither Kammler's visit nor his decision, and adds:

"I, however, believe that the decision to move the crematorium may be interpreted as the counterpart of an otherwise unrecorded decision to transform a red house belonging to the Polish peasant Wiechujka,^[588] located at the northwest edge of the terrain reserved for the prisoner-of-war camp, into the extermination installation known as Bunker I – the place where the history of the Holocaust merged with the history of Auschwitz-Birkenau."

Because the use of crematorium I as a killing station – van Pelt goes on – had interrupted the life of the camp, Kammler, during his visit to Auschwitz on February 27, 1942,⁵⁸⁹

"must have suggested that the killings be moved to Birkenau. Allowing for two or three weeks to select and transform a house into simple extermination facilities, one could expect the first killings to take place in Birkenau in the third week of March. Indeed, the historians at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum have determined March 20 as the date that Bunker I was put into operation."

In support of his hypothesis, van Pelt reproduces the design of a part of a "modified version," allegedly dating from the beginning of March 1942, of the map of the Birkenau camp of "January 6, 1942"⁵⁹⁰ in which the new crematorium (the future crematorium II) is actually located in the northwest corner of the camp. In reality, the map in question, entitled "Site map of POW camp Auschwitz – Upper Silesia," no. 885, was drawn by the SS WVHA on January 5, 1942,⁵⁹¹ hence much earlier than the presumed installation of 'Bunker I.' If it had actually been a later, "modified version" of the map of January 5 with its two "incineration halls," it would show a later date; instead, its date of completion is precisely January 5, 1942. There is no doubt about this, because it was checked by SS *Untersturmführer* Dejaco on January 5 and approved by Bischoff on January 6. Therefore, the decision to move the location of the new crematorium from the concentration camp at Auschwitz to the prisoner of war camp at Birkenau was made in early January 1942 – two and a half months before Bunker 1 allegedly became operational – and there is nothing suspicious about it. The new crematorium was already on the books in the "Explanatory report of the preliminary project for the new construction of the

⁵⁸⁸ Van Pelt confuses the name with Harmata.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 145f.

⁵⁹⁰ R. J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 134), p. 147. D. Dwork, R.J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 23), pp. 302f.

⁵⁹¹ RGVA, 502-2-95, p. 7.

Waffen-SS POW camp at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia" of October 30, 1941.⁵⁹² In a letter Bischoff wrote to the armament command at Weimar on November 12, 1941 (see p. 48), he clearly explains that the firm Topf & Söhne had received the order to build an incineration plant as quickly as possible,⁵⁹³

"because a POW camp has been attached to the Auschwitz concentration camp, which will accommodate 120,000 Russians in the immediate future."

The new crematorium was to be built in the main camp at Auschwitz, whereas the POW camp was to receive two cremation installations, each one equipped with a triple-muffle cremation furnace of a simplified design. These installations appear on the map of the POW camp dated January 5, 1942, on which one is located in the northwest corner of BAIII, the other in the southwest corner of BAI. ⁵⁹⁴ On February 27, 1942, Kammler approved the decision – already made in early January – to move the new crematorium to its natural place, at Birkenau.

As far as chronology is concerned, the connection made by van Pelt between the date of Kammler's approval and the date 'Bunker 1' went into operation is absolutely illusory because, as explained above in section 6, *"the historians of the Auschwitz Museum"* set the date of March 20 in a completely arbitrary manner, just as they had done previously with the general date of January 1942.

Van Pelt's assertion is thus without documentary, much less historical, foundation.

In his book written in collaboration with Debórah Dwork, van Pelt proposed another original hypothesis with respect to the beginning of the presumed extermination activity of 'Bunker 1.' The two authors note the agreement concluded in February 1942 between Germany and Slovakia, by which the latter would endeavor to supply the Germans with 20,000 able-bodied Slovak Jews, 10,000 of whom were to go to Auschwitz and 10,000 to Majdanek. At the time⁵⁹⁵

"Auschwitz already had become the destination for one particular group of Jews residing on Reich territory: those considered unfit for work in the so-called Schmelt program."

During these negotiations, in mid-February, 400 Jews belonging to this category were sent to Auschwitz, allegedly to be gassed in the crematorium of the main camp. Since the operation was successful, the authors claim that Eichmann decided to apply the same treatment to those Slovak Jews who were unfit for work and,

⁵⁹² *"Erläuterungsbericht zur Vorentwurf für den Neubau des Kriegsgefangenenlagers der Waffen-SS, Auschwitz O/S,"* RGVA, 502-1-233, p. 20.

⁵⁹³ RGVA, 502-1-314, p. 8.

⁵⁹⁴ *"Lagerskizze des Vorhabens Kriegsgefangenenlager der Waffen-SS in Auschwitz. Einfriedigung,"* RGVA, 502-1-235, p. 13.

⁵⁹⁵ D. Dwork, R.J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 23), pp. 299-302; quotations on pp. 301f.

“as the Slovak Jews were to be brought to Birkenau and not to Auschwitz, and as killing them in crematorium I would interrupt the life of the main camp, they considered building an extermination installation close to the new satellite [Birkenau] camp.”

In a later book, van Pelt returns to this question, but no longer speaks of the Jews unfit for work in the Schmelzt program. He writes:⁵⁹⁶

“When the Slovak government suggested that Himmler also take Jews unfit for labor in exchange for a cash payment, Himmler dispatched SS Construction Chief Hans Kammler to Auschwitz. Kammler toured the site and ordered that a peasant cottage there be converted into a gas chamber. Two months later, on July 4, 1942, the first Jews from Slovakia were sorted out. Those who could work were admitted to the camp. Those who could not were killed in the peasant cottage, now known as Bunker I. Killing at Auschwitz of selected categories of Jews had now changed from an ‘incidental’ practice, as had happened with some transports of Jews from Upper Silesia in late 1941, into what one could call ‘continuing’ practice, but it had not yet become policy. Bunker I was still a particular solution to a situation created by the combination of Slovak unwillingness to provide for old and very young Jews and German greed. The main purpose of Auschwitz, at this time, remained construction (of a plant, a city, and a region), not destruction (of Jews).” (emphasis in original)

This interpretation is completely unfounded, if only for reasons of chronology. The first transport of Slovak Jews arrived at Auschwitz on March 26, 1942. Up until June 20, 11 transports of Slovak Jews arrived with a total of 10,218 persons, who were all duly registered. The first ‘selection’ did not take place until July 4, the day the first transport of Slovak Jews containing unfit persons came in. But ‘Bunker 1’ is said to have gone into operation on March 20, long before not only the first ‘selection,’ but also the decision to deport Slovak Jews unfit for work, because the request for 500 RM for every such deported Jew dates from April 29.⁵⁹⁷

Van Pelt’s claims about Kammler’s visit to Auschwitz on February 27, 1942 – namely that he was sent there by Himmler to plan an extermination installation for Slovak Jews unfit for work – is simply conjecture, without the least bit of documentary evidence. As we have already seen,⁵⁹⁸ the aim of Kammler’s visit was merely to review the construction program of the Auschwitz camp for the third year of the war economy; the corresponding documents – Pohl’s letter of March 2, 1942, and Bischoff’s letter of March 17 – do not contain even the slightest trace of a desire to turn a peasant cottage into a gas chamber, although, for van Pelt, that was the main purpose of Kammler’s visit. In reality, this visit was a follow-up to the meeting between

⁵⁹⁶ R.J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 118), p. 72.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. Chapter 1 of the second part of my study *Special Treatment... , op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 29-35, in which I deal in detail with the question of the beginning of the deportation of the Slovak Jews to Auschwitz.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. chapter 2.2.

Höß and Kammler on June 13–14, 1941, which dealt precisely with the construction measures of the third year of the war economy.⁵⁹⁹

Hence, van Pelt's interpretation is not only unconfirmed by a single document, but is contradicted by the existing documentation; it is therefore arbitrary and unfounded.

8.5. Marcello Pezzetti's 'Discovery' of 'Bunker 1'⁶⁰⁰

On November 20, 2001, the *Corriere della Sera* published an article entitled "*Shoah. Hell started in a little red house.*"⁶⁰¹

In this article, Marcello Pezzetti, researcher at the *Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea* (CDEC) of Milan, proclaimed that he had discovered the place where, for a time, the alleged 'Bunker 1' of Birkenau stood. The site had been occupied until the end of 2001 by a private home inhabited by a Polish family, which was then demolished. The 'discovery' is said to have been made in the summer of 1993 when Shlomo (Szlama) Dragon, his brother Abraham, and Eliezer Eisenschmidt had accompanied Pezzetti to the house shown on a photograph accompanying the newspaper article.

Pezzetti had already announced the epoch-making 'discovery' of the alleged 'Bunker 1' at Birkenau in 1998,⁶⁰² but at the time his discovery passed almost unnoticed, and not by accident: the position he specifies for the alleged 'Bunker 1' is in total contradiction with the only source available to the official historiography: the account of Ms. Józefa Wińska, examined above in chapter 7.4.

On September 20, 1985, Franciszek Piper took four photographs of a house he claimed was that of Mr. Czarnik the house built a few meters away from where the alleged 'Bunker 1' is said to have stood), and filed them with Ms. Wińska's account. One of these photographs, registered in the archives of the Auschwitz Museum as "*no. Neg. 21225/3,*" shows a frontal view of the house in question, which is identical to the house in the photograph published in the article mentioned above.

However, this house, which I photographed in August 2000, was located on the other side of the road which now runs along the outside of the western enclosure of the Birkenau camp, whereas Józef Harmata's house (the alleged 'Bunker 1'), as is clear from Ms. Wińska's topographical sketch, was situated farther east, within the camp boundaries, and, to be precise a few dozen meters to the north of the four settling basins (sewage treatment plant). The house indicated by Pezzetti is to the west of another easily identifiable refer-

⁵⁹⁹ Letter from Kammler to Höß dated June 18, 1941. RGVA, 502-1-11, pp. 37-39. Cf. chapter 2.2.

⁶⁰⁰ This is a summary of my article "*The 'Discovery' of 'Bunker 1' at Birkenau: Swindles, Old and New,*" in: *The Revisionist*, 1(2) (2003), pp. 176-183.

⁶⁰¹ Gian Guido Vecchi, "*Shoah. L'inferno cominciò in una casa rossa,*" in: *Corriere della Sera*, November 20, 2001, p. 35.

⁶⁰² Valeria Gandus, "*Operazione memoria,*" in: *Panorama*, February 26, 1998, pp. 94-97.

ence point: the monument to the Soviet prisoners of war. This monument stands some 200 meters west of the settling plant and thus also of the site of Józef Harmata's house (the alleged 'Bunker 1'), not far from the western enclosure of the camp and of the road running along it and accessible via an old gate.

From there, moving to the right (north), Pezzetti's house is located about 100 meters away.

This house, which according to Pezzetti stood on the ruins of 'Bunker 1,' is more than 300 meters away, in a straight line, from the site of Józef Harmata's house, i.e., from the site of the alleged 'Bunker 1.'

Therefore Pezzetti's discovery has no historical basis.

9. Material Proof, Aerial Photos, and Archeological Findings

9.1. The Aerial Photographs of 1944

From May 1944 on, the Allied air forces began to take photographs of the Birkenau camp in which the zone around the alleged 'Bunker 2' is visible. The clearest shots are those taken during the mission of May 31, 1944, in particular two frames registered as 3055 and 3056.⁶⁰³

Photograph 9a in the Appendix is an enlargement of photograph 3056, centering on the area of the alleged 'Bunker 2.'

The T-shaped structure that appears at bottom left is the central sauna. Its longest side measured 73 meters.⁶⁰⁴ The camp fence running parallel to it points approximately north.⁶⁰⁵ The two barracks to the east of the central sauna were "*Effektenbaracken Typ 501/34 Z.8*," commonly known as air force barracks, and measured 12.64 by 41.39 meters. A rectangular structure is visible in a small clearing⁶⁰⁶ some 210 meters west of the northwest angle of the central sauna; its long side has an angle of about 250° from north (more or less east-west), the shorter one an angle of about 340° (more or less north-south). The sides of the house measure about 9 and 13 meters, respectively. The length of the house is practically equal to the width of the side of the central sauna parallel to the camp fence, which was 12.76 meters, and to the widths of the two barracks south of this structure, each, as we have seen, 12.64 meters. Therefore, the house cannot be longer than 13 meters.

It was located in a clearing shaped like a pentagon, with a base some 65 meters long and sides, moving clockwise, measuring 65, 90, 85 and 50 meters. The total surface area of this area is about 7,700 square meters. The distance from the center of the clearing's base to its northwest angle is about 120 meters, and, from the northern apex to the southwest corner, about 100 meters. This is the alleged area of the cremation pits for the corpses, as can be seen from the "*Sketch of the location of Bunker 2*" drawn by the engineer Nosal according to Szlama Dragon's information.

To the south of the house, on the right hand side of the access road, can be seen three rectangles, the smallest one measuring about 12 by 32 meters, the

⁶⁰³ NA, Mission: 60 PRS/462 60 SQ. Can: D 1508. Exposures 3055f.

⁶⁰⁴ Measurements taken on site.

⁶⁰⁵ The wire fence has an orientation of about 357 degrees.

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. photograph 9c.

other two about 12 by 42 meters. This is ground being leveled for the installation of barracks.

The house appears for the last time on a photograph taken on November 29, 1944;⁶⁰⁷ on a photo from December 21, 1944,⁶⁰⁸ it no longer exists. Therefore, it was destroyed between November 30 and December 21, 1944.

9.2. The Architectural Design of ‘Bunker 2’ in Relation to its Alleged Homicidal Activity

The ruins of the house allegedly transformed into ‘Bunker 2’ still exist, but only in the form of the ruins – perhaps one foot high – of the outer walls and the inner partitions of the house.⁶⁰⁹

Document 26 shows the ground plan of these ruins drawn by the Auschwitz Museum on July 29, 1985. The measurements that appear in this drawing agree with those I took on site in June 1990 and October 1991.

The ruins of the house, as they now stand, show a number of elements that are at variance with the propaganda story of ‘Bunker 2.’ The first element is the fact that the house is divided into seven rooms.⁶¹⁰ This clashes above all with Szlama Dragon’s deposition, according to which the house was divided into four rooms. Neither he nor any other witness has stated that the house was later redivided into seven rooms from the alleged four. But even the division of the house into four rooms is nonsensical on technical grounds because – if we follow the official historiography – the two ‘Bunkers’ were created not just to carry out the occasional murder of small groups of persons, but for extermination on a grand scale. As we have seen above, according to the Soviet commission of inquiry 3,000 persons a day were murdered in ‘Bunker 2,’ as many as 10,000 if we follow Dragon.

Why, then, divide the victims up into four rooms? To repeat the same gassing four times?

The ruins of the house, not counting the partitions between rooms 2/3, 4/5 and 6/7, show the remnants of four rooms (A, B, C and D), which had the following internal dimensions:

Room A: $4.74 \times 7.10 = 33.6 \text{ m}^2$

Room B: $2.40 \times 7.10 = 17.0 \text{ m}^2$

Room C: $3.89 \times 7.10 = 27.6 \text{ m}^2$

Room D: $3.46 \times 7.56 = 26.1 \text{ m}^2$

⁶⁰⁷ NA, Mission: 15 SG/887 5PG. Can: D 1610. Exposure 4058. Cf. photographs 10 and 10a.

⁶⁰⁸ NA, Mission: 15 SG/994 15PG. Can: D 1533. Exposure: 3021. Mission: 15 SG/994 15PG. Can: D 1533. Exposure: 3022. NA, Mission: 15 SG/995 5PG. Can: D 1535. Exposure: 4018.

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. photographs 5, 6, 7, 8

⁶¹⁰ Cf. photograph 8

Total floor area: 104.3 m²⁶¹¹

If, instead, all partitions had been demolished one would have obtained a room of 115.6 m²; therefore the division of the house into four rooms would not only have resulted in no economy of mass extermination, it would have rendered it more difficult, due to the loss of 11.3 m² of floor area and because of the necessity of introducing the Zyklon B four different times, to say nothing of the waste in materiel (eight gastight doors instead of two) and the difficulty of ventilation.

Indeed, the quartering of the house would not only have been technically nonsensical, it would also contradict Szlama Dragon’s deposition. The latter affirms that the four “gas chambers” could accommodate 1,200, 700, 400, and 200–250 persons, respectively, for a total of 2,525 persons, if we assume an average of 225 persons for the smallest room. One can thus calculate that Dragon’s first gas chamber had a floor area of [(1200 ÷ 2525) x 104.3 =] 49.6 square meters, the second one 28.9, the third one 16.5 and the fourth one 9.3 square meters. However, this does not tally with the floor area of the four rooms of the ruin, as is evident from the following comparison (the capacity is based on Dragon’s unreasonable figure of 24 persons per m²):

Room	Floor area of ruins [m ²]	Capacity [persons]	Floor area acc. to Dragon [m ²]	Capacity [persons]
A	33.6	813	49.6	1,200
B	17.0	410	28.9	700
C	27.6	670	16.5	400
D	26.1	632	9.3	225

The subsequent division into seven ‘gas chambers’ is obviously even more ridiculous, not only technically, but also in regard to the Holocaust. ‘Bunker 2’ is, in fact, said to have been reactivated in May of 1944 in connection with the deportation of the Hungarian Jews because the ‘gas chambers’ of the Birkenau crematoria were saturated. In the summer of 1944, as Franciszek Piper assures us, 20,000 persons were being gassed at Birkenau every day.⁶¹²

So, in order to be able to handle numbers so enormous that they would not fit into the enormous ‘gas chambers’ of the crematoria, the Central Construction Office couldn’t come up with anything better than the creation of seven puny gas chambers with floor areas of 33.6, 7.9, 8.4, 13.9, 12.6, 11.3, and 13.4 m² – not to mention the fact that the usable floor space would have been reduced by a further 3 m², or that these tiny rooms could not have been properly ventilated.

The second element that is incompatible with the propaganda story of ‘Bunker 2’ is the total absence of traces of the door which, according to Szlama Dragon, was in the northwest corner of the house. There, the ruins of

⁶¹¹ For room B I assumed the same width as that of room 3; room 2 was 2.30 meters wide. Room D had a length of 7.56 meters instead of 7.10, because its outer walls were thinner (0.39 instead of 0.62 meters for the rest of the house).

⁶¹² F. Piper, *op. cit.* (note 141), p. 174.

the house consist of a wall some 50 cm above the ground, which shows no trace of a threshold! The threshold could not have been any higher because, according to the witness, the house stood directly on the ground and there were no access stairs.

Something else that surprises about the ruins of this house is the enormous thickness of the partitions, which are of solid brick. The wall which separates rooms A from rooms B1 and B2 is 42 cm thick, the one between B1 and C1 59 cm; the prolongation of this wall (between rooms B2 and C2) is 48 cm wide, the partition that separates rooms C1 and C2 from rooms D1 and D2 62 cm, but the back walls of those two rooms are only 39 cm wide. Furthermore, the outer walls A, B2 and C2⁶¹³ measure 62 cm in thickness, but the outer walls of the rooms D1 and D2 hardly 39 cm. What kind of architect designed such an odd building? And for what purpose was it built?

The problems do not end here. According to the Soviet commission of investigation, as we saw in the preceding chapter, “*gas chamber no. 2*” measured 9 by 11 meters. According to Ms. Wiśńska the house itself measured some 12 by 9 meters. On the photograph of May 31, 1944, examined above, the house is about 13 meters long, but the present ruin measures 17.07 meters in length. The measurement of 13 meters corresponds to the overall length of the ruins of ‘Bunker 2’ minus the rooms D1 and D2, i.e., $17.07 - (3.46 + 0.39) = 13.22$ meters. One thus has to assume that the outer, thinner walls of rooms D1 and D2, as well as their partition, were added later. This also explains why these outer walls are much thinner than those of the rest of the ruin.

When was the addition made, and by whom? The aerial photographs of May 31, 1944, do not allow a sufficiently precise statement regarding the length of the house. On the other hand, for the Central Construction Office to add two tiny rooms of 11.3 and 13.4 square meters to speed up the extermination of the Hungarian Jews makes no technical sense at all. The most probable conclusion, then, is that the ruins of the two additional rooms were added by Polish or Soviet forgers after the end of the war simply to give the impression of a larger house.

9.3. The “Undressing Barracks” of ‘Bunker 2’

As we have seen, ‘Bunker 2’ is said to have been put back into operation in May of 1944 in connection with the alleged extermination of the Hungarian Jews. According to Filip Müller, preparations were undertaken as early as the beginning of May,⁶¹⁴ but on May 31, 1944, the two alleged undressing barracks did not yet exist.⁶¹⁵ Two clearly observable barracks near the alleged ‘Bunker 2’ appear only on the aerial photograph taken on November 29,

⁶¹³ The wall of rooms B1 and C1 is missing.

⁶¹⁴ F. Müller, *op. cit.* (note 384), pp. 125-142.

⁶¹⁵ Cf. photograph 9a.

1944,⁶¹⁶ on which one can also see the house claimed to have been ‘Bunker 2.’ Obviously, nothing proves that those actually were undressing barracks for ‘Bunker 2,’ all the more so since, according to Danuta Czech, the order to “*stop the gassings*” allegedly arrived at Auschwitz on November 2, 1944.⁶¹⁷ Thus the presence of the two barracks is established for a period during which they could not have fulfilled the auxiliary function ascribed to them in connection with the claimed homicidal activity of ‘Bunker 2,’ but nothing demonstrates that they existed earlier and performed that function. In the absence of any documents it would be risky to say what purpose the barracks did serve, and whether they had anything to do with the house nearby.

9.4. The “Cremation Pits” in the Area of ‘Bunker 2’

On the photograph of November 29, 1944, some 30 meters in front of the house, one can see a dark rectangle measuring about 10 by 8 meters, which is evidently the “basin” or “pool” (“бассейн”) on the map drawn by engineer Nosal on March 3, 1945. It also appears on the aerial photograph of February 19, 1945.⁶¹⁸ It was therefore not a cremation pit but a water basin, which was still there in 1954.⁶¹⁹

According to Danuta Czech, the alleged cremation pits were filled in and their surface landscaped⁶²⁰ by a specific unit starting in December 1944 onwards. But the “basin” mentioned was not filled in, obviously because it was not a cremation pit. As we have seen above, Filip Müller is the only witness who gave an exact number for cremation pits around ‘Bunker 2’ in 1944: four. At the present time, however, there are only two depressions visible there, the traces of just two pits.

The first one is 34 meters from the southern corner of the ruin of the house, at an angle of about 268°.⁶²¹ It is a depression of about 8 by 7 meters, the short side having an angle of about 40°. These data allow us to identify the “basin” found by the Soviets in 1945. The other depression⁶²² is situated at about 69 meters from the southern corner of the ruins of the house, at an angle of about 281°. The depression is about 25 meters long and 5 meters wide, and the long side has an angle of 28°.

At the corresponding locations on the aerial photograph of May 31, 1944, discussed above there is nothing, which can be connected with two excavations of those dimensions. On later aerial photographs, in particular those of December 21, 1944,⁶²³ and of February 19, 1945,⁶²⁴ the basin is clearly visible,

⁶¹⁶ NA, Mission: 15 SG/887 5 PG. Can: D 1610. Exposure: 4058. Cf. photograph 10.

⁶¹⁷ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 921.

⁶¹⁸ Cf. photographs 11 and 11a.

⁶¹⁹ Cf. photograph 12.

⁶²⁰ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 940f and 952f.

⁶²¹ Cf. photograph 13.

⁶²² Cf. photograph 14.

⁶²³ NA, Mission: 15SG/994 15 PG. Can: D 1533. Exposure: 3021.

but there is no trace of a trench 25 by 5 meters. Therefore, the depression still present in the ground must be attributed to a postwar excavation.

9.5. The “Cremation Pits” of the ‘Bunkers’: Origins of the Propaganda Story

The aforementioned two aerial photographs 3055 and 3056 of May 31, 1944, show the traces of four long trenches running north-south at some 160 meters north of crematorium V.⁶²⁵ They can be seen more clearly on photograph 14, which is an enlargement of the aerial photograph 3055.

Starting from the west, the first two trenches were about 100 meters long, the other two 130 meters. Each trench was about 10 meters wide. The trench farthest away from ‘Bunker 1’ was 220 meters from it, as the crow flies.

Are these the cremation pits Szlama Dragon spoke of? As we have seen, he states in the Soviet deposition that at a distance of 500 meters from “*gas chamber no. 1*” there were four trenches 30 to 35 meters long, 7 to 8 meters wide and 3 meters deep; in the Polish deposition, the dimensions of these trenches are 30 by 7 by 2 meters. The only point that is in agreement with the material evidence is the number of trenches – four. Their dimensions as well as their distance from “*gas chamber no. 1*” are, on the other hand, at variance with such evidence: the 30–35 meters stated by the witness do not agree with the actual 100–130 meters and can by no means be attributed to an error of estimation. Furthermore, the most distant trench, even if we chose the longest way (the road going west, which already existed in 1942, and then the path that branches off towards the trenches at the first curve) was located at a distance of 280 meters from “*gas chamber no. 1*.”

In the preceding chapters I have amply demonstrated that the history of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers’ is merely a propaganda legend. Let us assume for a moment, however, that it was true. In that case, the four trenches mentioned above would be the burial trenches, later to become cremation trenches of ‘Bunker 1’ – but where are the six trenches of ‘Bunker 2’?

The aerial photographs 3055 and 3056 (and the subsequent photographs) show nothing in the pentagonal area described above, which would correspond to the four trenches appearing north of crematorium V outside the camp. How is it possible that these four trenches are clearly visible, whereas there is no trace of the six trenches of ‘Bunker 2’? Even the dimensions of these trenches must have been of the same order of magnitude as those of ‘Bunker 1’ because ‘Bunker 2’ had a capacity – and therefore an extermination rate – 20 percent higher. Therefore, in the area of ‘Bunker 2’ there should appear six trenches measuring at least 100 by 10 meters each. We have seen

⁶²⁴ NA, GX 12337/145.

⁶²⁵ Cf. photograph 15.

that the distance from the northern to the southwestern angle of the pentagon was 100 meters, which was therefore too small for those six trenches.

Therefore, the six trenches did not and could not have existed. It is thus logical to assume that the four trenches appearing on the photograph have nothing to do with 'Bunker 1.' Then what is their origin?

It is known that in early July 1942 a terrible typhus epidemic erupted at Auschwitz. Not least in consequence of the poor sanitary and hygienic conditions in the Birkenau camp, mortality grew alarmingly. In the months of July, August, and September over 20,000 detainees died. The crematorium of the main camp, with its three double-muffle ovens, was absolutely insufficient to cope with the task. To make matters worse, it was out of service for a month due to the rebuilding of the chimney, which had been damaged beyond repair.⁶²⁶ The camp authorities had therefore ordered enormous mass graves dug outside of the Birkenau camp. There are no documents on this, but from the amount of coke delivered to the crematorium⁶²⁷ one can deduce with a sufficient degree of precision the number of corpses that were burned there.⁶²⁸

The analysis of these deliveries shows that inhumations began as early as March 1942, during which 2,400 detainees died, but coke deliveries amounted to only 39 tons – enough to cremate 1,400 corpses at best. Between March and September 1942 a total of 239.5 tons of coke were supplied to the crematorium, sufficient for about 8,500 corpses. During the same period, however, the number of deceased detainees was about 32,000, therefore at least 24,000 corpses had to be buried in the mass graves.⁶²⁹ From the end of September onwards, the corpses were exhumed and burned on field hearths made of brick.

On September 16, SS *Obersturmführer* Höß, the camp commander; SS *Untersturmführer* Hößler, responsible for the detainee labor force; and SS *Untersturmführer* Dejaco, employed by Central Construction Office, went to Litzmannstadt (now: Łódź) to see a “special plant”. In his report, Dejaco states that after having visited the ghetto the three officers went to see the “special plant,” which they inspected together with SS *Standartenführer* Blobel. He then says that the construction material ordered from *Ostdeutsche Baustoffwerke Posen* by special order of Blobel was to be supplied immediately to CC Auschwitz; by arrangement with SS *Obersturmführer* Weber of the WVHA C V/3 office they were to be shipped to Auschwitz. Dejaco also

⁶²⁶ Report of SS *Oberscharführer* Pollok of July 6, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-312, p. 29 and 31; handwritten note “Schornstein-Krematorium. BW 11” of December 7, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-318, pp. 4f.

⁶²⁷ “Koks i węgiel dla krematoriów w tonach” (Coke and coal for the crematoria in tons), APMO, D-AuI-4. N. inv. 12012.

⁶²⁸ In the ovens of crematorium I the cremation of a medium-lean corpse required about 28 kg of coke when the oven had reached a steady state; cf. C. Mattogno, “*The Crematoria...*”, *op. cit.* (note 184), pp. 391f.

⁶²⁹ The number of dead is calculated on the basis of a statistical evaluation of the *Sterbebücher* of Auschwitz.

mentions a “ball mill for materials” already available from the firm Schriever & Co. of Hanover, which was also to be sent to KL Auschwitz.⁶³⁰

The travel order issued by WVHA gives further details:⁶³¹

“Travel permission is hereby given for a passenger car from Au. to Litzmannstadt and back for visit to the testing station of field ovens Action Reinhard on 16.9.42.”

It is thus clear that the group from Auschwitz visited brickwork field ovens. The “ball mill for materials” was certainly used to break up the cremation residues. A similar device was discovered and photographed by the Soviets in the camp of Janowski at Lemberg (now: Lviv).⁶³²

The exhumation and cremation of the corpses thus began a few weeks later. Danuta Czech gives the date of September 21,⁶³³ but her source (the notes of R. Höß) does not give a date; she thus simply based herself on the visit to Litzmannstadt just mentioned.⁶³⁴

In 1942 (but in the summer of of 1944 as well) the ground water level in the Birkenau area varied between 0.30 and 1.20 meters,⁶³⁵ therefore the depth of the four mass graves mentioned could not have been more than one meter: this explains their enormous extension.

⁶³⁰ “Reisebericht über die Dienstfahrt nach Litzmannstadt,” September 17, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-336, p.69.

⁶³¹ AGK, NTN, 94, p. 112.

⁶³² GARF, 7021-128-157, p. 1.

⁶³³ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

⁶³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 301.

⁶³⁵ Cf. in this respect Michael Gärtner, Werner Rademacher, “Ground Water in the Area of the POW Camp Birkenau” *The Revisionist* 1(1) (2003), pp. 3-12; Carlo Mattogno, “‘Cremation Pits’ and Ground Water Levels at Birkenau”, *ibid.*, pp. 14-17.

10. Conclusion

As has been shown in chapter 4, the black propaganda of the ‘gas chambers’ in the ‘Bunkers,’ which began to be disseminated in 1942 in various and contrasting forms by the resistance groups at Auschwitz, was based on the disinfestation plants BW 5a and 5b. If the presence of these installations is a necessary element, it is not sufficient to account for the birth of the propaganda story. The connecting element that would focus the energies of the propagandists was still missing: the mass graves and the open-air cremations. The incineration of corpses exhumed from mass graves, which went on day after day for months on end, struck the imagination of the detainees at Auschwitz, and it was this “*eternal fire*” which inspired the propaganda makers: if thousands of corpses were burned outside the camp, there must have been mass extermination, and if there was mass extermination, there were also ‘gas chambers,’ equipped, of course, with the “*showers*” and installations similar to those in the gas chambers of BW 5a and 5B.

That is the origin of the propaganda story of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers.’

The inevitable conclusion of this study is that the story of the gassing ‘Bunkers’ at Birkenau is a propaganda legend, lacking all foundation in reality. Two fundamental historiographical consequences derive from this conclusion.

Historiographical Consequences

The first concerns the fate of detainees unfit for work who were neither registered nor interned in the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex. According to Danuta Czech’s *Kalendarium*, 207,000 persons were gassed in the two ‘Bunkers’ between March 20, 1942 (the alleged starting date of ‘Bunker 1’) and March 14, 1943 (date of the alleged first homicidal gassing in crematorium II). This figure has been affirmed by Robert Jan van Pelt, who speaks of the murder “*of more than 200,000 Jews.*”⁶³⁶ Since the gassing ‘Bunkers’ never existed, however, these 207,000 Jews were never murdered. With this, the claim of the official historiography that the Jews unfit for work were systematically murdered turns out to be false: if it is false for the ‘Bunkers,’ why should it be true for the alleged gas chambers in the crematoria?

The second consequence concerns the new methodological foundation of the official historiography.

Robert Jan van Pelt is the best-known propagator of the historiographical method of “*convergence of evidence,*” which he has also applied extensively to the witnesses: if two independent testimonies furnish descriptions of an event that are similar in their essential points, they constitute ‘convergent evi-

⁶³⁶ R.J. van Pelt, *op. cit.* (note 118), p. 455.

dence' and demonstrate the objective reality of the event. Obviously, the – unprovable – assumption of this method is that the testimonies are in fact independent.

On the subject of the Birkenau 'Bunkers' van Pelt writes that in 1946, the expert Roman Dawidowski "*had not found any documents or blueprints describing the two buildings*" and adds that "*in fact, none were ever found. It seems that the two cottages were transformed [into gas chambers] without much fuss.*"⁶³⁷

The last few words are nonsense. I have shown in this study that in the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex the idea of work "*without much fuss*" was absurd: any and all work done followed a rigid pattern of bureaucratic practices, starting with the opening up of a building site, which was given a specific number and a particular designation, including all the documentation that such bureaucratic acts entailed.

In contrast, the alleged 'Bunkers' had no designation and corresponded to no building site, and no document of the Central Construction Office contains even the least reference to them. This means that the two existing Polish houses were never taken over by Central Construction Office and were, therefore, never transformed into 'gas chambers.'

As we have seen, the story of the Birkenau 'Bunkers' is a simple propaganda legend, contrived in 1942 by the Auschwitz resistance on the basis of actual events and real structures which, however, had nothing to do with the alleged mass extermination.

In the following years, the legend fed on new and varied literary elements. This process continued even after Szlama Dragon had attempted to consolidate it into a unified version, so that several dozen apparently 'independent' variations branched out from the original theme, agreeing only on one element: the existence of alleged homicidal gas chambers in one or more farmhouses outside of the Birkenau camp. However, the "*convergence of evidence*" of these testimonies relied on a single imaginary and purely propagandistic element; therefore, despite appearances, they cannot be regarded as independent either.

Thus, together with the 'Bunkers,' the methodological keystone of the official historiography collapses as well.

On August 7, 1942, 987 Jews were deported from the Dutch transit camp at Westerbork; they arrived at Auschwitz the following day. After the selection, 315 men (ID numbers 57405 through 57719) and 149 women (15812 through 15960) were admitted to the camp. In her *Auschwitz Chronicle*, Danuta Czech writes:⁶³⁸

"There are several Catholic Jews as well as friars and nuns of various orders in this transport. Among them we have Dr. phil. Edith Theresia Hedwig Stein, called Sister Theresia Benedicta vom Kreuz, from the Car-

⁶³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 212.

⁶³⁸ D. Czech, *Kalendarium...*, *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 269.

melite convent at Echt, born October 21, 1891, in Breslau. Like her brothers and sisters, she is deported to Auschwitz wearing the robes of her order. After the selection, she is led with the others to the gas chambers.”

In support of the alleged gassing there is not the slightest proof, the most elementary evidence, the least trace, the most succinct testimony.

For her alleged gassing, Edith Stein was beatified by the Catholic Church at Cologne on May 1, 1987, and sanctified on October 11, 1998.

The Auschwitz Museum was quick to take up the Vatican’s initiative, cleverly trying to historicize this pious legend by installing in the ruins of the alleged ‘Bunker 2’ a plaque with the Polish inscription: “*Miejsce męczeństwa Bl.*^[639] *Edith Stein + 9.08.1942,*” i.e., “*Place of martyrdom of Edith Stein.*”⁶⁴⁰

By so doing, the Auschwitz Museum has committed a double historical error: First of all, because there is no proof that Edith Stein was ever gassed, nor second, a fortiori, that she was actually gassed in ‘Bunker 2.’ The Museum was faced with Hobson’s choice: since ‘Bunker 1’ has never been located, the plaque could only be set up near the ruins of what is falsely claimed to have been ‘Bunker 2,’ and therefore Edith Stein had to have been gassed in ‘Bunker 2.’

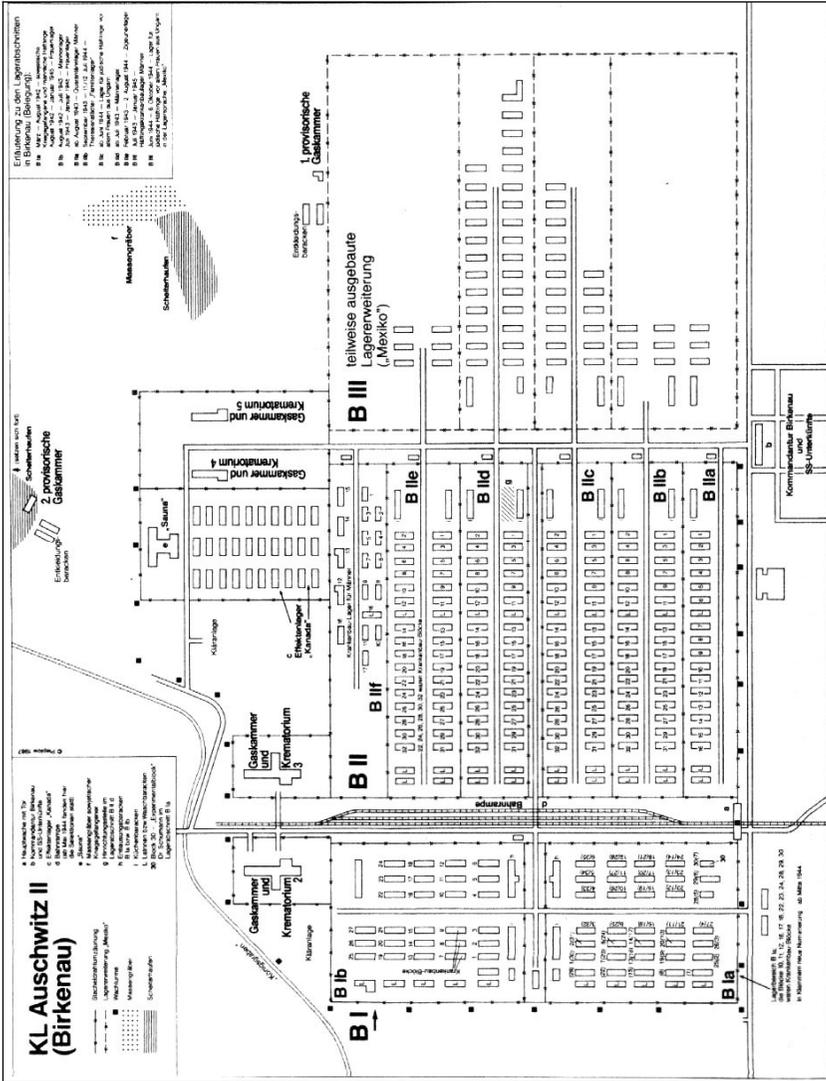
Thus the story of the Birkenau ‘Bunkers,’ which had started out as a propaganda tale, was finally transfigured into the legend of a saint.

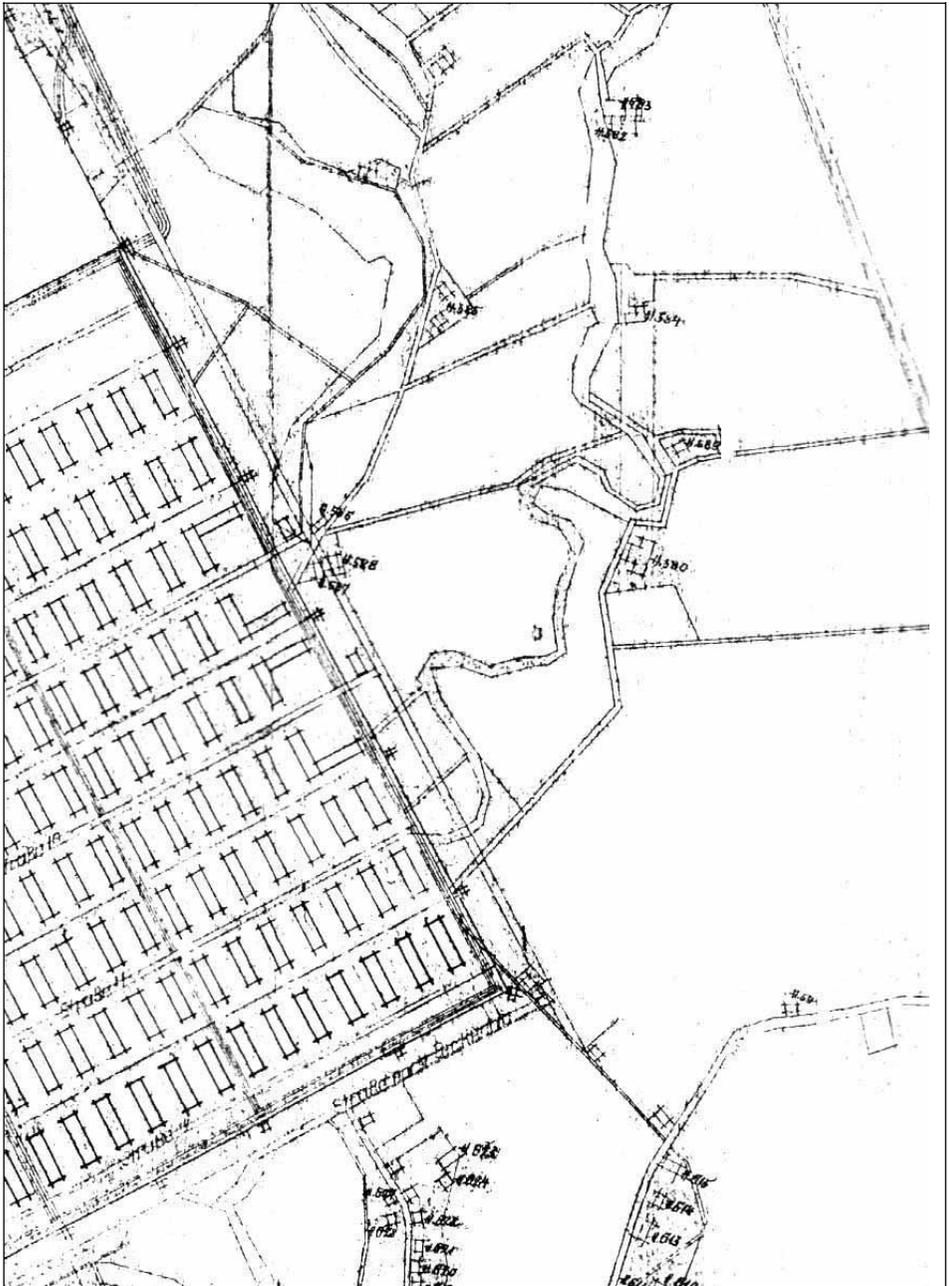
⁶³⁹ The Polish adjective “*byłej*,” abbreviated “*Bl.*” literally “*ex*” or “*former*,” refers in this case to the name of the nun in her civilian life.

⁶⁴⁰ Cf. photographs 16 and 17.

11. Appendix

11.1. Documents





2. Development map for the erection and extension of the concentration and POW camp. Northern portion of the camp.²

Der Bürgermeister
der Stadt Ruppertsberg

22
Ackerstraße
Lange Straße

Aufstellung

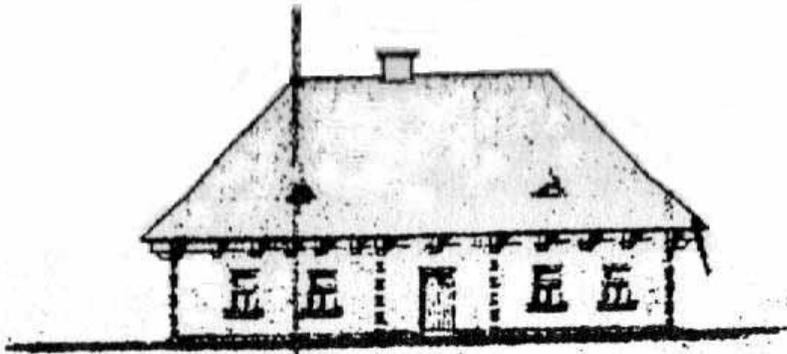
Umnummerierung von Hausnummern auf dem
westlichen Sola-Ufer
(Planungsgebiet für Neustadt -West)

Neue Straßenbezeichnung	alte	neue
	Hausnummern	
Ackerstraße	<u>Südseite:</u> B. 185 B. 184 B. 180 bzw. 353 B. 181 B. 179 <u>Nordseite:</u>	Hs. Nr. 1 Hs. Nr. 3 Hs. Nr. 5 Hs. Nr. 5 a Hs. Nr. 7
Ackerstraße	B. 186 H. 895 B. 187	Hs. Nr. 2 Hs. Nr. 4 im Abbruch
Lange Straße	<u>Nordseite:</u> Baracken zwischen Haus der Waffen-SS und B. 157 B. 167 bzw. B. 157 B. 168 bzw. B. 158 H. 889 <u>Südseite:</u>	Hs. Nr. 1, 3 und 5 Hs. Nr. 7 Hs. Nr. 7 a Hs. Nr. 9
Lange Straße	Baracke zwischen B. 154 und B. 24 B. 24 B. 25 H. 881 H. 882	Hs. Nr. 2 Hs. Nr. 4 Hs. Nr. 6 Hs. Nr. 8 Hs. Nr. 10

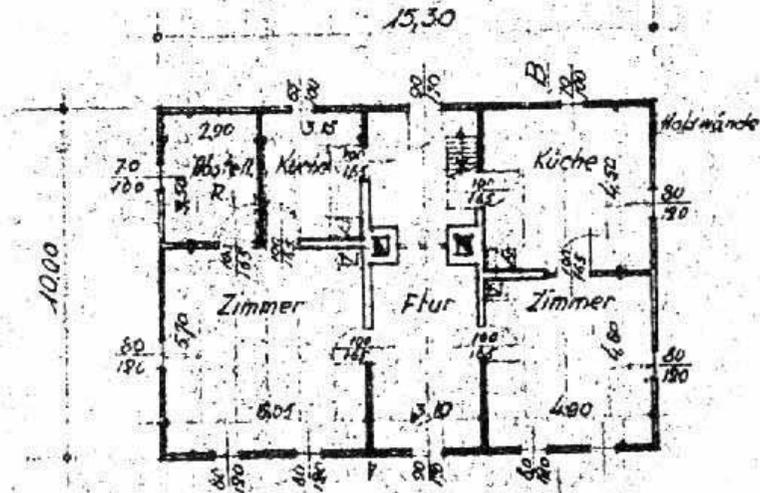
Auschwitz, den 10. September 1944.

Ka

3. Register. Renumbering of house numbers on the western bank of the Sola river. Planning area for western new town.³



Ansicht



Grundriss

5. Plan of house 647 in Budy, 1943.⁵

- 8 -

26	BW 24 Kommandantenwohnhaus: Instandsetzung des vorhandenen Gebäudes, Einbau von sanitären Anlagen und der Zentral- heizungsanlage, Erstellen des Außenputzes	<i>g. b. n.</i>	RM	21.740,--
	Errichtung des Steildaches und Ausbau des Dachgeschosses: Grundfläche: 12,30 x 11,80 = 145,14 m ² Geschoßhöhe: 2,75 m Umbauter Raum: 145,14 x 2,75 = rd. 400,00 m ³ Kosten für 1 m ³ : RM 12,50 400,00 x 12,50 = rd		RM	5.000,--
	Anlage eines Zier- und Gemüsegartens einschl. Aufstellen einer Wäschetrock- halle aus vorhandenem Abbruchmaterial	<i>g. b. n.</i>	RM	1.000,--
	Um- und Ausbau eines vorh. Neben- gebäudes als Wohnlaube und anschließen- dem Gewächshaus	<i>g. b. n.</i>	RM	3.000,--
	Einfriedigung etwa 140,00 a 9,--		RM	1.260,--
			RM	32.000,--
	<u>Kommandantenwohnhaus: Gesamtkosten z. b. N.</u>		RM	<u>32.000,--</u>
27	BW 36 C Ausbau eines bestehenden Rohbaues Grundfläche: Wohnhaus: 12,50x12,85 -(4,00 x 1,50+2,70x1,00) = 152,00 m ² Wirtschaftsein- gang: 7,00x2,70 = 18,90 " Terrasse: 6,00x4,50 = 27,00 " Umbauter Raum: Wohnhaus: 152,00x11,25 = 1710,00 m ³ Wirtschaftseingang: 18,90x5,40 = 102,00 " Terrasse: 27,00x1,00 = 27,00 " 1839,00 m ³ Kosten für 1 m ³ : RM 13,50 1839,00 x 13,50 = rd. RM 25.000,-- Hof- und Gartenanlage " 4.000,-- RM 29.000,--			

6. Cost estimate for building project Auschwitz O/S concentration camp, July 15, 1942.⁶

Kostenüberschlag

zum Umbau eines bestehenden Rohbaues BW 36 C

Bemittlung nach cbm ungebauten Raum.Grundfläche:

Wohnhaus:	12,50x12,85-(4,00x1,50+	
	+2,70x1,00) =	152,00 m ²
Terrasse:	6,00 x 4,50 =	27,00 "
Eingang:	7,00 x 2,70 =	18,90 "

Ungauter Raum:

Wohnhaus:	152,00 x 11,25 =	1710,00 m ³
Terrasse:	27,00 x 1,00 =	27,00 "
Eingang:	18,90 x 5,40 =	102,00 "
		<hr/>
		1839,00 m ³

Kosten für 1 m³: RM 10,301839,00 x 10,30 = RM 20.000,00
=====

Aufgestellt!

Luschwitz, den 15. Juli 1942

Po/Na.

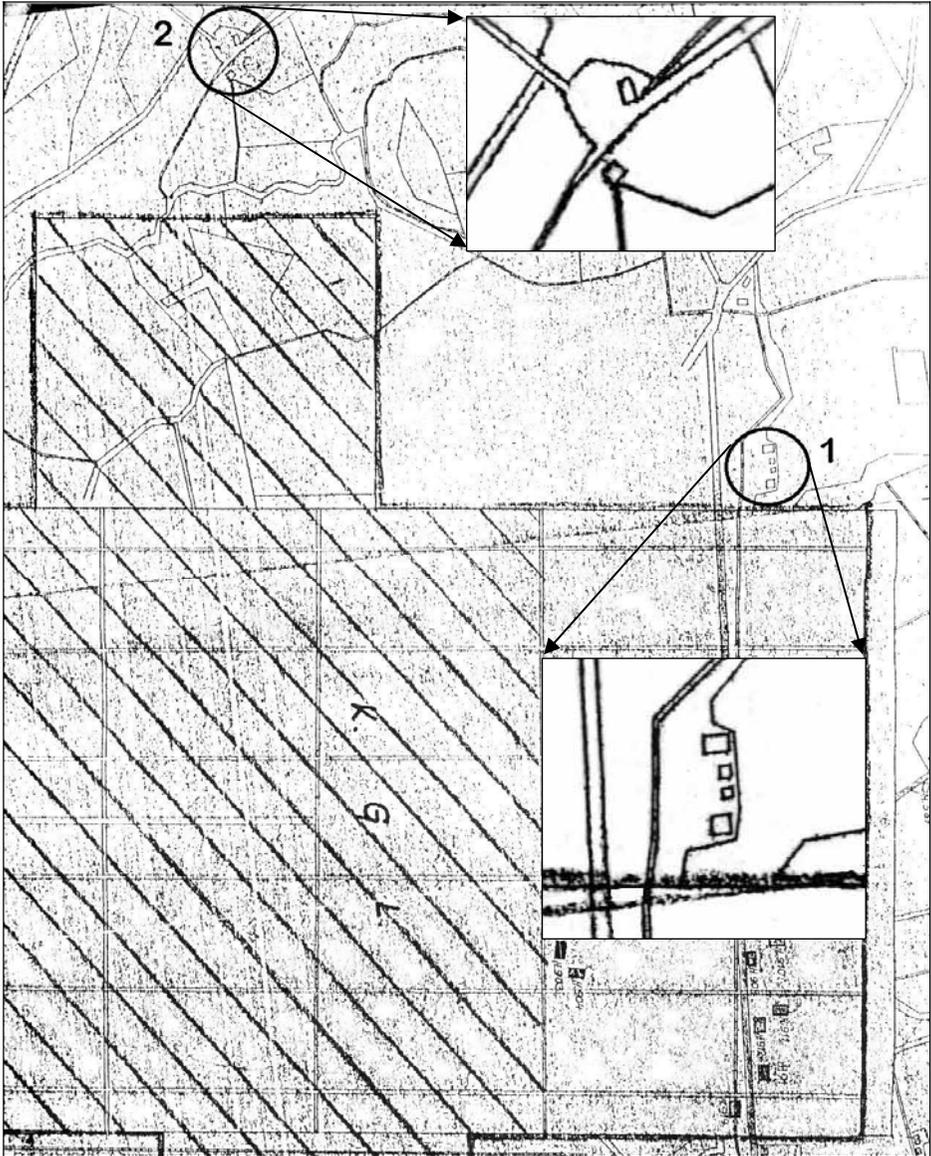
Centralbeleitung
der Waffen- und Polizei
Luschwitz
(Ruf: Lusowitz 22 259.)


Hauptsturmführer (S)

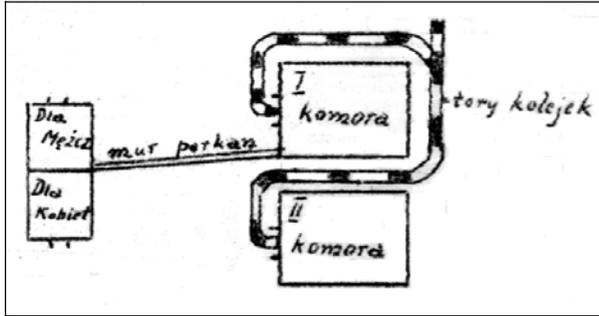
6b. First cost estimate for modification of existing building shell, BW 36C, July 15, 1942.⁷



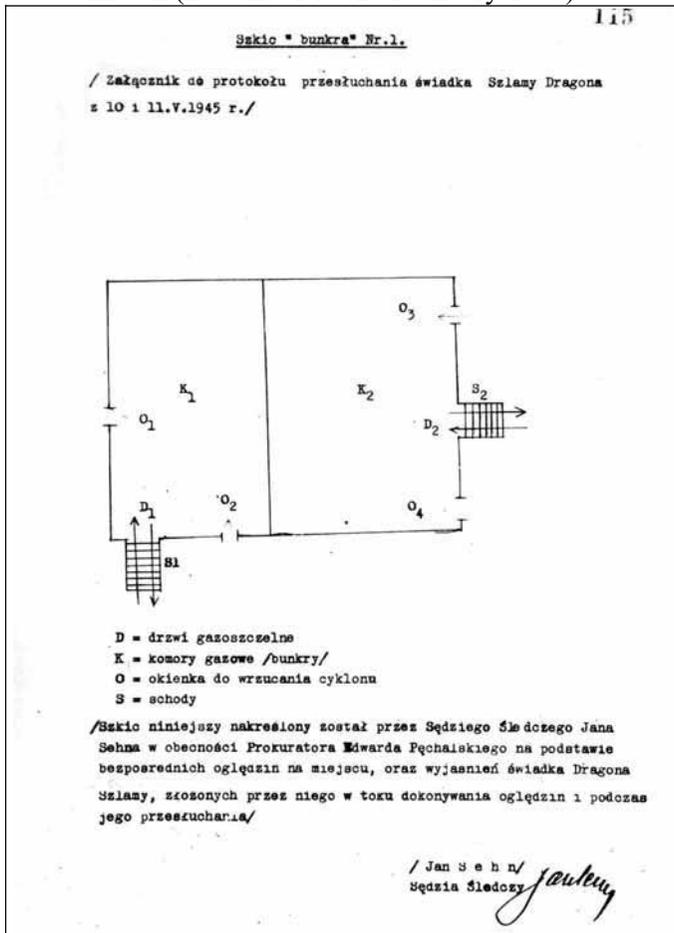
6c. Location sketch of BW 36C, July 15, 1942.⁷



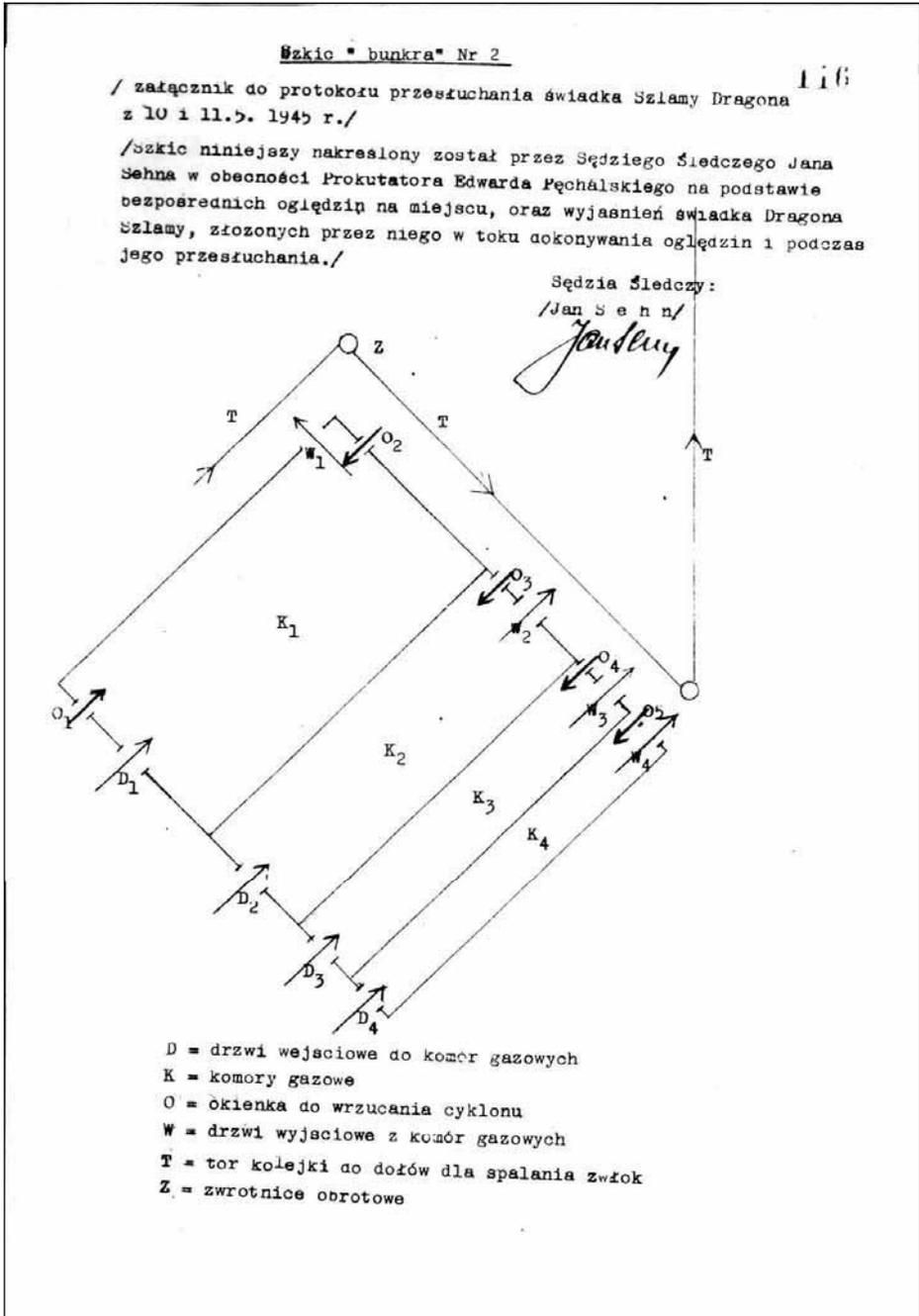
7. Site map of area of interest, KL Auschwitz no. 1733 of October 5, 1942.⁸
 Section enlargements: buildings close to the area of the alleged locations of
 'Bunker 1' (1) and 'Bunker 2' (2).



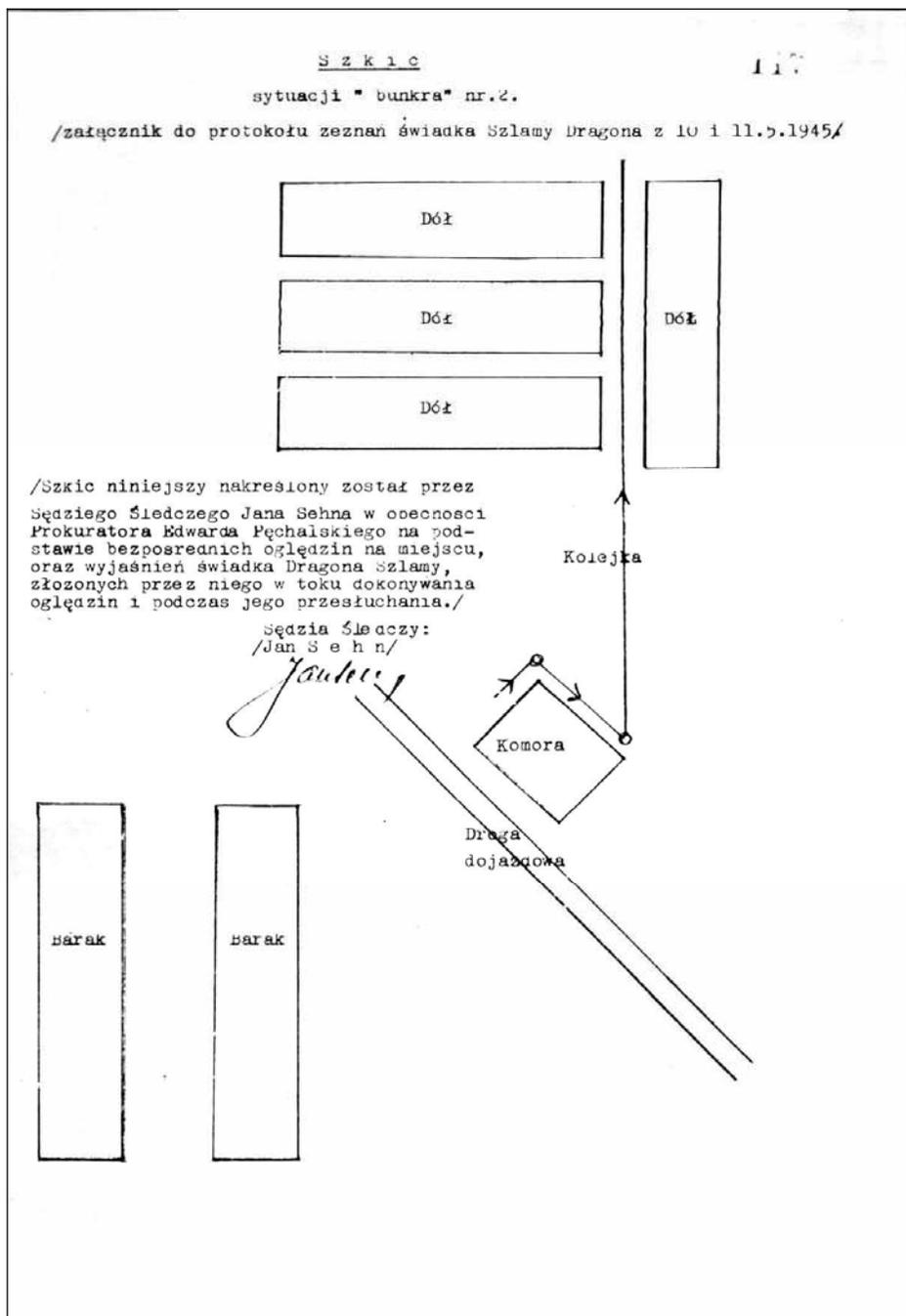
10. Drawing of two “gassing houses,” author unknown (December 1942 or January 1943).¹¹



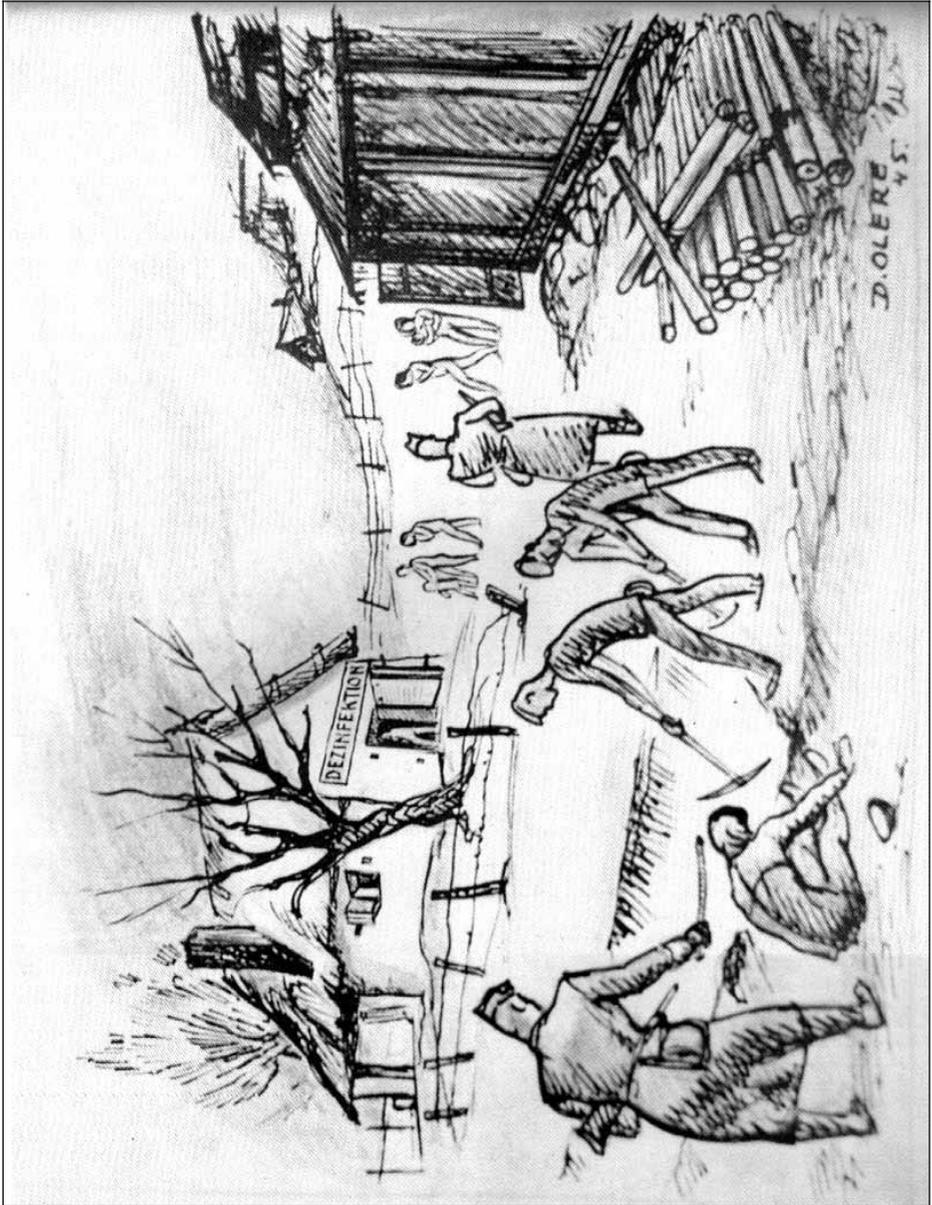
11. Sketch of “Bunker no. 1.” Annex to minutes of interrogation of witness Shlomo Dragon on May 10 and 11, 1945, drawn by engineer Eugeniusz Nosal upon information from the witness.¹²



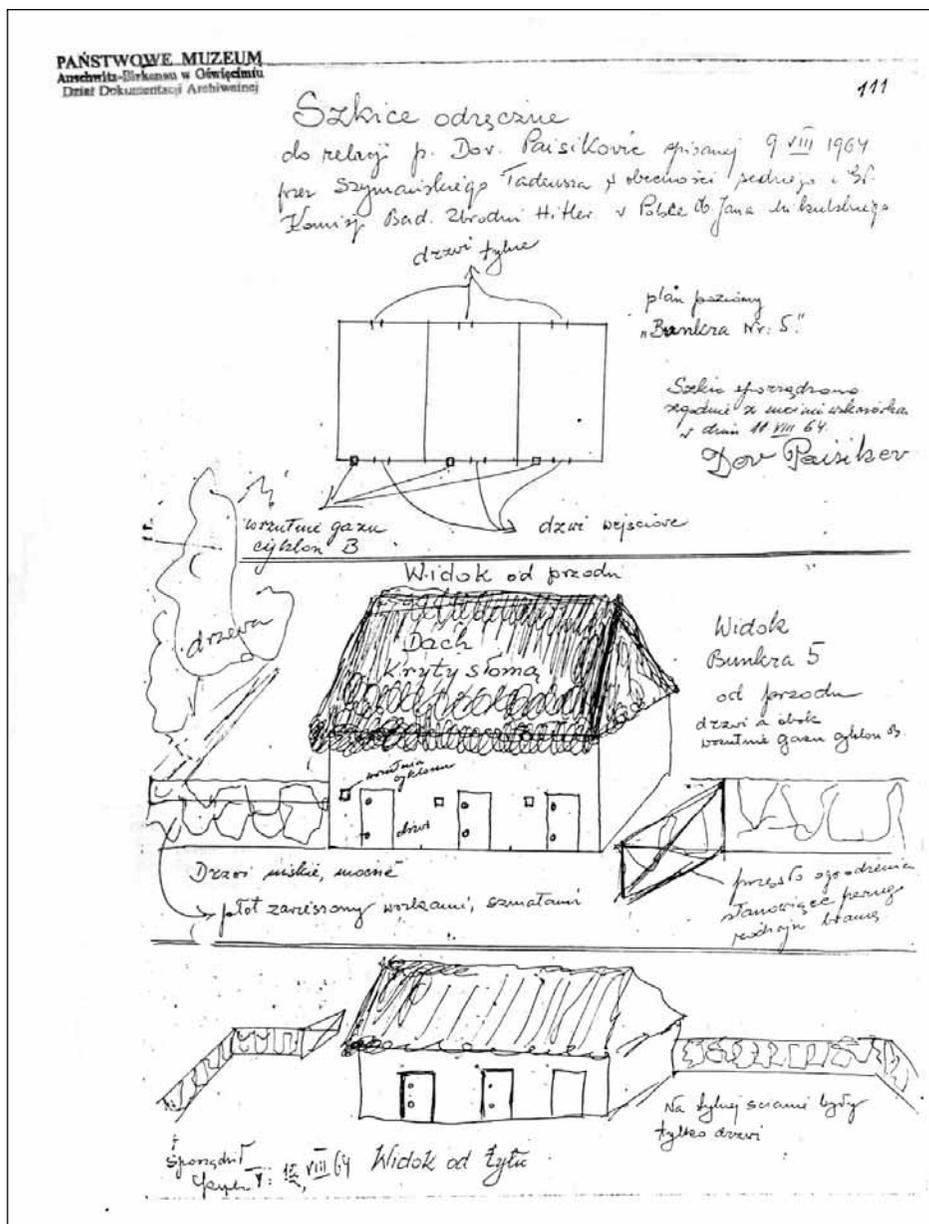
12. Sketch of "Bunker no. 2." Annex to minutes of interrogation of witness Shlomo Dragon on May 10 and 11, 1945, drawn by engineer Eugeniusz Nosal upon information from the witness.¹³



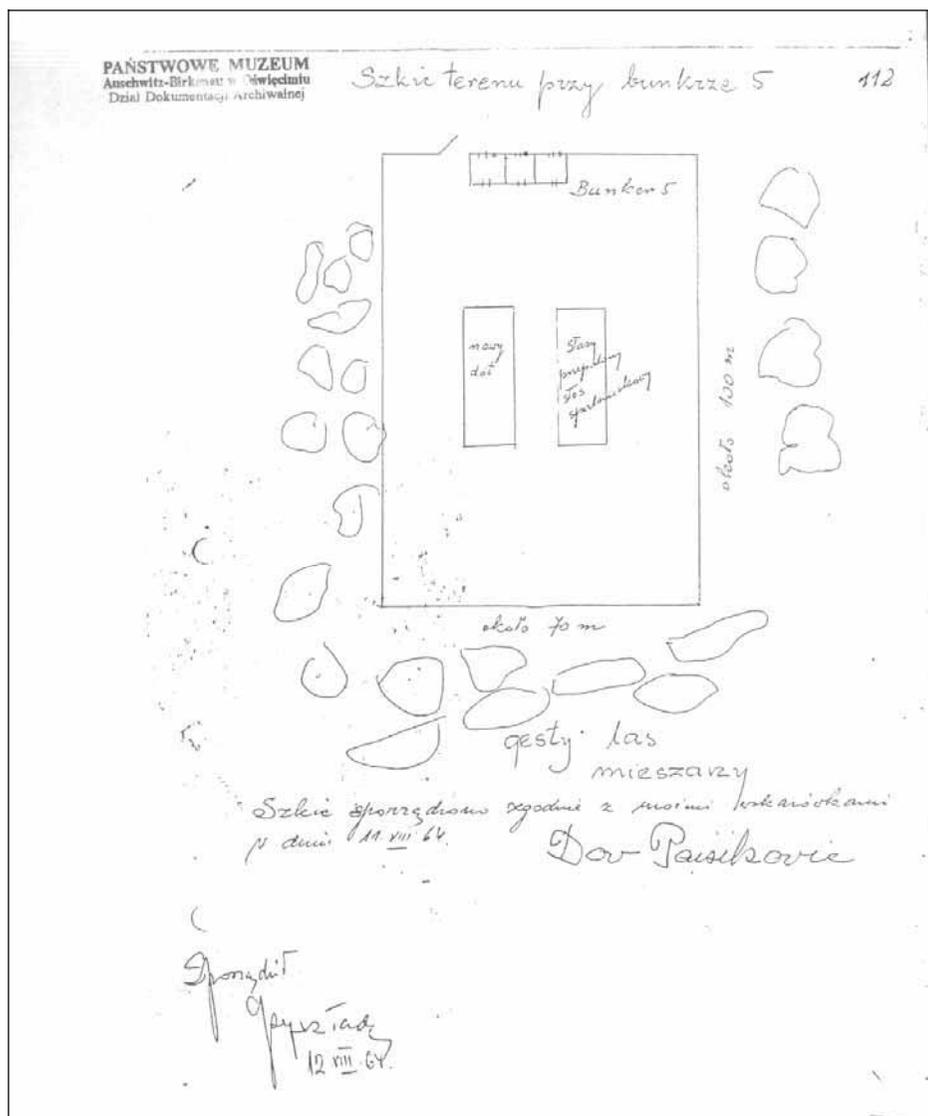
13. Sketch of "Bunker no. 2." Annex to minutes of interrogation of witness Shlomo Dragon on 10 and 11 May 1945, drawn by engineer Jan Nosal upon information from the witness.¹⁴



14. 'Bunker 2.' Drawn by David Olère in 1945.¹⁵



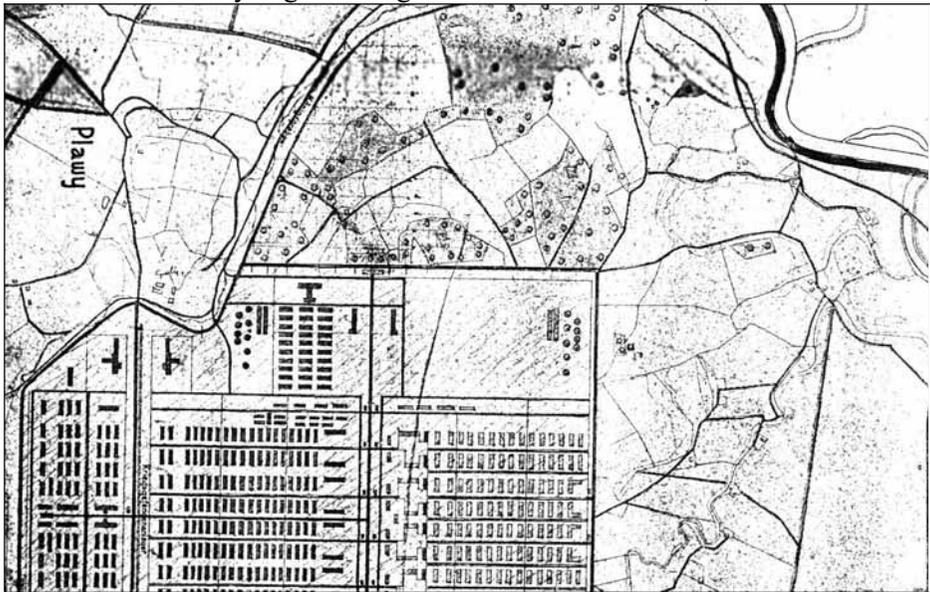
15. Sketches of “Bunker 5.” Drawings by Tadeusz Szymański on information from Dov Paisikovic.¹⁶



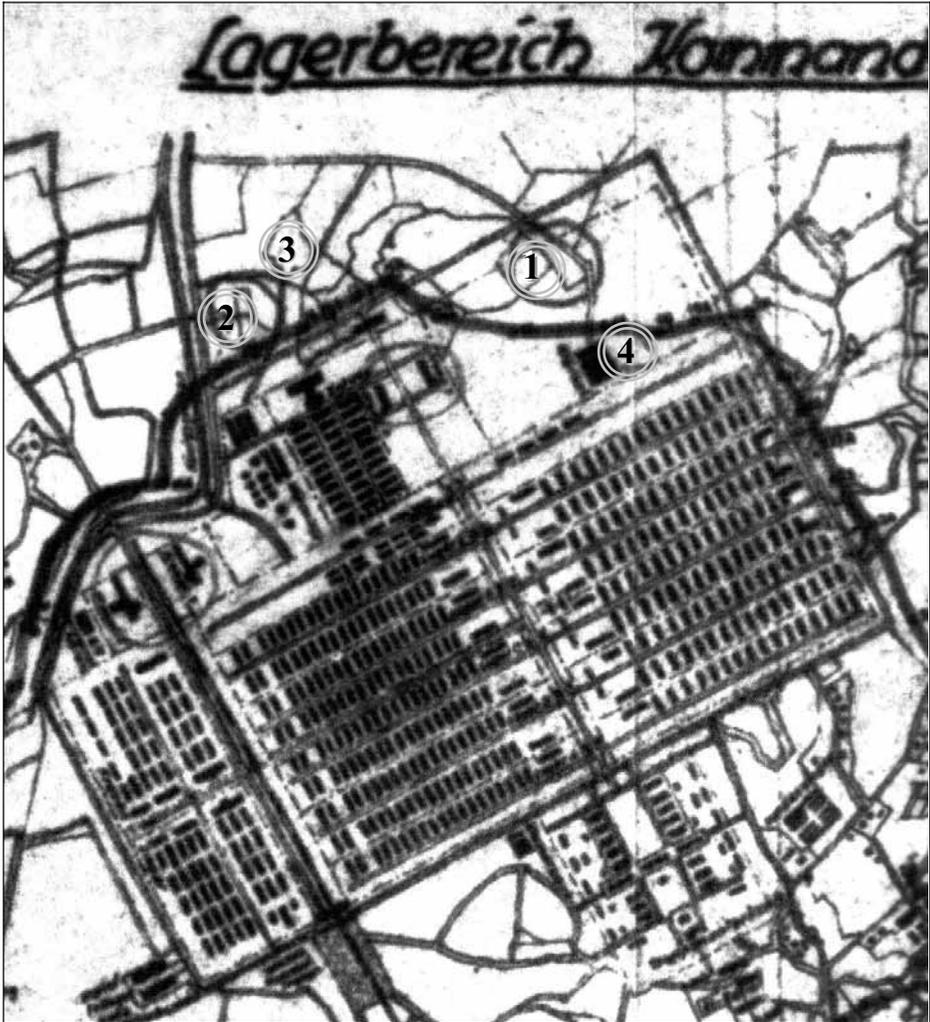
16. Sketch of area of "Bunker 5." Drawing by Tadeusz Szymański on information from Dov Paisikovic.¹⁶



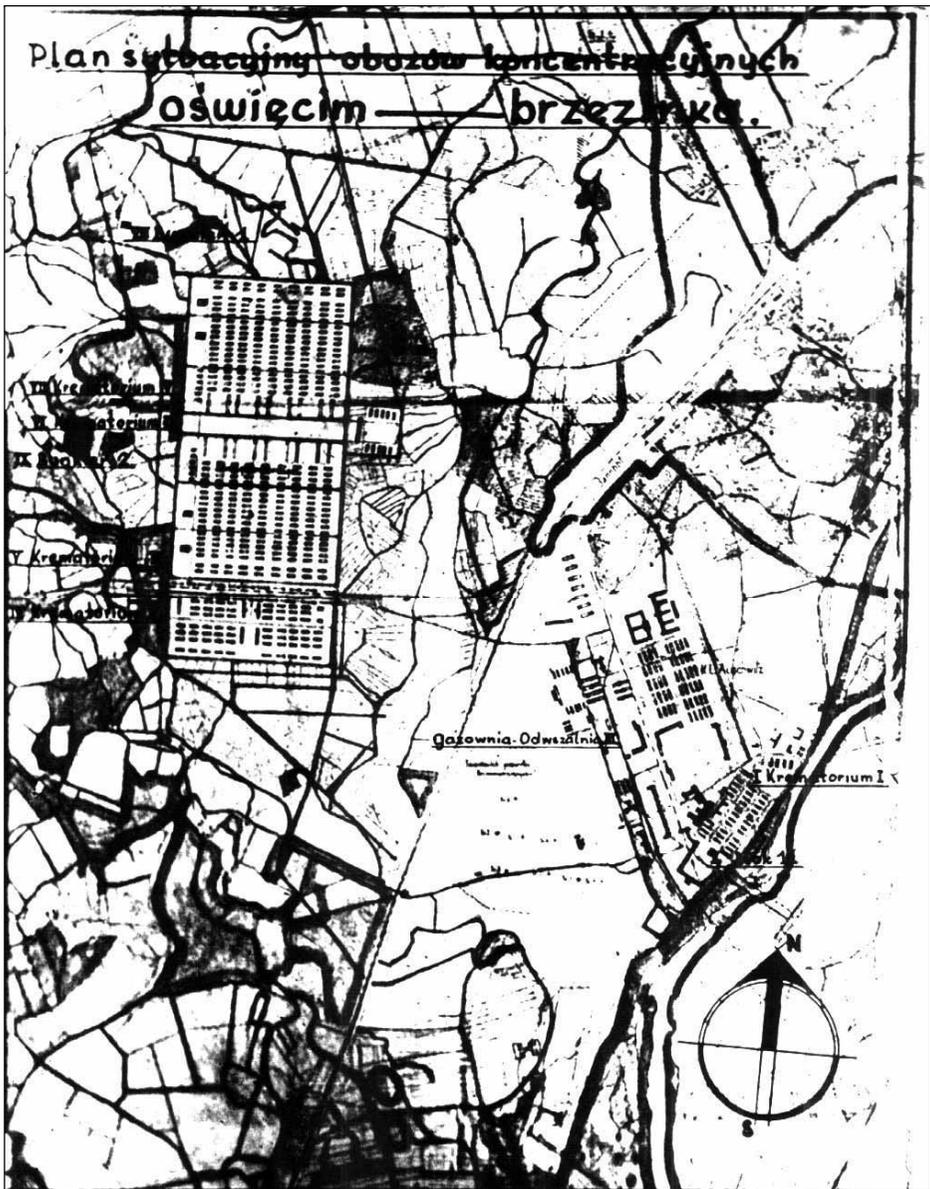
17. “Map of location of chambers and pyres for cremation of corpses.”
Drawn by engineer Eugeniusz Nosal on March 3, 1945.¹⁷



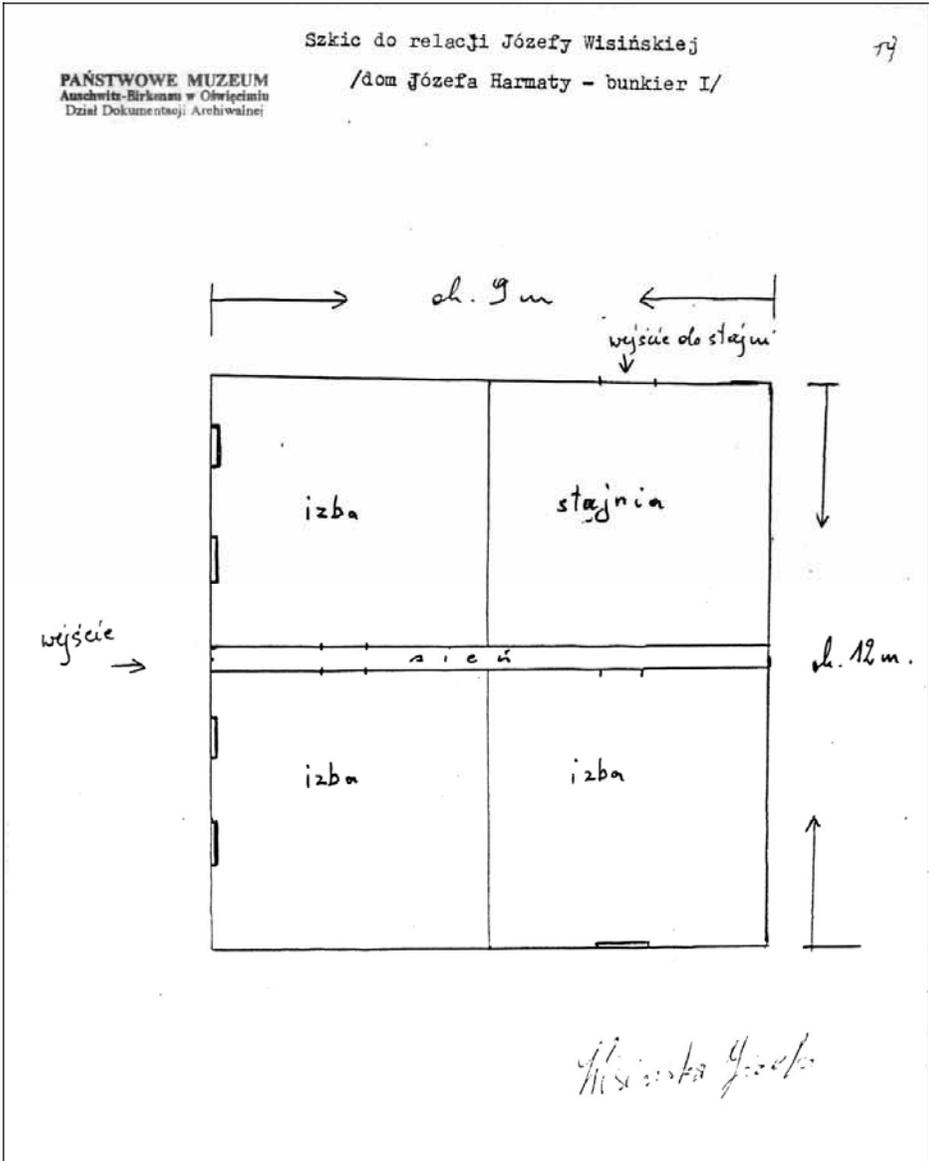
18. Map of area of interest, Plan no. 2501 of June 1943.¹⁸



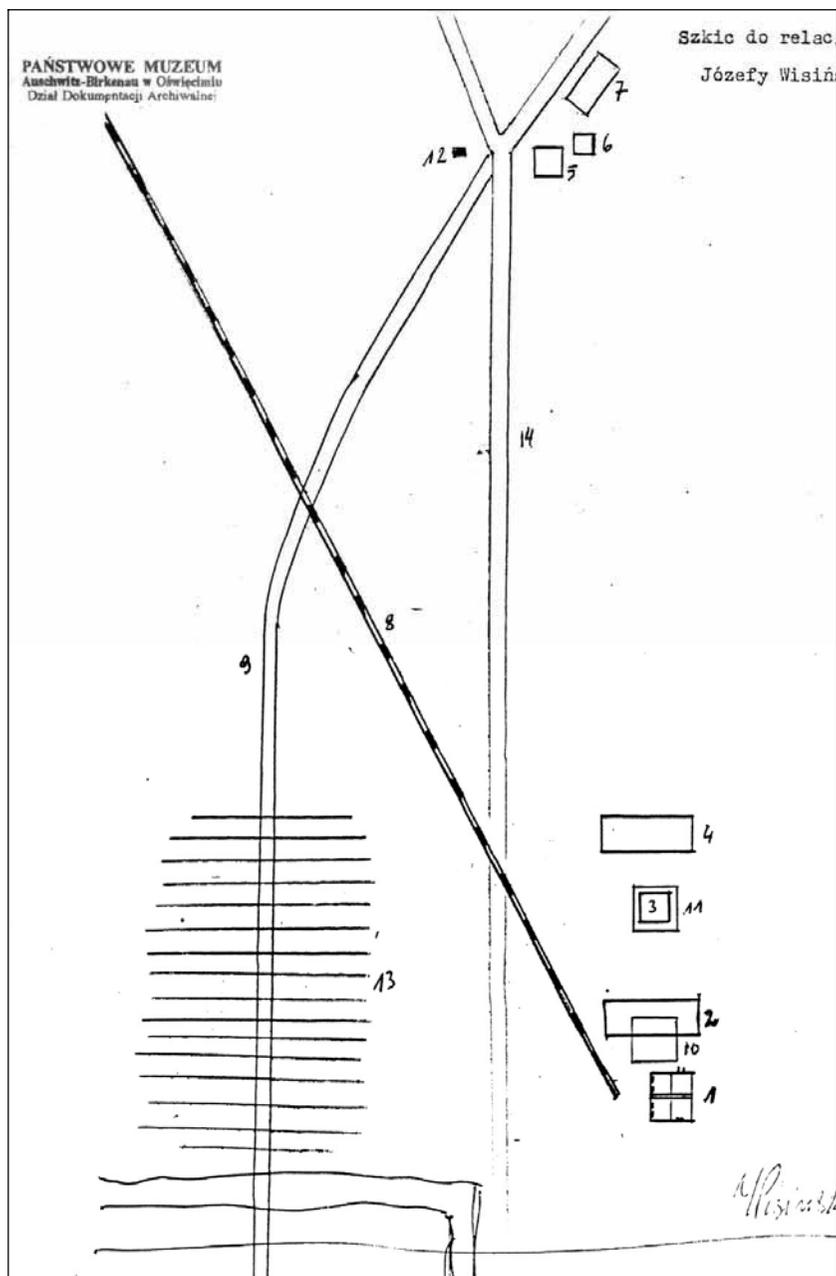
19. Camp area Kommandantur 1 and 2. Section enlargement of Plan no. 2503 of June 18, 1943.¹⁹ ①: 'Bunker 1' acc. to Soviet version; ②: 'Bunker' 2 acc. to Soviet version; ③: 'Bunker 2' acc. to current version; ④: 'Bunker 1' acc. to current version.



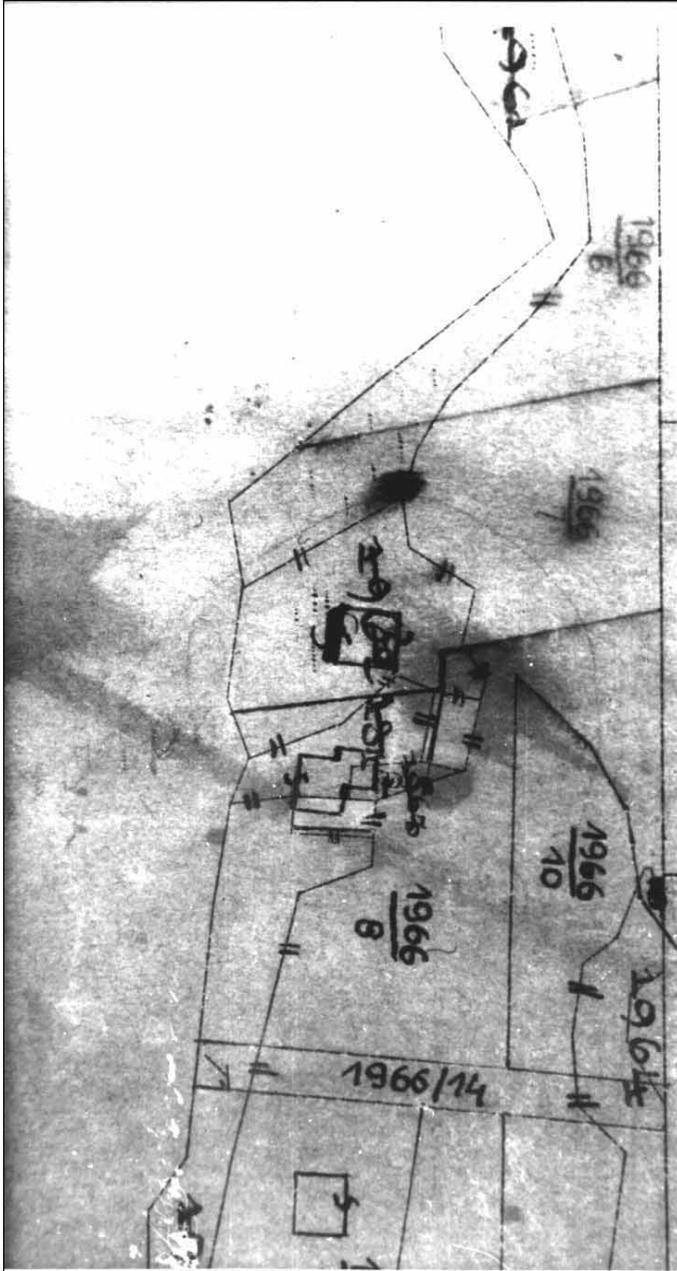
21. "Map of location of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp" used by expert Roman Dawidowski.²¹



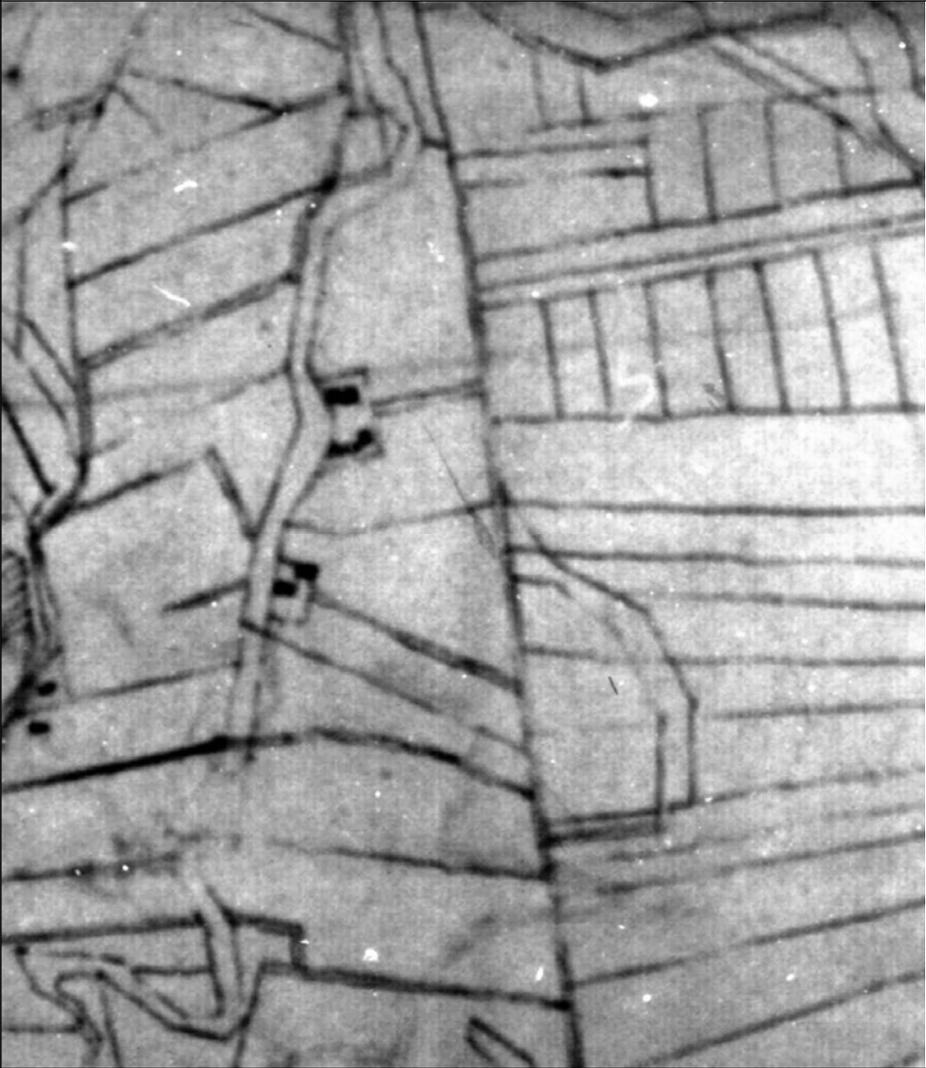
22. Sketch of house of Józef Harmata (the alleged 'Bunker 1'), annex to declaration of Józefa Wiśnińska of August 5, 1980.²²



23. Location sketch of house of Józef Harmata (the alleged 'Bunker 1'), annex to declaration of Józefa Wiśniewskiego of August 5, 1980.²³



24. Land-register map of alleged 'Bunker 1.'²⁴



25. Map of Birkenau area, February 4, 1942.²⁵

Document Sources

- ¹ D. Czech, *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau 1939–1945*. Rowohlt Verlag, Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1989, op. cit., p. 27.
- ² Plan Nr. 2215 of March 1943. Source. RGVA, 502-2-94, p. 2.
- ³ RGVA, 502-2-95, pp. 22–25.
- ⁴ Recorded in drawing register under no. 18125/7.44. RGVA, 502-2-50, p. 83.
- ⁵ D. Dwork, R. J. van Pelt, *Auschwitz 1270 to the present*. W.W. Norton & Company. New York- London, 1996, p. 305.
- ⁶ RGVA, 502-1-220, p. 27.
- ⁷ RGVA, 502-1-319, page number illegible.
- ⁸ RGVA, 502-2-93, p. 14.
- ⁹ RGVA, 502-1-93, p. 1.
- ¹⁰ RGVA, 502-2-94, p. 2.
- ¹¹ AGK, NTN, 155, pp. 299.
- ¹² Höß trial, vol. 11, p. 115.
- ¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 116.
- ¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 117.
- ¹⁵ S. Klarsfeld (ed.), *D. Olère. A painter in the Sonderkommando at Auschwitz*, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, New York, 1989, p. 34.
- ¹⁶ APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, vol. 44, p. 111.
- ¹⁷ GARF, 7021-108-25, p. 11.
- ¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 10.
- ¹⁹ GARF, 7021-108-36, p. 29a.
- ²⁰ GARF, 7021-108-25, p. 12.
- ²¹ AGK, NTN, 93, p. 2.
- ²² APMO, Oświadczenia, vol. 113, p. 79.
- ²³ *Ibidem*, p. 80.
- ²⁴ APMO, negative n. 21416/7.
- ²⁵ APMO, negativ n. 21135/5.
- ²⁶ APMO, Zespół Central Construction Office, BW 2/5/53 AuII.

11.2. Photographs



1. Birkenau, BW 5b, round openings for placement of ventilators in the outside wall of the gas disinfestation chamber. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



2. Birkenau, BW 5b. One of the two round openings for placement of ventilators in the outside wall of the gas disinfestation chamber. Above the sheet metal tube one can see, attached to it by means of a hinge, a metal plate to which the lid of the tube was welded. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



3. Auschwitz, Block 3. Round opening covered by a metal lid, which housed the ventilator for the gas disinfestation chamber located on the second floor of the Block. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



4. The ruins of the alleged 'Bunker 2' seen from the east. In the background a portion of the central sauna building is visible. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



5. The ruins of the alleged 'Bunker 2' seen from the west. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



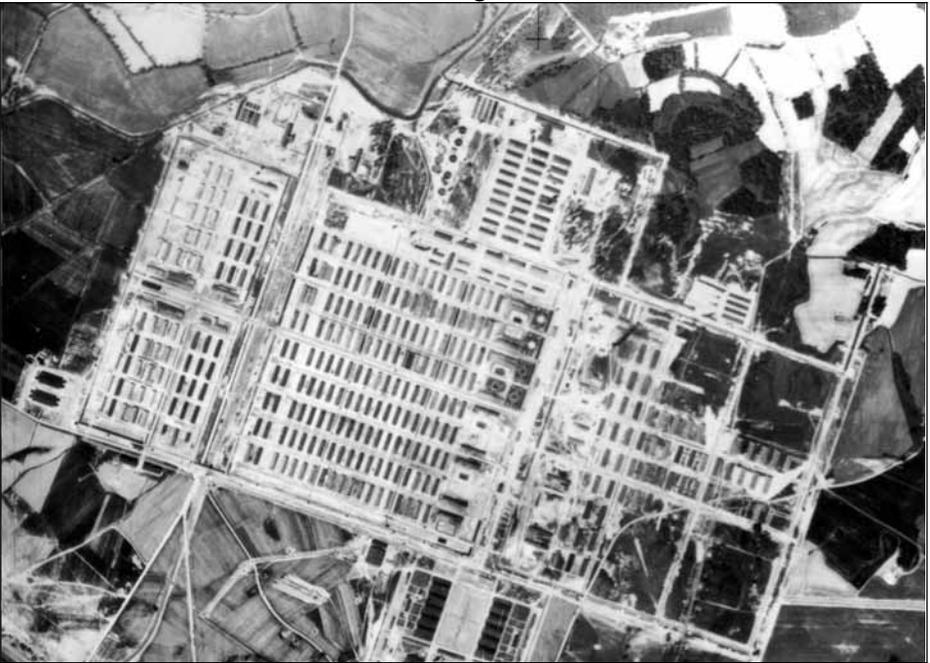
6. The ruins of the alleged 'Bunker 2' seen from the northwest. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



7. The ruins of the alleged 'Bunker 2' seen from the southwest. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



8. The ruins of the alleged 'Bunker 2' seen from the east. July 1992, © Carlo Mattogno.



9. Aerial view of the Birkenau camp, May 31, 1944. Source: National Archives, Washington D.C., mission 60 PRS/462 60 SQ, Exposure 3056.



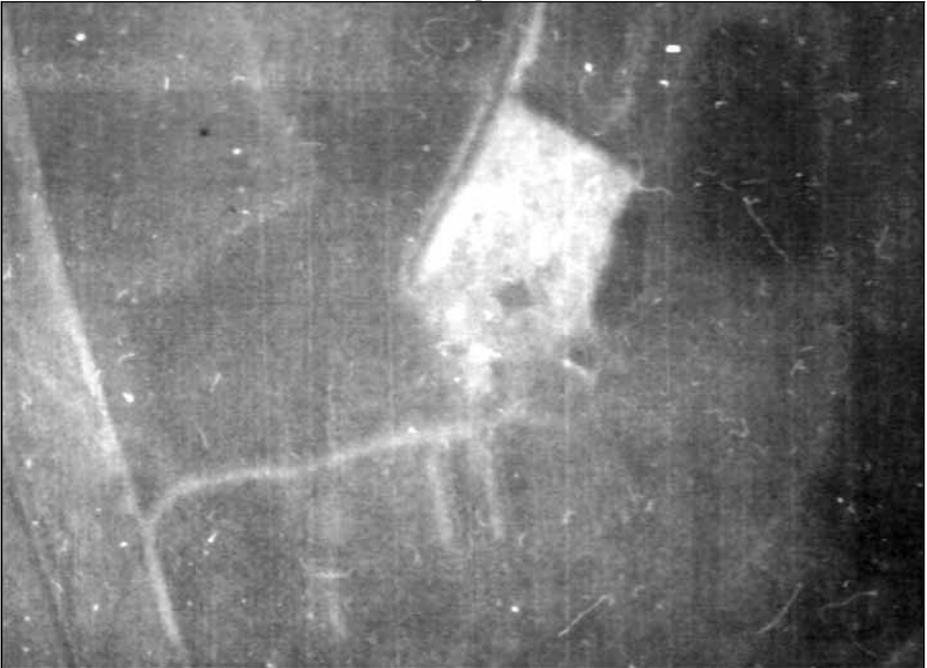
9b. Enlargement of photograph of May 31, 1944, pentagonal area of 'Bunker 2.'



9a. Enlargement of photograph of May 31, 1944.



10. Aerial view of Birkenau camp, November 29, 1944.
Source: National Archives, Washington D.C., mission
15 SG/887, Exposure 4058.



10a. Enlargement of aerial view of November 29, 1944, area of 'Bunker 2.'



11. Aerial view of Birkenau camp, February 19, 1945. Source: National Archives, Washington D.C., GX 12337/145.



11a: Detail enlargement



12. Rectangular basin filled with water in the area of 'Bunker 2,' 1954. Source: KL Auschwitz. Fotografie dokumentalne. Krajowa Agencja Wydawnictwa, Warsaw 1980, p. 167.



13. Area of 'Bunker 2.' Depression of about 8 by 7 meters located some 34 meters to the east of the ruins of 'Bunker 2.'



14. Area of 'Bunker 2.' Depression of about 25 by 5 meters located at some 69 meters to the east of ruins of 'Bunker 2.'



15. Aerial view of the Birkenau camp, May 31, 1944, area of mass graves. Crematorium V is on the left, the settling ponds are at the bottom. Source: cf. photograph 9.



16. Ruins of 'Bunker 2.' Commemorative plaque for Edith Stein.



17. Ruins of 'Bunker 2.' Commemorative plaque for Edith Stein.

11.3. Abbreviations

- AGK** *Archiwum Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* (Archive of the Central Commission of Inquiry into the Crimes against the Polish People – National Monument), Warsaw
- APMO** *Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum Oświęcim-Brzezinka* (Archive of the National Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau), Oświęcim
- GARF** *Gosudarstvenni Archiv Rossiskoi Federatsii* (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Moscow
- NA** National Archives, Washington D.C.
- PRO** *Public Record Office*, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, Great Britain
- RGVA** *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Vojennii Archiv* (Russian State War Archive), Moscow
- ROD** *Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (National Institute for War Documentation), Amsterdam
- VffG** *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung*
- VHA** *Vojenský Historický Archiv* (Archive of War History), Prague
- ZStL** *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen* (German Central Office of State Justice Departments), Ludwigsburg

11.4. Tables

TABLE 1: LIST OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS (AND *BAUWERKE*) SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL TO THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR FOR CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN MILITARY DISTRICT VIII, MARCH 17, 1942⁶⁴¹

- “A.) [... approved]
- 1.) *Adding stories to 6 old detainee accommodations*
 - 2.) *5 new detainee accommodations*
 - 3.) *Laundry and admissions building (entrance) with delousing unit and bath for detainees*
 - 4.) *Kommandantur and housing for Kommandantur*
 - 5.) *Water supply (1st section)*
 - 6.) *Electrical installations, external (1st section)*
 - 7.) *Utility buildings*
 - 8.) *Sewage (Main effluent collector, rain water sewer, and sewage treatment plant with bio-gas recovery)*
- B.) [... (included in list for G.B.-Bau)]
- 1.) *10 detainee accommodations and 5 detainee workshops*
 - 2.) *Entrance building*
 - 3.) *Crematorium*
 - 4.) *Temporary bridge across Sola river*
 - 5.) *12 troop barracks and 8 washing and toilet barracks for guard unit*
 - 6.) *4 troop barracks for Kommandantur*
 - 7.) *4 officer housing barracks*
 - 8.) *SS dormitory “Deutsches Haus”*
 - 9.) *1 barrack for construction office, 1 housing and utility barrack with garage for Bauleitung*
 - 10.) *Barrack for detainee mess hall*
 - 11.) *Barrack for detainee workshop*
 - 12.) *1 utility barrack, 1 washing barrack, 1 toilet barrack for civilian workers’ camp*
 - 13.) *1 utility barrack for guard unit*
 - 14.) *Enlargement of motor pool hall and workshop*
 - 15.) *Building materials store and local workshops*
 - 16.) *Water supply and sewage*
 - 17.) *Pump house*
 - 18.) *Security installations (camp wall and 5 watchtowers)*
 - 19.) *Transformer substation*
 - 20.) *Roads*
 - 21.) *Repair of existing houses*
 - 22.) *4 storage halls for potatoes*
 - 23.) *4 field barns and 12 shelters for grazing animals*
 - 24.) *Duck breeding, coops*
- C.) *POW camp of Waffen-SS under OX and OY.*^[642]
- a.) *Work up to 6 February 1942 (quarantine camp)*

⁶⁴¹ RGVA, 502-1-319, pp. 202-206.

⁶⁴² These symbols were the designations of the priority lists established by G.B.-Bau.

- 1.) 30 prisoner housing barracks (brick)
 - 2.) 2 utility barracks
 - 3.) 2 delousing barracks
 - 4.) 10 washing and toilet barracks
 - 5.) 1 barrack for corpses
 - 6.) Entrance building
 - 7.) Warehouse
 - 8.) 11 watchtowers (wood)
- b.) Work after 6 February 1942
- 1.) 252 prisoner housing barracks
 - 2.) 18 utility barracks
 - 3.) 18 barracks for provisions
 - 4.) 36 washing and toilet barracks
 - 5.) 4 barracks, infirmary
 - 6.) 10 barracks for corpses
 - 7.) Kommandantur building
 - 8.) Guard building
 - 9.) Barracks for guard unit
 - 10.) 27 watchtowers (wood)
 - 11.) Crematorium
 - 12.) Bakery for HWL^[643]
 - 13.) Water supply plant
 - 14.) Sewers and sewage treatment plant
 - 15.) Access road includ. parking area
 - 16.) Road surfacing in POW camp including roll call areas
 - 17.) RR siding from Auschwitz station
 - 18.) Wire mesh fences for camp sections
 - 19.) Wire mesh fences for camp sections
 - 20.) Power plant
 - 21.) Alarm and telephone system
- D. Special permit for:
- I. Agricultural buildings
- a.) permanent
- 1.) 2 cattle-sheds for a total of 400 head of cattle
 - 2.) Finishing of temporary stock-yard, installation of refrigeration rooms
 - 3.) Dairy, temp.
 - 4.) 2 farms
 - 5.) Finishing of shell at Raisko for laboratory
- b.) temporary
- 1.) 1 greenhouse at Raisko
 - 2.) 35 horse stable barracks
 - 3.) 3 field barns and 4 farm barns
 - 4.) SS dormitory "Praga" and temporary riding hall
 - 5.) Finishing of house for head of Auschwitz agricultural units
- II. Other
- 1.) 4 housing barracks for civilian workers' camp
 - 2.) 1 toilet and 1 washing barrack for civilian workers' camp
 - 3.) 1 mess hall barrack
 - 4.) Installation of two saunas
- E. Special permit for Bauwerke of Waffen-SS HWL

⁶⁴³ Bauvorhaben Hauptwirtschaftslager der Waffen-SS.

- 1.) 2 office and storage barracks
- 2.) Potato bunker

TABLE 2: LIST OF *BAUWERKE* OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CC AUSCHWITZ,
MARCH 31, 1942⁶⁴⁴

Buildings added later by hand are in italics

BW	Designation
1	Construction Office costs
2	Purchase of land, opening up of lots
3	K.L. women
4	Detainee infirmary building
5	Detainee cell building
6	Main guard hall
7A	Detainee housing building
7B	Block leader barrack
8	Watchtowers
9	Sewers
11	Crematorium
<i>11a</i>	<i>New chimney for crematorium KL</i>
12	Building for detainee goods storage
13	Kommandantur building
14	Infirmary and mess hall building
17A	Troop building 1
17B	Troop building 2
17C	4 troop housing barracks
17D	13 troop housing barracks
18	Automobile garage
19	Detainee workshops
20A	Detainee housing building 1
20B	Detainee housing building 2
20C	Detainee housing building 3
20D	Detainee housing building 4
20E	Detainee housing building 5
20F	Detainee housing building 6
20G	Detainee housing building 7
20H	Detainee housing building 8
20J	Detainee housing building 9
20K	Detainee housing building 10
20L	Detainee housing building 11
20M	Detainee housing building 12
20N	Detainee housing building 13
20O	Detainee housing building 14
20P	Detainee housing building 15
20Q	Detainee housing building 16
20R	Detainee housing building 17
21	Roads
<i>23A</i>	<i>Garage for workshops</i>
23B	Emergency power unit

⁶⁴⁴ "Aufteilung der Bauwerke (BW) für die Bauten, Aussen- und Nebenanlagen des Bauvorhabens Konzentrationslager Auschwitz O/S," March 31, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-267, pp. 3-13.

BW	Designation
24	Commandant housing
26A	Field barn
26B	3 field barns
27	Housing for married NCOs
27A	<i>Houses no. 27</i>
28	Admission barrack with delousing
29	Water supply installation
29A	<i>Erection of new water tower</i>
29B	<i>Water lines and water treatment</i>
30A	Automobile workshop
30B	Filling station
31	Utility building for Kommandantur
32A	Housing barrack for civilian workers
32B	Housing barrack for civilian workers
32C	6 barracks for civilian workers <i>and 4 toilet barracks</i>
32D	1 mess hall barrack for civilian workers
32E	1 utility barrack for civilian workers
32F	2 washing barracks for civilian workers
32G	2 toilet barracks for civilian workers
32H	Civilian workers' camp for Italians
33A	Stables
33B	Slaughterhouse and dairy
33Ba	<i>Horse stable barrack for animals to be slaughtered</i>
33C	Temp. greenhouse Raisko
34	Swimming pool
35	School with kindergarten
36A	Officers' club
36B	Housing for married officers
36C	Completion house for head of Auschwitz agricultural units
36D	4 officers' housing barracks
37A	Bauleitung barrack (old)
37B	Bauleitung barrack (new)
37C	Bauleitung housing and utility barrack
37D	Garage (collapsible) for Bauleitung
37E	<i>Bauleitung barrack 3</i>
38	Garage (collapsible) for Kommandantur
38A	<i>Central garage yard</i>
39	SS housing, temp.
40	SS dormitory "Deutsches Haus" incl. ancillary units
40A	<i>Installation of general quarters</i>
41	Enclosure for detainee camp
42	Detainee kitchen barrack <i>Temp. laundry</i>
43	Detainee mess hall barrack
44	Sports ground
45	Shooting range
46	Freight holding
49	Electrical installations, external
50	Construction yard (existing)
51	<i>Horse stables</i>
54	Gardening
55	2 housing and work barracks

BW	Designation
56	3 housing barracks for work details
57	2 R.A.D. lodging houses (RAD = Reichsarbeitsdienst, compulsory work service)
58	5 horse stable barracks 4 in Birkenau (Sonderbehandlung) [special treatment] 1 in Budy
59	12 barracks for detainee goods
60	Temp. security workshop barracks (detainee electricians) 2 <i>barracks for detainee electricians</i>
61A	Emergency workshops (barracks)
61B	Carpentry workshop
61C	7 sheds for building materials
63	4 farm barns
64	Greenhouse Raisko
65A	Duck breeding coop
65B	21 chicken breeding coops
65C	8 chicken breeding coops for 100 birds ea.
65D	16 chicken breeding coops for 50 birds ea.
65E	18 cattle-breeding sheds
66	4 potato storage sheds
67	Riding hall and stables at "Praga" incl. SS dormitory
68A	<i>Hygien. Laboratory</i>
68B	Raisko laboratory. Finishing of a building shell at Raisko
69	<i>Colt yard</i>
70	12 Shelters for grazing animals
71	ca. 35 horse stable barracks
71A	<i>Foaling shed</i>
71B	Babitz utility yard
72	2 cattle sheds
73A	Farm
73B	Farm
74	15 horse stable barracks
75	5 washing barracks
76	Grass drying plant
77	Housing for dog detail
78	Steaming plant for pig feeding unit
79	Soil improvement within area of interest (agric.)
80	Pigsties in Budy
81	Stables for veterinary examinations
82	Admission lock for civilian workers
83	House 184 for sanitary purposes <i>for the military</i>
84	Cisterns in grounds of KL
85	<i>House no. 154 (Post Office II)</i>
86	<i>Interrogation barrack for Political Department (near crematorium)</i>
87	<i>Barrack II for Political Department (near crema.)</i>
88	<i>New housing units (2) at Raisko</i>
89	<i>Barrack for detainees III^d</i>
90	<i>2 barracks for agriculture (special production)</i>
92	<i>Luftwaffe barrack for Political Department near crematorium</i>
93	<i>Special barrack B for K.L.</i>
94	<i>2 barracks for OKH [Oberkommando des Heeres = Supreme Command, Army] 290/6 (schooling)</i>
95	<i>5 potato storage sheds</i>

BW	Designation
96	<i>1 cabbage silo</i>
100	Detainee housing building 18
101	Detainee housing building 19
102	Detainee housing building 20
103	Detainee housing building 21
104	Detainee housing building 22
105	Detainee housing building 23
106	Detainee housing building 24
107	Detainee housing building 25
108	Detainee housing building
109	Detainee housing building
110	Detainee housing building
111	Detainee housing building
112	Detainee housing building
113	Detainee housing building
114	Detainee housing building
115	Detainee housing building
116	Detainee housing building 26
117	Detainee housing building 27
118	Detainee housing building 28
119	Detainee housing building 29
120	Detainee housing building 30
121	Detainee housing building
122	Detainee housing building
123	Detainee housing building
124	Detainee housing building
125	Detainee housing building 31
126	Detainee housing building 32
127	Detainee housing building 33
128	Detainee housing building 34
129	Detainee housing building 35
130	Detainee housing building
131	Detainee housing building
132	Detainee housing building
133	Detainee housing building
134	Detainee housing building 36
135	Detainee housing building 37
136	Detainee housing building 38
137	Detainee housing building 39
138	Detainee housing building 40
139	Detainee housing building
140	Detainee housing building
141	Detainee housing building
142	Detainee housing building
143	Detainee housing building
144	Detainee housing building
145	Detainee housing building
146	Detainee housing building
147	Detainee housing building
148	Detainee housing building
149	Detainee housing building

BW	Designation
150	Detainee housing building
151	Detainee housing building
152	Detainee housing building
153	Detainee housing building
154	Detainee housing building
155	Detainee housing building
156	Detainee housing building
157A	Detainee security workshop building 1
157B	Detainee security workshop building 2
157C	Detainee security workshop building 3
157D	Detainee security workshop building 4
157E	Detainee security workshop building 5
158	Entrance building with tower
160	Laundry <i>and</i> admissions building with delousing unit and bath for detainees
160a	<i>Short-wave delousing unit</i>
161	Temp. central heating plant
162	<i>Utility building for detainees</i>
166	<i>Completion of 60 houses for bombed-out SS members within area of interest</i>
172	Utility barrack
173	Kommandantur and Kommandantur housing building
174	Kommandantur guard building
200	5 watchtowers, permanent
201	Main [sewage] collector
202	Alarm installation
203	Lightning protection
204	Telephone system
205	PA unit
206	Fire protection plant
207	<i>2 Sauna units</i>
207a	1 Sauna unit for agriculture at Raisko
208	Railroad siding
209	Temporary bridge across Sola river
209a	<i>Access road to Sola bridge</i>
210	Enclosures
211	Substation
212	Hauptinsgemein [unclear]

TABLE 3: EXPLANATORY REPORT ON THE BUILDING PROJECT
CC AUSCHWITZ O/S, JULY 15, 1942⁶⁴⁵

I. Temporary makeshift items [sic] (buildings and outside installations)

a) Buildings

1. BW 4 Detainee infirmary building
2. BW 5 Detainee cell building
3. BW 12 Detainee goods storage building
4. BW 13 Kommandantur building
5. BW 17A Troop building 1
6. BW 17B Troop building 2
7. BW 14 SS infirmary and mess hall building

⁶⁴⁵ RGVA, 502-1-220, pp. 1-19.

8. BW 36A Officers' club
 9. BW 27 Housing for married NCOs
 10. BW 36B Housing for married officers and officer housing
 11. BW 11 Crematorium
- b) Outside installations
12. BW 67 SS dormitory, riding-hall and animal sheds in the former Praga works at Birkenau
 13. BW 39 SS housing, outside camp perimeter
 14. BW 23A Substation
 15. BW 21 Roads
 16. BW 29 Water supply installation
 17. BW 49 Power lines
 18. BW 44 Sport fields
 19. BW 45 Shooting range
 20. BW 54 Gardens

II. Temporary work (buildings and outside installations)

a) Buildings

21. BW 7B Block leader barrack
22. BW 24 Commandant's house
23. BW 36C Completion of an existing building shell
24. BW 40 SS dormitory "Deutsches Haus"
25. BW 33B Slaughter-house enlargement
26. BW 18 Extension of Kommandantur garage
27. BW 30B Filling station for Kommandantur
28. BW 28 Admission barrack with delousing and 4 goods storage barracks
29. BW 42 Extension of detainee kitchen
30. BW 17C 4 troop barracks for Kommandantur
31. BW 17D/1 Staff and troop barrack
32. BW 17D/2-13 12 troop barracks, 4 washing barracks, 4 toilet barracks for guard unit
33. BW 36D 4 officers' housing barracks
34. BW 43 Detainee mess hall barrack
35. BW 172 Utility barrack for guard unit
36. BW 59 12 barracks for storage of detainee goods, etc.
37. BW 60 2 barracks for housing of detainee electricians. et al.
38. BW 38 Vehicle and equipment hall
39. BW 3 Second women's camp

b) Outside installations

40. BW 8 8 watchtowers
41. BW 52 2 living and working barracks
42. BW 56 3 housing barracks for work detail
43. BW 57 2 RAD houses
44. BW 58 5 barracks for special treatment of detainees
45. BW 77 Housing for dog team details
46. BW 161 Central heating plant
47. BW 209 Temporary bridge across Sola [river]

III. Completed structures

a) Buildings

48. BW 7A Detainee housing building 41
49. BW 20A Detainee housing building 1
50. BW 20B Detainee housing building 2
51. BW 20C Detainee housing building 3

52. BW 20D Detainee housing building 4
53. BW 20E Detainee housing building 5
54. BW 20F Detainee housing building 6
55. BW 20G Detainee housing building 7
56. BW 20H Detainee housing building 8
57. BW 20J Detainee housing building 9
58. BW 20K Detainee housing building 10
59. BW 20L Detainee housing building 11
60. BW 20M Detainee housing building 12
61. BW 20N Detainee housing building 13
62. BW 20O Detainee housing building 14
63. BW 20P Detainee housing building 15
64. BW 20Q Detainee housing building 16
65. BW 20R Detainee housing building 17
66. BW 100 Detainee housing building 18
67. BW 101 Detainee housing building 19
68. BW 102 Detainee housing building 20
69. BW 103 Detainee housing building 21
70. BW 104 Detainee housing building 22
71. BW 105 Detainee housing building 23
72. BW 106 Detainee housing building 24
73. BW 107 Detainee housing building 25
74. BW 116 Detainee housing building 26
75. BW 117 Detainee housing building 27
76. BW 118 Detainee housing building 28
77. BW 119 Detainee housing building 29
78. BW 120 Detainee housing building 30
79. BW 125 Detainee housing building 31
80. BW 126 Detainee housing building 32
81. BW 127 Detainee housing building 33
82. BW 128 Detainee housing building 34
83. BW 129 Detainee housing building 35
84. BW 134 Detainee housing building 36
85. BW 135 Detainee housing building 37
86. BW 136 Detainee housing building 38
87. BW 137 Detainee housing building 39
88. BW 138 Detainee housing building 40
89. BW 157A Detainee security workshop building 1
90. BW 157B Detainee security workshop building 2
91. BW 157C Detainee security workshop building 3
92. BW 157D Detainee security workshop building 4
93. BW 157E Detainee security workshop building 5
94. BW 158 Detainee camp entrance building
95. BW 160 Laundry and admissions building with delousing unit and detainee bath
96. BW 173 Kommandantur building and Kommandantur housing building
97. BW 31 Utility building for Kommandantur
- b) Outside installations
 98. BW 9 Sewers
 99. BW 21 Roads
 100. BW 23B Building for emergency power plant
 101. BW 29 Water supply installation
 102. BW 41 Detainee camp enclosure

103. BW 49 Electrical connections
104. BW 200 5 watchtowers
105. BW 201 Main sewer with treatment plant
106. BW 202 Alarm installation
107. BW 203 Lightning protection
108. BW 204 Telephone system
109. BW 205 PA system
110. BW 206 Fire protection plant
111. BW 207 2 sauna units
112. BW 210 Enclosures
113. BW 211 Substation

**TABLE 4: *BAUWERKE* AS LISTED IN THE CONSTRUCTION REPORT
ON THE PROGRESS OF CONSTRUCTION WORK
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CC AUSCHWITZ, DATED APRIL 15, 1942⁶⁴⁶
Covering the period up to April 1, 1942 and containing the description of 66 *Bauwerke***

#	NO.	DESIGNATION OF BW	Progress
1	18	Automobile halls and extension	90%
2	30A	Automobile workshop	100%
3	30B	Filling station	100%
4	11	Crematorium	100%
5	19	Detainee workshops	80%
6	28	Admission barrack with delousing	60%
7	160	Laundry and admission building with delousing unit and bath for detainees	7%
8	23A	Garage extension and transformer	80%
9	50	Building yard	80%
10	17A	Troop building 1	100%
11	17B	Troop building 2	100%
12	39	SS housing outside of camp perimeter	100%
13	40	SS dormitory "Deutsches Haus"	75%
14	7A	Block leader barrack	100%
15	17C	4 troop housing barracks	
		Barrack 1:	100%
		Barrack 2:	100%
		Barrack 3:	75%
		Barrack 4:	60%
16	17B	Troop barrack for guard unit	100%
17	36A	Officers' club	95%
18	36B	Officers' housing and housing for married officers	60%
19	36D	Officers' housing barrack 1:	15%
20	27	Housing for married NCOs	60%
21	24	Commandant's housing (attic)	30%
22	20A,B,D, E,F,G,R FF,G,R	7 detainee housing buildings	100%

⁶⁴⁶ "Baubericht über den Stand der Bauarbeiten für das Bauvorhaben Konzentrationslager Auschwitz," RGVA, 502-1-24, pp. 318-342.

#	No.	DESIGNATION OF BW	Progress
23	20C,H,I, K,L,M,N, O,P,Q	10 Detainee housing buildings	100%
24	100	Detainee housing building 18	100%
25	101	Detainee housing building 19	100%
26	102	Detainee housing building 20	100%
27	103	Detainee housing building 21	100%
28	104	Detainee housing building 22	75%
29	105	Detainee housing building 23	45%
30	106	Detainee housing building 24	35%
31	107	Detainee housing building 25	70%
32		Temporary goods storage barrack in women's branch camp	100%
33		Temp. barrack for laundry and delousing in women's branch camp	100%
34	13	Kommandantur building	100%
35	7B	Block leader barrack	100%
36	37A	Construction Office barrack	100%
37	14	SS infirmary and mess hall building	100%
38		4 detainee infirmary buildings	100%
39		5 detainee cell buildings	100%
40	12	Building for detainee goods storage	100%
41	42	Detainee kitchen	100%
42	6	Main guard hall	100%
43	172	Utility barrack for guard unit	95%
44	43	Detainee mess hall building	100%
45	32A	Housing barrack for civilian workers	100%
46	32B	Housing barrack for civilian workers	80%
47	32D	Utility barrack for civilian workers' camp	80%
48	44	Sports ground	60%
49	34	Swimming facility on Sola river	60%
50	21	Roads inside camp	45%
51	54	Gardening	50%
52	9	Sewers	55%
53	29	Water supply installation	35%
54	23A	Transformer substation	100%
55	49	Electrical installations, external	45%
56	41	Enclosure for detainee camp	30%
57	8	Watchtowers (wood)	60%
58	37	School with kindergarten	100%
59	33A	Stables and ancillaries	40%
60	33B	Slaughterhouse with dairy	100%
61	33C	Greenhouse for gardening at Raisko	60%
62	64	Large greenhouse at Raisko	10%
63	65A	Duck breeding coop at Harmense	60%
64	67	SS dormitory, stables and riding hall at "Praga"	100%
65	71	35 horse stable barracks	10%
66	201	Main sewer with treatment plant and bio-gas recovery unit	5%

TABLE 5: *BAUWERKE* LISTED IN CONSTRUCTION REPORT OF MARCH 1942⁶⁴⁷
describing the construction activity of various sites

I. Building department

a) Detainee camp

- Detainee housing, new (Block 7)
- Detainee housing, new (Block 15)
- Detainee housing, new (Block 18)
- Detainee housing, new (Block 17)
- Detainee housing, new (Block 16)
- Temporary detainee kitchen
- Fences
- Laundry and admissions building and bath for detainees
- Detainee mess hall
- Temporary goods storage barrack in FKL [women's concentration camp]
- Temporary laundry with delousing in FKL
- Detainee housing, new, for extension of detainee camp

b) Other structures

- Utility barrack for troops
- Temporary delousing barrack with admissions
- Troop housing barracks for Kommandantur
- Bauleitung garages, addition, in construction yard
- Staff building
- Garages for Kommandantur
- Housing for civilian workers
- Officer and NCO housing
- Modification "Deutsches Haus"
- Poultry breeding at Harmense
- Temporary stables at Bor-Budy
- Temporary gardening facility with greenhouse for agriculture at Raisko
- Large greenhouse at Raisko
- Construction Office barrack
- Officer housing barrack
- Construction yard

c) POW camp

"A further 4 barracks for the quarantine camp were finished, bricklaying, carpentry and roof work is continuing on the remaining 17 barracks. One utility barrack is ready for service, the others are under cover, furthermore the 2 delousing barracks are ready as a shell or nearly so, the corpse barrack has meanwhile been erected and covered. The washing and entrance building with watchtower is ready as a shell, covered, and internals are proceeding at present. In the quarantine camp 6 collapsible barracks (horse stable type) for housing of POWs have moreover been erected, internals are proceeding. The fence with wire obstacle is nearly finished. For section II, 5 of the above barracks have been erected. Works on the future camp road have been taken up again. Earth works for the future sewage treatment plant at POW camp have been terminated and brick-works have been prepared."

- Bakery for HWL [Main Industrial Camp]

II. Civil engineering

- Roads
- Water supply

⁶⁴⁷ "Baubericht für Monat März 1942," written by Bischoff on April 3, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, pp. 380-386.

- Surveying (field work)
- Sewage
- Gardening

III. Workshops

- Wood working, metal working, carpentry work
- Painting, glazing
- Workshops for concrete

TABLE 6: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF MARCH 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CC AUSCHWITZ⁶⁴⁸

#	No.	Designation of BW	Starting date ⁶⁴⁹	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	18	Garage hall extension	5/1/42	45%	30/4/42
2	30B	Filling station	20/8/41	100%	31/1/42
3	11	Crematorium extension	16/1/41	100%	31/3/42
4	19	Workshop extension	1/7/40	80%	30/9/42
5	28	Admission barrack with delousing	15/2/42	60%	30/4/42
6	160	Laundry and admissions building with delousing and detainee bath	12/10/41	7%	30/11/42
7	23A	Garage extension near transformer at construction depot	10/12/41	80%	15/5/42
8	50	Construction depot	1/7/40	80%	30/9/42
9	40	SS housing "Deutsches Haus"	2/2/42	75%	15/7/42
10	17C	Troop barrack 1	10/11/41	100%	28/2/42
11		Troop barrack 2	10/11/41	100%	31/3/42
12		Troop barrack 3	10/11/41	75%	30/4/42
13		Troop barrack 4	10/11/41	60%	30/4/42
14	17D	Troop barrack (staff barrack)	5/1/42	100%	31/3/42
15	36A	Officers' club	15/5/41	95%	30/4/42
16	36B	Officers' housing and housing for married NCOs	10/7/41	60%	30/9/42
17	36D	Officers' housing barrack 1	16/11/41	15%	30/6/42
18	27	Living quarters for married NCOs	1/7/40	60%	30/9/42
19	24	Modification commandant's residence	5/1/42	30%	31/5/42
20	100	Detainee housing 18	1/5/41	100%	31/3/42
21	101	Detainee housing 19	1/4/41	100%	30/1/42
22	102	Detainee housing 20	1/4/41	100%	30/1/42
23	103	Detainee housing 21	1/4/41	100%	30/1/42
24	104	Detainee housing 22	15/8/41	75%	30/6/42
25	105	Detainee housing 23	10/9/41	45%	30/6/42
26	106	Detainee housing 24	10/10/41	35%	31/7/42
27	107	Detainee housing 25	1/8/41	70%	30/6/42
28	[3]	Women's camp (temp. goods storage and temp. delousing and laundry)	2/3/42	100%	30/3/42
29	37A	Barrack for construction office	10/7/41	100%	30/1/42
30	42	Addition to detainee kitchen	6/9/41	100%	30/1/42
31	172	Utility barrack for troops	15/9/41	95%	20/4/42
32	43	Mess hall barrack for detainees	5/1/42	100%	31/3/42
33	32B	Housing for civilian workers	26/10/41	80%	30/4/42

⁶⁴⁸ RGVA, 502-1-22, pp. 11-13.

⁶⁴⁹ All Dates given as d/m/yy

#	No.	Designation of BW	Starting date ⁶⁴⁹	Progress	Est. compl. date
34	32D	Utility barrack for civilian workers' camp	26/10/41	80%	30/4/42
35	44	Sports ground	29/10/41	60%	30/9/42
36	21	Roads	1/6/40	45%	31/5/43
37	54	Gardening	1/4/41	50%	31/5/43
38	9	Sewers	1/6/40	55%	31/5/43
39	29	Water supply	1/6/40	35%	31/5/43
40	49	Electrical installations, external	1/6/40	45%	31/5/43
41	41	Detainee camp enclosure	1/6/40	30%	31/5/43
42	8	Temp. watchtowers	1/6/40	60%	31/5/43
43	35	School and kindergarten	10/6/41	100%	31/1/42
44	33A	Stable and ancillaries	1/6/40	40%	30/9/42
45	33B	Stockyard	6/12/40	100%	31/3/42
46	33C	Raisko garden center	23/2/42	60%	31/5/42
47	[64]	Large greenhouse at Raisko	23/2/42	10%	31/8/42
48	[65A]	Duck breeding coop at Harmense	16/2/42	60%	30/8/42
49	[71]	Horse stable barracks	20/3/42	10%	30/8/42
50	201	Main sewer with treatment plant and bio-gas recovery	5/11/41	5%	31/5/43

TABLE 7: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT
POW CAMP OF THE WAFFEN-SS IN AUSCHWITZ O/S,
DATED MAY 8, 1942, CONCERNING APRIL 1942⁶⁵⁰

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	2	Drainage	16/3/42	15%	30/9/42
2	3a	Housing barrack (brick) 12 pcs.	7/10/41	100%	10/12/41
3	3a	Housing barrack (brick) 12 pcs.	24/11/41	100%	20/3/42
4	3a	Housing barrack (brick) 8 pcs.	24/11/41	80%	31/5/42
5	3a	Housing barrack (brick) 1 pcs.	4/12/41	60%	15/6/42
6	3b	Housing barracks (horse stable type) 9 pcs.	12/3/42	70%	31/5/43
7	3a	Housing barracks (horse stable type) 9 pcs.	23/3/42	75%	15/6/42
8	4a	Utility barrack	10/11/41	100%	31/3/42
9	4a	Utility barrack	10/11/41	90%	31/5/42
10	5a	Delousing barrack	4/12/41	75%	20/5/42
11	5b	Delousing barrack	6/3/42	55%	30/5/42
12	6a	Washing barrack 5 pcs.	4/3/42	45%	15/6/42
13	7a	Toilet barrack 5 pcs.	4/3/42	45%	15/6/42
14	8a	Corpse barracks	5/1/41	100%	30/4/42
15	9	Quarantine camp entrance building	5/12/41	80%	30/6/42
16	13	Watchtowers	10/3/42	20%	31/7/42
17	16	Access road, etc.	7/10/41	60%	30/6/42
18	17	Road consolidation within camp	5/4/42	3%	30/9/42
19	18	Sewers and treatment plant	21/10/41	25%	30/9/42
20	19	Water supply plant	5/1/42	25%	30/9/42
21	20/21	Power plant and HT feeder	16/11/41	100%	15/3/42
22	24	Enclosure (electrical wiring)	8/10/41	30%	31/7/42
23	25	Fence for camp separation	1/12/41	15%	30/9/42

⁶⁵⁰ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 15.

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
24	26	Transformer substation	6/12/41	100%	15/3/42
25	31	Bakery	21/11/41	35%	15/8/42

TABLE 8: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF MAY 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CC AUSCHWITZ⁶⁵¹

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	24	Modification commandant's residence	5/1/42	90%	31/5/42
2	36A	Officers' club	15/5/41	100%	30/4/42
3	27	Living quarters for married NCOs	1/7/40	75%	30/9/42
4	36B	Living quarters and housing for married officers	10/7/41	75%	30/9/42
5	40	SS dormitory "Deutsches Haus"	2/2/42	95%	10/6/42
6	11	Crematorium extension	16/1/41	100%	31/3/42
7	23A	Garage extension near transformer	10/12/41	100%	31/5/42
8	44	Sports ground (existing)	29/10/41	60%	30/9/42
9	54	Gardening	1/4/41	60%	31/5/43
10	8	Watchtowers, temp.	1/6/40	65%	31/5/43
11	18	Garage extension for Kommandantur	5/1/42	100%	31/5/42
12	30B	Filling station	20/8/41	100%	31/1/42
13	28	Admissions barrack with delousing	15/2/42	100%	15/5/42
14	42	Extension of detainee kitchen	6/9/41	100%	30/1/42
15	17C	Troop barrack 1	10/11/41	100%	28/2/42
16	17C	Troop barrack 2	10/11/41	100%	31/3/42
17	17C	Troop barrack 3	10/11/41	100%	30/4/42
18	17C	Troop barrack 4	10/11/41	100%	20/5/42
19	17D	Troop barrack 1 (staff)	5/1/42	100%	31/3/42
20	36D	Officers' housing barrack 1	16/11/41	15%	31/7/42
21	43	Mess hall barrack for detainees	5/1/42	100%	31/3/42
22	172	Utility barrack for troop	15/9/41	100%	18/4/42
23	3	Women's camp (temp. goods storage barrack, temp. laundry and delousing, sanitary installations, fence)	2/3/42	90%	15/6/42
24	20L	Detainee housing 11 (Addl. story)	20/5/42	5%	30/9/42
25	20M	Detainee housing 12 (Addl. story)	20/5/42	5%	30/9/42
26	20O	Detainee housing 14 (Addl. story)	18/5/42	3%	30/9/42
27	20Q	Detainee housing 16 (Addl. story)	18/5/42	10%	30/9/42
28	100	Detainee housing 18	1/5/41	100%	31/3/42
29	101	Detainee housing 19	1/4/41	100%	30/1/42
30	102	Detainee housing 20	1/4/41	100%	30/1/42
31	103	Detainee housing 21	1/4/41	100%	30/1/42
32	104	Detainee housing 22	15/8/41	100%	18/4/42
33	105	Detainee housing 23	10/9/41	80%	30/6/42
34	106	Detainee housing 24	10/10/41	60%	31/7/42
35	107	Detainee housing 25	1/8/41	100%	30/5/42
36	134	Detainee housing 36	7/5/42	3%	30/11/42
37	135	Detainee housing 37	7/5/42	3%	30/11/42
38	136	Detainee housing 38	15/4/42	10%	30/11/42
39	137	Detainee housing 39	15/4/42	10%	30/11/42

⁶⁵¹ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 22.

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
40	138	Detainee housing 40	15/4/42	10%	30/11/42
41	7A	Detainee housing (now temp. troop housing)	12/5/42	10%	30/11/42
42	160	Laundry and admissions building with delousing and detainee bath	12/10/41	8%	31/12/42
43	201	Main sewer with treatment plant and bio-gas recovery	5/11/41	10%	31/5/43
44	9	Sewers	1/6/40	55%	31/5/43
45	21	Roads	1/6/40	55%	31/5/43
46	29	Water supply plant	1/6/40	30%	31/5/43
47	49	Electrical installations, external	1/6/40	45%	31/5/43
48	41	Enclosure	1/6/40	30%	31/5/43

TABLE 9: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF MAY 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AGRICULTURE⁶⁵²

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	33A	Stables and ancillaries	1/6/40	45%	30/9/42
2	33B	Stockyard extension	1/4/42	25%	31/8/42
3	33C	Raisko garden center	23/2/42	95%	30/6/42
4	64	Large greenhouse for Raisko	23/2/42	20%	31/8/42
5	71	Horse stable barracks for agriculture	20/3/42	65%	31/8/42
6	65A	Duck breeding Harmense	16/2/42	90%	15/6/42
7	65D	Chicken breeding Harmense	4/5/42	40%	31/8/42

TABLE 10: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF MAY 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CONSTRUCTION YARD⁶⁵³

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	19	Detainee workshop barracks	1/7/40	90%	30/9/42
2	30	Construction yard storage shed	1/7/40	90%	30/9/42
3	32B	Civilian workers' housing in existing buildings	26/10/41	100%	30/4/42
4	37A	Construction office barrack 1	10/7/41	100%	30/1/42
5	37B	Construction office barrack 2 with housing	1/4/42	60%	15/7/42
6	32D	Mess hall barrack for civilian workers	26/10/41	100%	30/4/42
7	71	Horse stable barracks for building materials	4/5/42	60%	31/7/42

TABLE 11: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF MAY 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT POW⁶⁵⁴

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	2	Drainage	16/3/42	15%	30/9/42
2	3a	9 pcs. housing barracks (brick)	7/10/41	100%	10/12/41
3	3a	12 pcs. housing barracks (brick)	24/11/41	100%	20/3/42
4	3a	9 pcs. housing barracks (brick)	24/11/41	90%	20/6/42

⁶⁵² RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 21.

⁶⁵³ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 20.

⁶⁵⁴ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 19.

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
5	3b	12 housing barracks (horse stable type)	12/3/42	90%	15/6/42
6	3c	Housing barracks (horse stable type), 54 erected so far	23/3/42	80%	15/7/42
7	4a	Utility barrack 1	10/11/41	100%	31/3/42
8	4a	Utility barrack 2	10/11/41	95%	15/6/42
9	5a	Delousing barrack 1	4/12/41	95%	15/6/42
10	5b	Delousing barrack 2	6/3/42	70%	15/7/42
11	6a	Washing barracks 5 pcs.	4/3/42	75%	20/6/42
12	7a	Toilet barracks 5 pcs.	4/3/42	75%	20/6/42
13	8a	Corpse barrack	5/1/42	100%	30/4/42
14	9	Entrance building, quarantine camp	5/12/41	90%	30/6/42
15	13	Watchtowers	10/3/42	25%	31/7/42
16	16	Access roads	7/10/41	65%	30/6/42
17	17	Road consolidation within camp	5/4/42	15%	30/9/42
18	18	Sewers and treatment plant	21/10/41	35%	30/9/42
19	19	Water supply plant	5/1/42	35%	30/9/42
20	20/21	High voltage facility and HT feeder	16/11/41	100%	15/3/42
21	24	Enclosure, electrical wiring	8/11/41	35%	31/7/42
22	25	Fence for camp separation	1/12/41	20%	30/9/42
23	26	Transformer substation	6/12/41	100%	15/3/42
	31	Bakery	21/11/41	40%	15/8/42

TABLE 12: CONSTRUCTION REPORT FOR MAY 1942⁶⁵⁵

This report describes the construction activity (Baustellenbetrieb) up to the end of May 1942 of the following sites.

I. Building department

a) Detainee camp

- BW 104 Detainee housing building (New building VI – Block 18)
- BW 105 Detainee housing building (New building VII – Block 17)
- BW 106 Detainee housing building (New building VIII – Block 16)
- BW 107 Detainee housing building (New building V – Block 15)
- BW 20L Detainee housing building (Addl. story in F.K.L. Block 1)
- BW 20M Detainee housing building (Addl. story-Block 14)
- BW 20O Detainee housing building (Addl. story-Block 12)
- BW 20Q Detainee housing building (Addl. story-Block 23)
- BW 3 Temp. laundry in F.K.L.
- Existing buildings in F.K.L.

b) Detainee camp extension

- BW 7A Detainee housing building (now temp. troop housing)
- BW 135 Detainee housing building
- BW 136 Detainee housing building
- BW 137 Detainee housing building
- BW 138 Detainee housing building
- BW 160 Laundry and admissions building with delousing and detainee bath

c) Other buildings

- BW 28 Temp. admissions barrack with delousing
- BW 17 C/4 Troop barrack 4

⁶⁵⁵ “*Baubericht für Monat Mai 1942*” written by Bischoff on June 2, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, pp. 258-265.

-
- BW 24 Commandant's residence
 - BW 18 Garage extension for Kommandantur
 - BW 36B Officers' residences and housing
 - BW 172 Utility barrack
 - BW 40 Modification SS dormitory "Deutsches Haus"
 - BW 11 Crematorium

d) Agriculture

- BW 65 A-B Duck and poultry breeding coops at Harmense
- BW 71 Stable yard for agriculture and Construction Office
- BW 33 B Extension of slaughter-house
- BW 33C Garden center with greenhouse for agriculture
- BW 64 Large greenhouse at Raisko

e) Construction yard

- BW 37B-C Construction office and housing
- BW 50 Construction depot
- BW23 A Extension of garage for Construction Office

f) POW camp

"In the quarantine camp (1st section) 12 brick housing barracks have so far been put in service, in the other 18 barracks the interior work is nearly finished. Furthermore, 12 collapsible barracks (horse stable type) have been erected. To date 6 of these can be used; one is being arranged as an infirmary. Boilers have been installed in utility barrack 2, some more installation work has yet to be finished. The pump unit for the water supply has been installed in the first delousing barrack. The second delousing barrack is nearly under cover. The 10 washing and toilet barracks have been mounted and covered, installations etc. are being put in at present. Some more finishing work has to be done on the guard and entrance building.

For the second section, 54 collapsible barracks (horse stable type) have been erected so far, including some insulation. Works on the enclosure for this section are continuing. Work continues on the water supply plant and the treatment plant, as well as the earth works for the main effluent ditch. Drainage work on the quarantine camp has started. The road from the POW camp to Birkenau has been partly taken up and re-packed, this also goes for the road from the quarantine camp to camp 2; a number of roads in the quarantine camp have been packed, graveled and rolled."

- BW 31 (KGL) Bakery for H.W.L. [Main Industrial Camp]

g) Main supply camp

- BW 7 (H.W.L.) Storage barrack

II. Civil engineering

- BW 21 Roads
- BW 29 Water supply plant
- BW 9 Sewers
- BW 201 Rain water and main effluent ditch with treatment plant and bio-gas recovery
- Surveying
- Landscaping

III. Workshops

- Wood-working, metal-working, carpentry
 - Painting, glazing
 - Concrete work
-

TABLE 13: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF JUNE 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CC AUSCHWITZ⁶⁵⁶

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	3	Women's' branch camp: temp. laundry, temp. goods storage barrack, delousing, sanitary installations	2/3/42	100%	15/6/42
2	7A	Detainee housing, presently temp. troop housing	12/5/42	25%	30/11/42
3	8	Temp. watchtowers (wood)	1/6/40	65%	31/5/43
4	9	Sewers	1/6/40	55%	31/5/43
5	11	Crematorium (new chimney)	12/6/42	10%	10/8/42
6	20K	Detainee housing (add'l stories, no. 2)	18/6/42	15%	15/10/42
7	20L	dto. no. 11	20/5/42	30%	30/9/42
8	20M	dto. no. 12	20/5/42	15%	30/9/42
9	20O	dto. no. 14	18/5/42	15%	30/9/42
10	20Q	dto. no. 16	18/5/42	20%	30/9/42
11	21	Roads	1/6/40	60%	31/5/43
12	24	Commandant's residence	5/1/42	100%	31/5/42
13	27	Housing for married NCOs	1/7/40	75%	30/9/42
14	29	Water supply installation	1/6/40	30%	31/5/43
15	36B	Officers' housing and housing for married officers	10/7/41	80%	30/9/42
16	36D	Officers' housing barrack 1	16/11/41	15%	30/9/42
17	40	SS dormitory "Deutsches Haus"	2/2/42	100%	10/6/42
18	41	Detainee camp enclosure	1/6/40	30%	31/5/43
19	49	Electrical installations, external	1/6/40	45%	31/5/43
20	54	Gardening	1/4/41	65%	31/5/43
21	28	Detainee goods storage	3/6/42	30%	30/9/42
22	105	Detainee housing no. 23	10/9/41	100%	30/6/42
23	106	Detainee housing no. 24	10/10/41	85%	31/7/42
24	134	Detainee housing no. 36	7/5/42	15%	30/11/42
25	135	Detainee housing no. 37	7/5/42	15%	30/11/42
26	136	Detainee housing no. 38	15/4/42	15%	30/11/42
27	137	Detainee housing no. 39	15/4/42	15%	30/11/42
28	138	Detainee housing no. 40	15/4/42	20%	30/11/42
29	160	Laundry and admissions building with delousing and bath for detainees	12/10/41	12%	31/12/42
30	201	Main sewer with treatment plant			

TABLE 14: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF JUNE 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AGRICULTURE⁶⁵⁷

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	33A	Existing stables and ancillaries	1/6/40	45%	30/9/42
2	33B	Slaughterhouse extension	1/4/42	55%	31/8/42
3	33C	Gardening unit with greenhouse at Raisko	23/2/42	95%	31/7/42
4	36C	Residence for head of agricultural units	4/5/42	45%	15/8/42
5	64	Large greenhouse at Raisko	23/2/42	25%	30/11/42

⁶⁵⁶ RGVA, 502-1-22, pp. 27f.

⁶⁵⁷ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 26.

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
6	65A	Duck breeding at Harmense	16/2/42	100%	15/6/42
7	65B	Duck breeding coops	4/5/42	30%	30/9/42
8	65E	Breeding stables	4/5/42	30%	30/9/42
9	71	Horse stable barracks	20/3/42	65%	31/8/42

TABLE 15: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF JUNE 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CONSTRUCTION DEPOT AUSCHWITZ⁶⁵⁸

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	19	Finishing of detainee workshop barracks	1/7/40	90%	30/9/42
2	37B	Bauleitung barrack	1/4/42	90%	15/8/42
3	37C	Construction Office housing barracks	1/4/42	85%	15/8/42
4	50	Building materials storage shed	1/7/40	90%	30/9/42
5	71	Horse stables and building materials storage	4/5/42	60%	30/9/42

TABLE 16: CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE PLAN OF JUNE 1942
FOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT POW AUSCHWITZ⁶⁵⁹

#	BW	Designation of BW	Starting date	Progress	Est. compl. date
1	2	Drainage of grounds	16/3/42	20%	30/9/42
2	3a	30 housing barracks (brick)	7/10/41	100%	20/6/42
3	3b	Housing barracks (horse stable barracks)	12/3/42	60%	31/7/42
4	3cd	Housing barracks (horse stable barracks)	23/3/42	80%	31/8/42
5	4a	Utility barrack 1+2	10/11/41	100%	20/6/42
6	5a	Delousing barrack 1	4/12/41	100%	20/6/42
7	5b	Delousing barrack 2	6/3/42	100%	15/7/42
8	6a	5 washing barracks	4/3/42	100%	20/6/42
9	7a	5 toilet barracks	4/3/42	100%	20/6/42
10	8a	1 corpse barrack	5/1/42	100%	30/4/42
11	9	Quarantine camp entrance building	5/12/41	100%	30/6/42
12	13	Watchtowers (wood)	10/3/42	30%	30/9/42
13	16	Access road	7/10/41	65%	30/9/42
14	17	Road consolidation inside camp	5/4/42	20%	30/9/42
15	18	Sewers and treatment plant	21/10/41	40%	30/9/42
16	19	Water supply plant	5/1/42	40%	30/9/42
17	20/21	Power plant and HT feeder	16/11/41	100%	15/3/42
18	24	Enclosure, electric wire	8/11/41	45%	31/8/42
19	25	Wire mesh fences for camp sections	1/12/41	25%	30/9/42
20	26	Transformer substation	6/12/41	100%	15/3/42
21	31	Bakery	21/11/41	50%	15/10/42

⁶⁵⁸ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 25.

⁶⁵⁹ RGVA, 502-1-22, p. 24.

TABLE 17: CONSTRUCTION REPORT OF JUNE 1942⁶⁶⁰
 This report describes the construction activity (*Baustellenbetrieb*)
 up to June 1942 of the following sites

I. Construction project SS housing and CC Auschwitz

a) Detainee camp

- BW 105 Housing building for detainees (Block 17)
- BW 106 Housing building for detainees (Block 16)
- BW 20L Adding stories to detainee housing of FKL
- BW 20K Adding stories to detainee housing of FKL
- BW 20G Adding stories to detainee housing of FKL
- BW 20H Adding stories to detainee housing of FKL
- BW 20Q Adding stories to detainee housing of FKL
- BW 7A Detainee housing building, presently temporary troop housing
- Existing buildings of FKL

b) Detainee camp extension

- BW 134 Detainee housing building
- BW 135 Detainee housing building
- BW 136 Detainee housing building
- BW 137 Detainee housing building
- BW 138 Detainee housing building
- BW 160 Laundry and admissions building with delousing unit and bath for detainees
- BW 11 Crematorium (existing)
- BW 28 Temp. admissions barrack with delousing

c) Other constructions

- BW 24 Commandant residence
- BW 36B Officers' residences and housing
- BW 40 SS dormitory "Deutsches Haus"
- BW 21 Roads
- BW 29 Water supply installation
- BW 9 Sewers
- BW 201 Rain water collector and main collector with treatment plant and bio-gas recovery

II. Construction project agriculture Auschwitz

- BW 36C Residence for head of agricultural units
- BW 33B Slaughterhouse extension
- BW 33C Gardening unit with greenhouse at Raisko
- BW 64 Large greenhouse at Raisko
- BW 65A-E Poultry and duck breeding coops at Harmense
- BW 71 Stable yard

III. Construction project POW

"In the quarantine camp (1st section) 15 out of the 30 brick housing barracks are presently occupied, the remaining 15 are ready for occupancy, and some of the erected barracks (horse stable barracks) including infirmary barrack have been put into service. Furthermore, 2 utility barracks, 2 delousing barracks, 1 corpse storage barrack, 10 washing and toilet barracks and the washing and entrance building are ready or usable. For the quarantine camp the water supply and sewage system including treatment plant and recipient are finished. Drainage of this section is about half completed. In section II a total of 99 barracks (horse stable barracks) have so far been erected. Another 18 barracks of the same type, to be used as washing and toilet barracks, are now

⁶⁶⁰ "Baubericht für Monat Juni 1942" written by Bischoff on July 2, 1942. RGVA, 502-1-24, pp. 219-225.

being put up. Work on enclosure and on roads is continuing. Foundation work for the guard troop barracks has started. Excavation for the crematorium has been started as well."

– BW 31 KGL Bakery

IV. Construction Project Construction Yard Auschwitz

– BW 37B/C Bauleitung barrack and housing

– BW 50 Construction yard

– BW 23A Bauleitung garage building

V. Construction project main industrial camp of Waffen-SS

– BW 7 Depot barrack

VI. Other

– Gardening works

– Workshops (wood working, metal working, carpentry work, painting and glazing)

– Surveying

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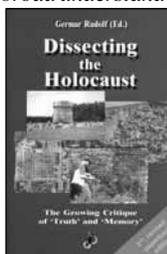
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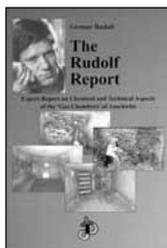


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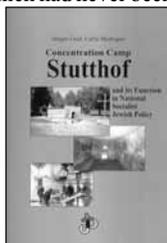


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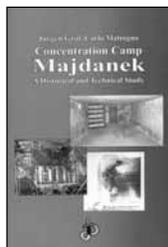
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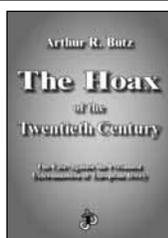


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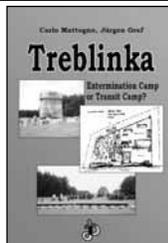


C. Mattogno, J. Graf, *Treblinka. Extermination Camp or Transit Camp?*

Holocaust historians alleged that at Treblinka in East Poland, between 700,000 and 3,000,000 persons were murdered in 1942 and 1943. The weapons used were alleged to have been stationary and/or mobile gas chambers, poison gases of both fast acting and slow acting varieties, unslaked lime, superheated steam, electricity, diesel exhaust fumes, etc. Holocaust historians alleged that bodies were piled as high as multistoried buildings and burned without a trace, using little or no fuel. Graf and Mattogno have now analyzed the origins, logic and technical feasibility of the official version of Treblinka. On the basis of numerous documents they reveal Treblinka’s true identity: it was a transit camp.

Even longtime Revisionism buffs will find a lot that is new in this book, while Graf’s animated style guarantees a pleasant reading experience. The original testimony of witnesses enlivens the reader, as does the skill with which the authors expose the absurdities of Holocaust historiography.

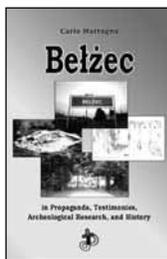
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Witnesses report that at least 600,000, if not as many as three million Jews were murdered in the Belżec camp, located in eastern Poland, between 1941 and 1942. Various murder weapons are claimed to have been used: diesel gas chambers; unslaked lime in trains; high voltage; vacuum chambers. According to witnesses, the corpses were incinerated on huge pyres without leaving any traces.

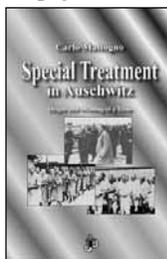
For those who know the stories about Treblinka, this all sounds too familiar. The author therefore restricted this study to the aspects, which are different and new compared to Treblinka, but otherwise refers the reader to his Treblinka book. The development of the official image portrait of Belżec is explained and subjected to a thorough critique. In contrast to Treblinka, forensic drillings and excavations were performed in the late 1990s in Belżec, the results of which are explained and critically reviewed. These findings, together with the absurd claims by ‘witnesses,’ refute the thesis of an extermination camp.



138 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index: \$15.-

Carlo Mattogno, *Special Treatment in Auschwitz. Origin and Meaning of a Term*

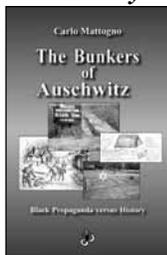
When appearing in German wartime documents in the context of the “Holocaust,” terms like “special treatment,” “special action,” and others have usually been interpreted as code words that signify the killing of inmates. While certainly the term “special treatment” in many such documents meant execution, the term need not always have had that meaning in German records. In this book, C. Mattogno has provided the most thorough study of this textual problem to date. Publishing and interpreting numerous such documents about Auschwitz – many of them hitherto unknown – Mattogno is able to show that, while “special” had many different meanings in these documents, not a single one meant “execution.” This important study demonstrates that the habitual practice of deciphering an alleged “code language” by assigning homicidal meaning to completely harmless documents is no longer tenable



151 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index, \$15.-

Carlo Mattogno, *The Bunkers of Auschwitz. Black Propaganda versus History*

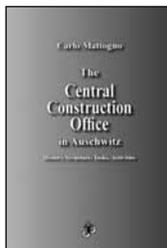
The so-called “Bunkers” at Auschwitz-Birkenau are claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz specifically erected for this purpose in early 1942. With help of the almost complete files of the Auschwitz construction office, the first part of this study shows that these “Bunkers” never existed. The second part shows how the rumors of these alleged gas chambers evolved as black propaganda created by resistance groups within the camp. The third part shows how this black propaganda was transformed into ‘reality’ by historians. The final chapter, dedicated to the material tests (aerial photography and archeological research) confirms the publicity character of the rumors about the “Bunkers.”



264 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index: \$20.-

Carlo Mattogno, *Auschwitz: The Central Construction Office*

Based upon mostly unpublished German wartime documents from Moscow archives, this study describes the history, organization, tasks, and procedures of the Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz. It provides a deep understanding of this office, which was responsible for the planning and construction of the Auschwitz camp complex. This study is indispensable for all those, who wish to avoid misinterpretations of Auschwitz documents, as they are frequently made by many Holocaust historians.



ca. 200 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., glossary: \$18.-

Carlo Mattogno, *Auschwitz: Krematorium I and the Alleged Homicidal Gassings* (spring 2005)

The morgue of Krematorium I in Auschwitz is claimed to have been the first homicidal gas chamber in that camp. This study thoroughly investigates all accessible statements by witnesses and analyzes hundreds of wartime documents in order to accurately write a history of that building. Mattogno proves that its morgue was never used as a homicidal gas chamber.

ca. 180 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index: \$18.-

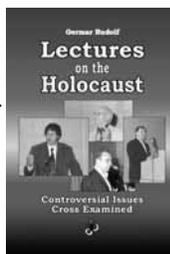
Send orders to: Castle Hill Publishers, PO Box 257768, Chicago, IL 60625; +1-877-789-0229; www.vho.org

Germer Rudolf, *Lectures on the Holocaust. Controversial Issues Cross Examined*

Since 1992, German scholar Germer Rudolf is giving lectures to various mainstream audiences all over the world. His topic is very controversial: the Holocaust in the light of new forensic and historical findings. His listeners initially think they know exactly, what "the Holocaust" is all about, but their world view is completely turned upside down after the evidence is presented. Even though Rudolf presents nothing short of full-fledged Holocaust revisionism, his arguments fall on fertile soil, because they are presented in a very pedagogically sensitive and scholarly way. This book is literary version of Rudolf's lectures, enriched with the most recent finding of historiography to a topic regulated by penal law in many countries.

The book's style is unique as is its topic: It is a dialogue between the lecturers on the one hand who introduce the reader to the most important arguments and counter arguments of Holocaust Revisionism and the reactions of the audience on the other hand: supportive, skeptical, and also hostile comments, questions, and assertions. The *Lectures* read like a vivid and exciting real-life exchange between persons of various points of view. The usual moral, political, and pseudoscientific arguments against revisionism are all addressed and refuted. This book is a compendium of Frequently Asked Questions on the Holocaust and its critical re-examination. With more than 1,000 references to sources and a vast bibliography, this easy-to-understand book is the best introduction into this taboo topic both for readers unfamiliar with revisionism and for those wanting to know more.

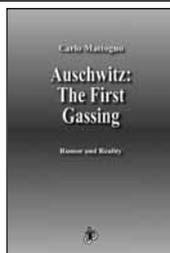
ca. 500 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index: \$30.-



Carlo Mattogno *Auschwitz: The First Gassing. Rumor and Reality* (summer 2005)

The first gassing of human beings in Auschwitz is claimed to have occurred on Sept. 3, 1941, in a basement room. The accounts reporting it are the archetypes for all later gassing accounts. This study exhibits all available sources about this alleged event and analyzes them critically. It shows that these sources contradict each other in every essential point – location, date, preparations, victims... – rendering it impossible to extract a consistent story. Original wartime documents inflict a final blow to the tale of the first homicidal gassing.

ca. 180 pp. pb., 6"×9", b/w ill., bibl., index: \$16.-



R.H. Countess, Ch. Lindtner, G. Rudolf (eds.), *Exactitude. Festschrift for Robert Faurisson to his 75th Birthday*

On January 25, 1929, 75 years before this book was published, a man was born, who probably deserves the title of the most courageous intellectual of the last third of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century: Robert Faurisson. With hitherto unheard of bravery and steadfastness, he challenged the dark forces of historical and political fraud, deception, and deceit with his unrelenting exposure of their lies and hoaxes. His method of analytical exactitude in historiography and his striving for clear brevity in presenting the results of his research have become both famous and infamous at once. This *Festschrift* is dedicated to him by some of his closest friends in his struggle for exactitude in historiography and his ongoing fight not only for historical and political, but also for individual justice. It contains a collection of articles by several authors addressing various issues of scientific revisionism in general, Holocaust revisionism in particular, and biographic sketches of Robert Faurisson's scholarship over the decades.

140 pp. pb., 6"×9", ill., biographies: \$15.-



Upcoming Books (working titles):

- Franz W. Seidler: *Crimes Against the Wehrmacht* (vol. 1 & 2). Collection of documents and testimonies about crimes committed against members and units of the German Wehrmacht during WWII.
- Walter Post: *The Defamed Wehrmacht*. Collection of evidence proving that the German Wehrmacht was probably the most righteous army of WWII, always trying to keep a high standard of honor.
- Carlo Mattogno: *Healthcare in Auschwitz*. A documentary study on the vast efforts of the SS to keep their prisoners alive and healthy.